

# Teresa

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2 months before I had gone to her aid at her rented Monte Rio house where she put her fist through a good-sized window and 12 stiches later, we drove to my place in Bolinas for much needed psychic repairs. The doctor prescribed Percodan for the pain with the label warning Alcohol may intensify this effect and she did what the label warned. I traveled back with her a week later to collect her things and she left a note for the landlord that said thank you very much but I am moving on. She left ten 20-dollar bills in the envelope to cover what she felt was right and a PS --keep the cleaning deposit. It was never discussed that she was moving in with me but the place had enough space for both of us. I worked at Point Reyes at the Radio Antenna Farm and made decent money for the time being. I had built a desk with a bed above it that she moved right into while I slept in the loft above in the chateau like house, a block from the Pacific in all its fury and then often --- in all its solitude. Me, working 5 days a week, gave her the relative freedom for reentry and adjustment among the coastal environs with morning fogs and a desolate beach that anyone would in time come to remember and cherish.

Teresa was raised in the Boston area, Revere to be exact. Not much was said about her life there or even mention of high school or her family outside of the fact that they paid for her to attend New College in Sausalito where many wealthy families conveniently placed their kids at a safe distance to relative relief. When I first encountered her at school, she dressed in never washed Levi's with keys and a knife dangling, new engineer boots, adorned in a black leather jacket and studded belt. She had thick reddish-brown hair with curls to no end down to her shoulders that framed her round tortoise shelled glasses. This was Tess Rosen as I first met her. She put on a front as a tuffy and in fact when I first asked her a question as to where she came from, she just blew a smoke ring from her Camel No Filter in my direction followed by one more swirling in descending haloes. After they dissolved, she just said 'Bahston'. There was always more said in what she never said than what she ever could. I found that she wasn't that tough and that exterior facade she donned was her armor.

I only found out her name was Teresa after having slept with her while still living in Oakland at 22nd Avenue. Everyone knew her as Tess but somewhere in that encounter she told me her name was Teresa. Made sense. Tess was not an eye catcher but she was very attractive. She was there staring at you with her unblemished porcelain skin and wide eyes. You really just wanted to hug her and give her clear space all in the same moment. Her presence was intimidating. She could scare you into thinking you just stepped in a pile of shit and that you stunk to holy hell. But after watching her for many weeks at school there was a soft side I detected and approached that side when she appeared to let down her fences.

Hey Tess --- let's go get a sandwich and beer at the deli at Gate 9.

Nah --- got no money and I'm not hungry.

Then let's just go have a beer or two.

Thanks, no money she said blowing smoke in my direction towards but not reaching me.

I got ya covered. Come on Tuff Girl.

I knew that was pushing it but you could see just the trace of a smile on the corner of her mouth.

OK I can drink a beer. Let's go.

We became friends, harder for her than me. We saw through each other. She wasn't the hard-edged fem ready to rip your balls off and I wasn't aloof and spaced out as I appeared to be. If you can hang with someone where there is little to be said and the silence is understood, well that solves the existential dilemma of inconvenient conversation.

Teresa's parents must have had some money to spare because she never seemed to be without. When she came to stay with me, I was both happy and concerned. Happy that I could give her a port in the storm but concerned that I felt I was not equipped with what she needed to regain a positive outlook on a world that had suddenly merged into mine. I wasn't a therapist. If she was looking for love on a romantic level with me, well, I wasn't quite there yet, or was I? Over a year ago we did fuck. And that only went as well as the moment provided. There were no repercussions or even hurt butts. The physical chemistry did not seem to materialize but now that she was here, sleeping in my place, I thought that showing a blind eye was certainly not a healthy agenda. Her problem, she announced to me, was that she felt like an incompetent shithead, had no self-respect and wasn't capable of ever providing for herself. She was provided for by her parents but had nothing to show for it. She said they never took pride in her, in anything that she did. They just sent money in the mail never asking what or how she was doing. She said Look at you Trace – You have it made.

Jeez Tess, I really didn't have much choice in direction but to go forward. My folks were working class people. They were done with me after I graduated from high school. It wasn't malicious on their part. Who can hold them accountable? They did what they could do for me but had to take care of themselves as well. For you it's more difficult, you come from privilege and the decisions

in life are less consequential in that there is always a life support system that can catch you just in case you fall from the high wire. You could look at it as saving grace or the ultimate curse. You choose or really don't choose direction in life and the big sack of shit that keeps dragging you down and how you can't seem to figure out a way to get rid of is something you might need time to figure out.

She took a long drag off her Camel no filter.

You might have that right.

Behind her tortoise shells I could see her crying before she turned away.

