

"Do you want to make love?" When had she ever had to ask? Gabrielle dreamily met her eyes. "I thought I'd better ask. You sure you're not too...involved in your own sense of...well-being...I mean--"

Gabrielle's lassitude all but vanished as she rolled to Xena and flung a thigh over the warrior's. Grinning now at any hint of challenge, Xena wrestled her easily back to the bed's white half from her dark side, the two halves of the circle nestled together like zodiacal Pisces, head to tail. Gabrielle's eyes were closed again and she relaxed completely, sighing softly as Xena slid the nightgown up

past her hips, her breasts and over her head to fall in a soft sighing rustle to the floor. 'Gods, she only gets lovelier with every passing day,' Xena thought as she touched the tip of her tongue to a flat coral nipple which colored to a darker hue and became erect and rigid between her lips. 'O woman...how I worship you...'

Gabrielle was deep within herself savoring each sensation, all thought gone from her mental processes, except pure pleasure and feeling. She breathed slowly, heightening the delicious, trembling emotion as Xena played the song of her body as surely as if she plucked a lyre, the strings taut and toned and quivering.

Gabrielle's intent focused completely on the moment, an eternity in microcosm, the lotus opening at a touch, a breath. The release spasmed her body and she was falling suddenly, down and down into that dark bottomless pit in the warming cave, then caught up in Xena's arms, abruptly awakened from the depths of her soul's reverie, she twisted into a womb-remembered position and curled into Xena's body weeping uncontrollably once again, trying, in vain, to let it go--whatever it may be. And Xena wrapped herself around the younger woman, held on tight, never wanting to lose her very soul, her source. Just so, she had flung herself into the dark, headfirst, knowing instinctively, this time she could not bear to live without her, better to die by her side than to ever go through that tearing heartsick agony ever ever again. "Don't leave me," she whispered in the girl's ear, remembering, "don't you ever leave me."

Like honey
nectar sweet
it pours from the bole of
this tree
the hole betwixt
the crux
it gushes forth
upon my tongue

Xena lay on the dark side, head on the small white pillow and listened to Gabrielle's soft shallow breathing. She murmured something in her sleep and turned on her side facing Xena. With Gabrielle's head at the other end of the big round bed all Xena could think of was...that. That particular position. So sensuous. So satisfying. Mutually satisfying. She wanted to wake her up. No, better wait till morning. But, even then, do I trust myself to touch her?

Xena's hand slid between her thighs to touch herself as she thought about how she would take Gabrielle. Rolling over and pulling the sheet aside, slipping the nightgown up past her womanly hips and diving headfirst into Gabrielle. Her sweetness, nectar flowing, better than ambrosia, this lover's kiss, her tongue inside the fragrant flower, the petals, blood roses, the swollen bud, oh yes, Xena's hand worked between her own legs, played on her clitoris,