

# The three women in my life

Laszlo Moussong\*

**F**or now, there are three great women in my life and my feelings. Two are my lovers and the other is my wife.

One of my lovers is the most phenomenal prostitute I have ever known; when I think of her, I am engulfed by obsessions about pleasures that no one else could give me, and all my principles and values are overshadowed by the idea of having her so far away and barely being able to enjoy her when I have the chance to sacrifice my money and squander it on her, she who is incapable of love but still so exciting to me.

The other is young, beautiful, sweet, sensitive and intelligent. She is also far from my home, her memory pulverizes into nostalgia all the structures of my immediate reality; when we have seen each other and I must leave, she fills the suitcases of my memory with smiles, intense discussions, tokens of generosity, caresses that cover body and soul.

With regard to my wife, I cannot help thinking (she gives me enough reasons to reaffirm it every day) that she is a woman little given to thought, slovenly, dirty, extemporaneous and difficult, but despite these and many other defects, she has qualities and blemishes which by now have become

essential to my life; perhaps because of that, and not just because we are married, this lady is the one who is truly mine and to whom I really belong. This is something I've learned through loving my two girlfriends.

I have the right to say their names, given that they are such an important part of my life: the first is New York, the second Montreal and the third Mexico City.

I love all three in different ways, but I am in love with the first two. I understand. To fall in love with a city is not to know her, not to have lived in irremediable attachment to her presence, limitations and demands, not to be her spouse. We can fall in love with a city thanks to not knowing her in depth; this is possible, because we see her on weekends and spend some vacations with her; because we seek in her, above all, the delights of her shapes, her laughter, her caresses, personality, discoveries. For the same reason, falling in love with a human being is like being a tourist.

Streets that on the first day were bewitching, you no longer see when you walk

through them frequently and your mind is occupied only with your destination.

I tremble when I think of you, New York, woman of sensations even in culture; I gasp for breath as I penetrate your museums and galleries, concert halls and theaters, your architecture, and this joyful delight goes beyond the aesthetic experience, the artistic value which could predominate only if I were to stabilize myself with you in conjugal life; you are violent, haughty, giddy, incapable of cohering fully-rounded feelings. Sensations and emotions are what you can give me, but you surpass my rate of speed; you know of seduction, not love; you have known men from all parts and I am yet another; your cost is high and it is paid in cash.

When I come close to hating you, you disarm me with innocent

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provincial gestures, with your people who play music in the street, but not the music of poverty like in the streets of Mexico City; or with Broadway converted into a small-town, night-time hangout; or with a wedding at Saint Patrick's which provokes naive smiles from the passers-by on Fifth Avenue.

Demented, alienated, delirious, aberrant, you confuse respect for human beings with the rigid demand that your own rights be respected. I would hate you if all this were not part of your seductive wiles; love can be pure, but passion cannot; that is why you impassion me.

Of you, Montreal, I only string together shining images, because I truly love you. Your eyes are of clear, bright colors; you live with the superior attitude of one who is searching for their true nature; besieged by English-speaking millionaires, you defend your language and your essence. They should stop calling you French or Canadian, since you are Quebecois, different, unique; you are very young, but you know what you yearn for; serene, you do not deafen us with raucous laughter nor scandal; instead you express yourself with a smile. I know I couldn't live with you; I am

made of the same stuff as my wife; you are too civilized for me and are forging your own culture. I, in turn, bring too much stagnant culture and too little civilized behavior from my Mexico City.

You are a woman of dialogue, conceptual, honorable, lucid, although you lack that something without which I cannot breathe: the magic which my old witch of a wife brings forth in all its colors.

Your innocence tempers my malice, while you make me breathe fresh air. I like to idealize you, to hold onto your memory through our likenesses and our understandable and tolerable differences. I become enthused getting carried away with you and laughing with you amidst the songs of Gilles Bigneault, savoring wines together, or having a Brador in the open air of the rue Saint-Denis; to solidarize with your voices and all your Quebec —although, as you well know, I have my wife...



whom I can yell at or advise.

You, I do possess; you, to whom I can talk a blue streak without remorse because you get your own back soon enough; woman of verdant mountains where you keep your mysteries buried.

Somehow I love you; we always end up forgiving each other for everything, even if this is just from wearing each other out. Baroque idler, compulsive smoker, resentful drunk, you still know how to be my friend, you know how to give your life for someone, you know how to cook with flavor and variety, you like to give to others.

You are touchy but not jealous; conventional but no longer sanctimonious; you're full of tricks, you want to find a non-existent way out of your vices, you're capable of the best despite the fact that you do everything wrong and by halves.

With you I hear names that I recognize; you don't abandon me to solitude; you offend me but you don't forget to encourage me. We know everything about each other; we tolerate one another; we let each other live; we identify.

I am married to you; that's just how it is. I may fall in love with many others, but it is only with you that I can live. ❖

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