After moving in Tess would take long walks on the beach always in her black leather jacket and jeans with my dog Laslow sometimes not coming back late after the sun set with Tamalpais looming large, gulls finding nights roost and the chill chasing fog. Two Friday nights later she came up the stairs off the driveway, Laslow in tow and into the house. I had shut all the windows and was thinking about starting a fire in the stove just to take the cold edge off.

You know Trace --- I'm not as pathetic as you make me out to be. I'm going to do this --- this life thing --- and I want to go to bed with you and fuck you and --- well --- I want that.

Really? Let's have some wine I said while thinking about the forth coming. The half-gallon of Almaden Mountain Red with cork top was opened and we smoked some weed that was grown up on the mesa that wasn't that great. I put on a music tape because they last longer than one side of an album and lit candles and incense. In the candlelight she had already shed her clothes and we laughed and climbed the stairs to the waterbed in the loft. She said the next morning over coffee while smoking her Camel no filter that it was the best night of her life. I knew that could not be true and felt a thud in my heart.

Trace, she said the next Sunday while rolling a joint of weed not from the mesa but from her own resources, I really am kinda getting used to you. She paused as she licked the glue on the Zig-zag wheat papers to seal the deal. She looked up and inhaled, not from the joint but just a supreme inhalation of her immediate universe. This is kinda hard for me to say she continued on as she struck a match, took a long slow hit and then handed it to me.

I think that I more than like you.

That was Tess alright, half committing, executing but stopping just short, feeling me out to see where this would go and not hanging herself.

I took a big hit and realized that this wasn't Bolinas mesa weed but something more along the lines of Maui, Mendocino or Thailand. The rush was instantaneous. I paused because I had to and just to take in what she had just said.

Instead of saying the insignificant that either committed myself, chastised her or placated her in some way or evaded the issue altogether, I got up, pulled her up into my arms and hugged her, my head buried in her thick curls, the surf pounding half a block away, my heart the same.

Days passed, I went to work, came back to the Chateau with her waiting for me smoking cigs or weed and looking not so that happy I don't think with me but herself. Whatever was happening in her brain, whether she had fallen in love with me for no other option or general insecurity about herself, I was not helping and the weed just seemed to procrastinate her evolution on whatever basis that was happening. She had gone back to sleeping in the bed above the desk ever since last Sunday. She was distant --- almost the same as when I first met her, like don't even try to talk to me.

Working at the Radar Station I had some vacation days saved up and when at work Thursday I informed those that mattered that I was taking Friday off. I did the payroll for the station and it was completed and ready to turn in on Monday reported unless someone deviated and even then, it was all an easy fix.

Hey Tess, I reported after settling in, I took tomorrow off. How about you and I take some psilocybin and hike north past Duxbury Reef to RCA Beach. She was halfway through the number she rolled and exhaled with just the hint of a smile.

You know Trace, I've never taken any of those drugs. It's just not me. I would get too out there.

And would that be a bad thing? I think it would be more of an Exploratorium kind of thing, an adventure.

I was thinking that this is exactly what she might find engaging, something, anything to remove herself from the day to day tangibles, to disconnect, rise above and observe the remedial life we get tangled up in.

Let me think about it.

Later after dinner and wine on the deck with the waves crashing so close, she said she wanted to take it tomorrow. It wasn't long after we went to bed that she left hers and crawled in with me and for the first time with her I felt a change of heart, a new warmth that I could surrender to.

In the morning I left her sleeping, curls covering the pillow, mouth half open to go downstairs, feed Laslow and make the coffee. The beans made noise in the grinder but I still did not hear her stir until later when the aroma of fresh brew infiltrated the loft. Then the toilet flushed and the shower started. I had a cup on the deck brushing the acacia leaves off the bench of the long wooden table I had built from lumber washed up on the beach behind the Antenna Station on the Point. It was a very isolated beach where apparently a ship had wrecked some decades ago carrying a load of lumber from the mills somewhere north, probably Fort Bragg. There were so many two by twelve planks, wave worn to their benefit that I just had to drag them one by one back to my car a quarter mile and lash onto the roof with ropes around them through the windows. The crew at the station thought I was crazy but after more than a dozen of trips I had more than enough to build a long table and benches. With what was left I built a writing table

piece by piece up in the loft. The only way that table was coming out of there was to take it back apart.

Tess came down, hair drenched and half dripping, pulling my short white Japanese robe closed and onto the deck. She spiraled around in classic pirouette fashion and I thought that must be something she's hiding. She must be or has to be the daughter of a Ballet School owner and somewhere along the line she gleaned one flash move, maybe two. She sat down, the bench between her legs, drying her hair with a beach towel that had Monte Carlo printed all over it.

