

## **The Atomic Theory of Valentines**

by Felix Jung

We're given paper, scissors, glue, as if these tools can make or mend our little hearts. Each February teaches us that red means love, despite the world's request to stop, to see our anger like a film, to hear an ambulance's shrill and piercing wail.

Democritus believed the world composed of atoms, tiny specks defining pleasure and unpleasantness. The sweetness of the honeycomb resides in atoms round and smooth; the other atoms, sharp, asymmetrical, cause bitterness and pain.

When called to recreate that part of us we're taught to give away, we turn to simple shapes: a triangle below a circle split in half. The heart we see is smooth, two curves to represent the lips, the breasts, a pair of shoulders bearing weight.

Yet when we try to merge the two into the singular, a line of vertebrae is drawn between the shoulder blades. All breasts, regardless of perfection, cease to rise and simply fall. The lips, when pulling back to bare our teeth, go dry, and crack.

Like water, love will fill whatever vessel we create. On paper, hearts are easy things to make, the danger being how we fashion out the end – the barb, the sting, that dagger point whose tip can penetrate our thick and lonely skin.



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