

MANIFESTO

GRACE OTTO

PREFACE:

MEN ARE MEN AND WOMEN AND THOSE ALIKE
WHO BUILD AND REBUILD AND REBUILD STONE WALLS
WHICH SERVE ILL PURPOSE OR NO PURPOSE AT ALL

WOMEN ARE WOMEN AND THOSE ALIKE
WHO PUSH AND PUSH AND PUSH AT THE STONES
FOR HERE IT IS BEST TO DERAIL AND DETHRONE

WHEN THE STONES DO NOT BUDGE WOMEN DO NOT STALL
INSTEAD THEY CARVE OUT OF THE STONES, SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL
AND WAIT AGAIN TO PUSH UNTIL THE MORTAR CRACKS

1.

Yes, Yes, No.

MEN WANT WOMEN TO HAVE HAIR, BUT LONG HAIR THAT HAS BEEN COMBED, PRESSED, STYLED, AND TAMED.

MEN SAY WHETHER OR NOT HAIR IS ALLOWED TO EXIST IN ITS NATURAL STATE.

Yes, Yes, No.

MEN DON'T WANT WOMEN TO HAVE HAIR, SAVE THEIR EYELASHES, BROWS, AND THE HAIR ON THEIR HEADS.

MEN WANT WOMEN'S BODIES TO STAY HAIRLESS, PREPUBESCENT.

MEN OSTRACIZE THOSE WHO DON'T COMPLY.

MEN DEEM THEM UNFUCKABLE, *AND WHAT COULD BE WORSE THAN THAT?*

MEN WANT WOMEN TO HAVE BOUNCY, SWINGING PONYTAILS.

MEN OFTEN CHOOSE THE WOMEN WITH BOUNCY PONYTAILS, *FOR PONYTAILS ARE EASY TO GRAB.*

MEN USE HAIR TO CONTROL, WITH THEIR TONGUES AND WITH THEIR HANDS, TO KEEP WOMEN INSECURE AND AT THEIR MERCY.

CAN ONE-FIFTIETH OF A MILLIMETER OF KERATIN BE SUCH A VESSEL OF SUFFOCATION?

Yes, Yes, No.

2.

YOU KNOW NOT THE WAY

NOR HOW TO STEER, WHY MUST YOU

COMMANDEER *THIS* SHIP?

3.

I AM.

I LOVE. I HATE.

I FIND. I HAVE.

I AM KIND, AND I AM NOT.

TO WOMEN, YES.

TO MEN, LESS.

I LOVE WOMEN.

AND THOSE WHO , ALIKE.

I HATE MEN

MOSTLY.

I FIND TRUTH IN LOVE.

MEN LIE, , AND TRY TO TAKE AWAY.

THEY'VE SUCCEEDED IN PART.

THEY'VE DRAINED ONE RESERVE OF MINE:

THE LOVE HELD FOR THEM.

I HAVE LITTLE LOVE LEFT

IN MY GORY, BLOOD-FULL FIST.

ONLY FOR A SECOND, FEAR NOT.

AS QUICKLY AS IT DRAINS, IT IS REFILLED,
REPLENISHED WITH LOVE FOR THE OTHERS,
REPLACED DOUBLY.

4.

I SPEAK OF MEN IN ART AND LIFE
NOT OUT OF DESIRE, BUT NECESSITY
FOR THE SAKE OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND URGENCY, FOR CHANGE.

I SPEAK OF WOMEN IN ART AND LIFE
OUT OF NECESSITY AND DESIRE
FOR THE SAKE OF MY OWN BREATH AND PURPOSE, FOR .

LESBIAN

GOD WHAT A BEAUTIFUL WORD

LESBIAN

I AM ONE, A LESBIAN

I AM A LESBIAN

I CRIED NOT WHEN I WAS CONCEIVED,

ONLY AFTER I ENTERED THE WORLD

THE SHORTEST GESTATION AND GRANDEST BIRTH

IN MY EYES, AT LEAST

MYSELF, I SPOKE INTO EXISTENCE

BORN, AGAIN, MY OWN MOTHER AND GOD

THEY HAVE THE FIRST, BUT IT WASN'T TRUE

I HAVE, I AM, THE SECOND

I AM ONE, A LESBIAN

I AM A LESBIAN

LESBIAN

GOD WHAT A BEAUTIFUL WORD