I'm ready she said but you gotta give me one last request.     I n e e d c o f f e e  
You passed right by it Tess.

It was midafternoon before we ingested the psilocybin in granulated 4 ott capsules. After she swallowed the capsule, she thought that maybe it should come on right then and I told her that it might be an hour or more, so relax, if you can, and breathe. Maybe lie on your back and take some deep breaths. She did and began to almost hyperventilate. She was getting into more than was delivered. I told her to relax her relaxation as if trying to get her to just lie still and bring it. She jumped up and said I have to go for a walk. Great, because that was the next step, to get out of the house and onto the beach with the waves crashing, as strange as it sounds, provide her, now us, with some standard, a familiar regiment. A beach provides the most positive atmosphere ever for a psychedelic experience. Sounds of waves and receding water over shells, sand and rocks makes for a continuous reflection and distraction.

Tess, I said, are you OK? She was swirling on the sand in a dance. Her leathers long gone and left back at the Chateau, she pirouetted in thin white gauze pants and a maroon top. Where was her uniform I was so used to? I was coming on as well and so the question became moot. I told her that we needed to walk up the beach towards Duxbury Reef away from the stock and barrel village side. She looked blank but without question we proceeded north. Laslow followed us, half navigator, and half sense of normality. Never did we see another human and that made it solitary and that made it immediate. Immediate in the sense that all sensory input came from what was in front of you or if you closed your eyes, what the movies you created in your brain gave you. The ocean seemed to be a ready provider. All this I defined as immediate.

We walked up the beach with Laslow romping in the surf and of course the driftwood gave us both cause for disbelief. It certainly was sensational and the touching part was huge in that the wood was so smooth and had indentations and wave worn curves. It was as if this piece of driftwood had traveled thousands of miles in the sea and had so many stories to tell us. But we were on a journey further north and could not stop to listen.

There is one part of Duxbury Reef that can always be hard to cross. It's not a problem if the timing is right time with the tides but I never paid much attention and when I did it didn't matter.

I guess I didn't time it right.

The waves were rushing as we were too.

I should have paid more attention but under the circumstances I didn't.

Duxbury Reef comes to a point and is easily crossable near the sandy bluffs most all the time. At high tide, some varying, you cannot cross at the rocks leading north. Tess and I had somehow astrologically managed to be at Duxbury Reef when it could be a most difficult crossing. I somehow knew this, gleaned it, perhaps, from walking the beach and constant observation. I was inside my own head at this point and really did forget about Tess. She was too far ahead of me, up the beach and there were some clouds that went over and she gazed at the sky as if the clouds were certainly an act of betrayal. When she got to the crossing she never hesitated and began to climb over the rocks.

They call them Rogue Waves and I never really believed in them. Waves, always observed, increase and decrease in severity and frequency. Yeh, OK. But that wave that smashed down on Tess was something I had never seen before and probably never will see again. I got there pretty quick and the waves mashed her up pretty good. She had strange little cuts on her bottom side where she was slammed but other than that, a dodge ball of disaster with respect to our condition. I pulled her out to the North side and Laslow started licking her wounds. I wasn't sure if this was completely medicinal but Tess and Laslow seemed to be in a cosmic synch I just had to stand away from.

You would have thought that we would have dwelled upon Tess's injury but we didn't and plodded north for quite a while as it seemed we were working out some kinetic energy that just had to be released.

After entourage and parading and plodding we arrived at RCA Beach, below the bluffs after Bolinas gives way to Point Reyes National Seashore.

Tess decided to take a deserved break and sat down in the sand below the bluffs and crashing waves. I had some issues myself in that I was perplexed by the different textures of the sand I was walking upon. It definitely wasn't uniform. I needed to differentiate but was at a loss of how. My eyes were microscopic but my mind was extraterrestrial. I was surfing up and down the sand dunes in Peter O'Toole fashion sans camel.

Trace, Tess yelled, pulling me out of the fantasy.

What?

Come over here please.

I came over to her with the waves crashing and the air sounding like hovering helicopters.

Lay down on top of me.

I didn't question her request and lay down on top of her.

What I didn't anticipate was this complete union, this one junction, one being. No that's not the right word. It was a wonderful convergence where I felt my energy flowing into her and I was

feeling hers as well. We gazed at each other, our faces one inch apart and she began to kiss me, gentle lips to my face and then tender brushes with her lips to mine and then full on as if it was the first kiss we ever had.

We lie there after this and she said --- Don't think this means I want to fuck. Just can't fit into that right now.

