

February 14, 2012

St. Valentine's day:
Es tan corto el amor, y es tan largo
el olvido.

(Love is so short, forgetting is so long.)

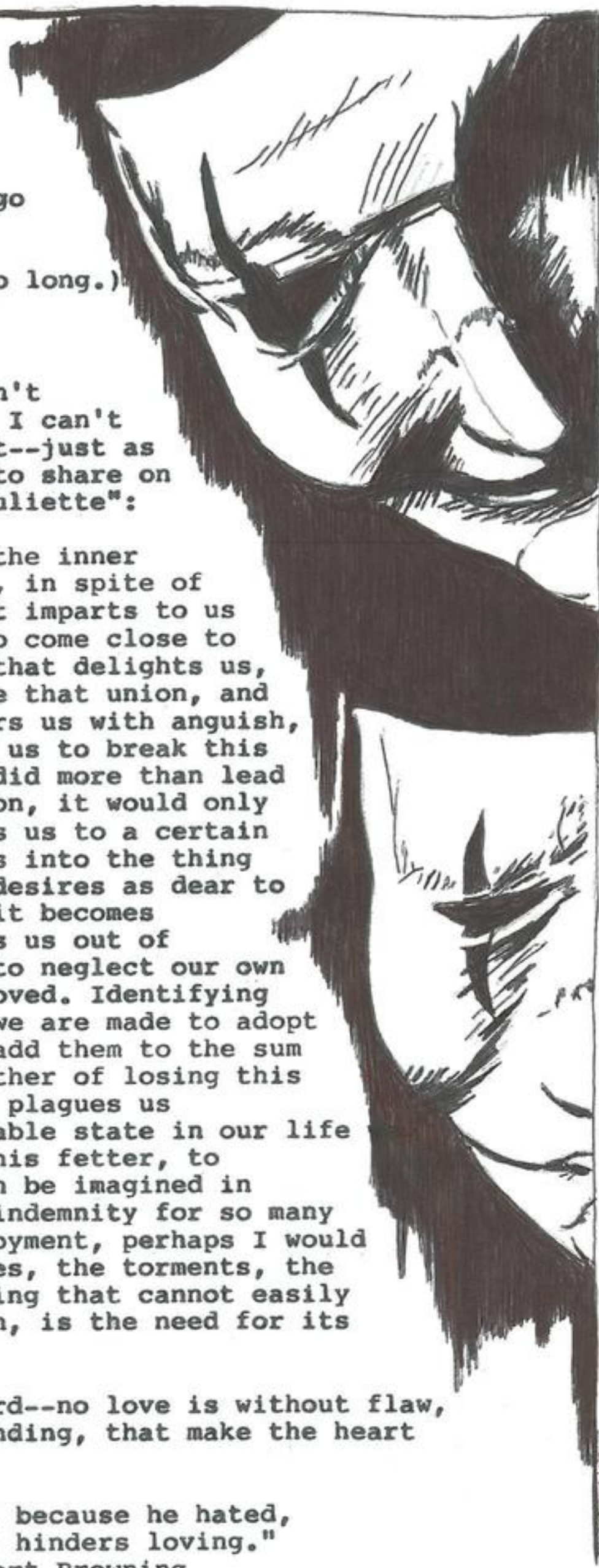
The Marquis de Sade's "ethics" aren't exactly what I'd call ethical; but I can't deny he hits on an occasional point--just as in the following excerpt I'd like to share on this Valentine's day, it's from "Juliette":

"Love is the name we give to the inner feeling that draws us, so to speak, in spite of ourselves, towards some object that imparts to us a sharp desire to unite with it, to come close to it time and time again, an object that delights us, that intoxicates us when we achieve that union, and that reduces us to despair and tears us with anguish, when some extraneous cause obliges us to break this union. If this extravagance never did more than lead us to ardent, intoxicated possession, it would only be an absurdity; but since it leads us to a certain metaphysic that, by transforming us into the thing loved, makes its acts, wants, and desires as dear to us as our very own, by this alone it becomes excessively dangerous; for it takes us out of ourselves too much, and causes us to neglect our own interests for those of the thing loved. Identifying us, so to speak, with this thing, we are made to adopt its miseries and vexations and to add them to the sum of ours. What is more, the fear either of losing this object, or of seeing it grow cold, plagues us incessantly, and from a most peaceable state in our life we pass insensibly, by accepting this fetter, to doubtless the cruelest one that can be imagined in the world. If the compensation or indemnity for so many pains were other than ordinary enjoyment, perhaps I would advise risking it' but all the cares, the torments, the thorns of love never lead to anything that cannot easily be obtained without it. Where, then, is the need for its irons?"

The cliché of the double edged sword--no love is without flaw, and it is forgiveness and understanding, that make the heart of love beat on....

"Dante, who loved well because he hated,
Hated wickedness that hinders loving."

-Robert Browning



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