That's OK I said because at this point it felt that that was more than either of us could muster up. We both lay there looking up at the stark white puffy clouds moving so fast above us in the blue sky with Laslow coming in and out of the picture.

Do you ever wonder who created all this? She asked

These existential questions came up and were always prevalent among all or any of us who doubted God or even Carl Sagen. It was a rabbit hole gone down that I was too familiar with and didn't want to go there now but this was Tess's first psychedelic adventure and I should be a gracious host and try to respond as hard as that could be for me in the state I was in.

When I was younger, 4 or 5, my Mother used to take my sister and I to Playland at the Beach in San Francisco. It was a long journey and I have kudos for my mom for packing us up with towels, food and whatever might occur. We first had to cross the bridge from Oakland, which required 2 busses. There were trains, then, that crossed the lower deck of the Bay Bridge along with trucks and busses. Then and when in San Francisco we took the Muni Geary Street in what seemed like the longest journey in the world. I would see people get on and later get off while we were there forever waiting for Land's End. When finally arriving at Playland you felt as if you had paid the price and now you were rewarded. There were calliopes and harps, pipe organs bellowing welcome, bellowing beware. Magical might be the description. As you entered Playland right smack in front of you was this fat laughing lady, they called her Laughing Sal, and she was the most comforting and scariest thing I ever experienced. How could she scare me so much but how did I feel so soothed at the same time? In my naïve state I related Laughing Sal to God. There was that pacification of life and then there was someone, there, scaring the shit out of you while still holding you accountable.

Tess, that's beyond my scope at this point.

I was glad I didn't put too much thought into it because my remark just glanced off her as if nothing had been said. We had then progressed to RCA Beach, which was below the bluff of the extinct Radio Tower Farm. I knew that it was just a matter of time before the different antennae farm where I worked would be obsolete with technology proceeding as it was.

We're here I proclaimed with Tess lighting up a cig and sitting down and then looking at the cigarette and laughing.

Why am I sticking this burning log into my mouth?

She had to figure that out because I had lodged my foot and ankle underneath a driftwood log and felt as though I had to be there for them until the high tide would return them back to their rightful place in the ocean. There was sympathy there that's hard to feel now. I freed my foot which allowed me to free my mind.

The isolated beach was deserted, as it usually was this far in between Bolinas and Point Reyes. Instinctively I began to gather wood and built a rudimentary criss cross-shelter where we could feel some sort of boundary. I carried a small backpack with essentials --- water for Laslow and for us, French bread and hard cheese and wine in a Bota bag. I also brought along some dog food but forgot about it until Laslow was going after the cheese. There was absolutely no wind and the waves were lapping the shore behaving, as such a Sargasso Sea would be. We sat with our back upon a huge log beyond the structure I assembled.

I'm not sure how much time passed but we sat there for probably 2 hours with Laslow occasionally checking in. There was never much said as I passed the bread and bota bag to her. It was getting late and the decision had to be made whether to hike back to the Chateau or camp out on RCA Beach. Tess was an either or at this point and I knew it was my decision. We started back.

The sun is kind of topsy-turvy at this spot on the west coast. You would think that the sun would set, so beautifully, into the ocean but this part of the coast is twisted around so the sun sets behind you while you are waiting for the ideal over the ocean sunset. This was all inconsequential at the point because we were chasing the oncoming dark. I might have given us too much psilocybin because the effects were not letting up. Not in the least. Tess had this time a long-ago reflection where she was riding on her brother's back piggy back and now wanted to recreate this now with me. She explained very briefly and in some cosmic sense I derived her desire and let her launch herself onto my back. At first the weight was more than I was up to but upon evaluation I took on the challenge to charge down the beach in the dusk, Tess on my back, Laslow barking in glee until my footing gave away and we fell into the sand rolling and hugging.

It was getting dark and cooling off rapidly. We were probably only a half a mile from the house but I thought it would be wise to gather some driftwood and attempt a small fire to warm us up. The fire went well but the wine in the bota bag had finally run out. It wasn't a full moon but bright enough to walk without a flashlight. We trodded on further with the remembrance of burning driftwood and the desire of a warm bed.

When we returned to the chateau, Laslow in tow, I managed to start a fire in the inefficient avocado stove that was like feeding a locomotive instead of doing any actual heating. But it was more than enough. I brought the unfinished half-gallon over and sitting on the furry rug in the avocado heat we said very little for so long. The fire did finally warm us enough to retreat into the loft waterbed and just talk, talk and talk.



I just wanna say, Tess began, that when I was in high school I had two finches that I kept in a cage. I wasn't much in high school, I mean in my own eyes. I didn't have any hobbies outside of listening to music and I didn't have any friends or friends that would jump into a swamp to save you if alligators were munching your ass. I went to the pet store and came home with these finches. They occupied my life. I watched them incessantly and began to think my thoughts as theirs and could relate to them as to their confines and captivity. I mean they were birds, meant to fly from branch to branch, from tree to tree and wander wherever they might choose. The day I set them free I realized was their death sentence. They had to fly beyond what they were ever meant to do as captive birds. They didn't know how to get food or protect themselves or even get along in the bird world. I made a mistake I still regret. But today, Trace, I related to those finches in the cage and you gave me the key to unlock that cage to let myself fly. And unlike the finches I'm gonna survive just fine.

The psilocybin did more for Tess than I could have or even a year of therapy could have done. The next week she secured a job at Campolindo Foods in Point Reyes as a produce stocker. She made pyramids of carrots and cauliflower, rows of cucumbers and mounds of grapefruits. She came home to the Chateau with produce we needed to eat if not that night the next day. She discovered Tofu and with a new cookbook produced night after night of incredible meals that I was only too happy to oblige in. Our usual menu was vegetables and wine of the jug variety. We screwed a lot, not every day but a couple of times a week and Tess slept in the loft bed with me and she even did housekeeping things that I had entirely done before. We lived in a somewhat suspended bliss, each of us knowing that there was a light at the end of the tunnel so big that it could never contain both of us. Gone were the days of stiff jeans and leather jackets. Tess now wore loose and flowing clothing, linen pants and loose tops. She celebrated her curly hair and let it flow.

After a few weeks, well maybe a month of her working at the food store, she stopped sleeping with me and resumed her place in the bed above the desk. Of course, I couldn't help but take notice but gave her the space she obviously decided to claim. She stopped talking to me and that hurt so I had to find out why. I asked her what was wrong and she said nothing, I mean she said nothing was wrong.

How can this be I said maybe shouting, maybe just frustrated in the turn of events. She had come so far or was it that she had come so far in my eyes, my expectations, and my desire for her to be like I wanted her to be? She got up out of the chair and walked out.

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The ocean was flat gray, such like a lake, with fog hanging in webs, soft and gauzy. She walked down the cement ramp that led to the beach after telling me to leave her alone. I exhaled slowly hoping to relieve the tension as if that would work. I wanted to help but she was beyond my reach.

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I went back and waited for her to return and though it was only a half hour it seemed like days. When she did come back, she sat down on the ottoman in front of me and told me she was pregnant. She said she didn't know if it was your baby inside of her or someone else.

Someone else? I said as I thought that it could only be her and I and there was no one else.

There's a guy at work I've been with besides you. He handles the bread department and ...

Handles you as well? She glared at me with eyes of knives.

It could be either of yours but right now there is no way of telling. I'm going home. To Boston. I'll figure this out there.

Jeez Tess, stay here, we can deal with this. Is nothing I expected but running away home doesn't change anything. I love you.

You don't really mean that. I don't want to mess up your life Trace. You have so much going for you to try to take me and a baby on.

What about the other guy?

He'll never know. I quit today and he's not the type who might even care. He's 17.

I had her address of her home and wondered for months what had happened. I was also moving on, leaving the antenna farm at Point Reyes and on my way to meet up with Ken in Vigo, Spain to sail to Costa Rica. Lofty pretensions but loyal pursuits. I sent her a letter telling her that I would eventually be on the East Coast and could meet up with her. My return address was with my parents in retirement in Placerville. I never received a response before I left hitchhiking from the west coast to the east. Over a year later my folks said a letter came for me from Revere, Massachusetts.

*Hey Trace --- Here I am all fixed up and ready to go. You might want to know what that means. Well after I made that desperate dash from Bolinas impregnated from you or that hippie boy I had*

*an abortion in Boston that was far from pleasant. There comes with that a lot of guilt and needless shame. I had to find a friend who had connections to mushrooms to get a new perspective on this matter that was bringing me down. She was into it as well and we went to the Cape to take them. It brought back all those thoughts and ideas I had, we had, in Bolinas and I regained my footing. I was going to go back to school but found it unnecessary and am now working with a Women's Advocacy Group in Boston and living with a woman on Beacon Hill. I know we had a rough time when I was leaving but you know I just had to. I guess what I really wanted to say was that I cherish those times we had at the Chateau and beyond on the beach and am forever full of gratitude for you being a guide through those times but don't let it go to your head. You were a dick sometimes too. Just kidding Trace, I love you, Tess*

Jonive Road / February / 2020

