

The trilogy Letters from my Soul is a remarkable, true story of healing and spiritual growth. It explores the transformation of a woman who has been suffering from chronic fatigue since college. It not only recounts her struggle to heal the pain hidden underneath the surface, but reveals the fundamental process of change in her life.

Letters From My Soul 3

by Chantal van den Brink

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CHANTAL VAN DEN BRINK

Letters from my soul | 3

About the bottom of the pit
and the encounter with my twin soul,
who finally brings me home

A remarkable true story of healing



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Paperback ISBN: 978-1-64438-081-9

Hardcover ISBN: 978-1-64438-082-6

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Published by BookLocker.com, Inc., St. Petersburg, Florida.

Cover design: Hemels van der Hart bv

Photo cover: author's private collection

Photo author: Charline van Ommen

Printed on acid-free paper.

BookLocker.com, Inc.

2020

First Edition

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Brink, Chantal van den

Letters From My Soul 3 by Chantal van den Brink

BODY, MIND & SPIRIT / Healing / General | BODY, MIND & SPIRIT /
Inspiration & Personal Growth | SELF-HELP / Abuse

Library of Congress Control Number: 2020900300

One in three women was sexually abused as a child.

Diane Russel, Sexual Exploitation Research

Grief, anger and pain are necessary companions
on the road to wholeness.

Laura Davis in her foreword in *The Obsidian Mirror* by Louise M. Wisechild

When the truth is finally recognised,
trauma survivors can begin their recovery.

Judith Lewis Herman, *Trauma & Recovery*

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1.

Raw

Breathe Chantal, in heaven's name, breathe. Just a few more minutes, you're almost there. As I mutter quietly to myself, my shaking hands tighten their grip on the steering wheel. On both sides of the highway, fields, cows and horses are shining in the bright sunlight, but today I have no eye for the world's beauty. Gritting my teeth, I keep my eyes fixed on the road, I must focus! But when I see the blue sign of my hometown flashing past, I realise I have missed the exit anyway. Agitated, I check the time on the dashboard. Blast, I'm going to be late! Fighting a rising inner panic, I count the kilometres to the next highway exit, speed across by-roads with too many traffic lights and finally park in front of Anne Sofie's school, stressed to the bone.

This is how it's been ever since my mother's funeral one month ago; I have to pull out all the stops to get even the most trivial things done. Taking care of the children, the laundry, the shopping, tasks which before were matter of fact, suddenly require more of me than I have to give. My mental capacity seems to have switched off, my coordination wiped out, and my mind caught in a fog. An invisible hand seems to have punched an aching hole in my torso near my heart. I don't recognise myself anymore.

At home I lift five-year-old Anne Sofie out of her car seat, her light blonde hair, swept into a jaunty ponytail, tickling my arm. In her little hand she clasps that day's artwork, a cardboard sheet filled with colourful splashes of paint. But as she chatters on about her teachers and classmates, I hardly hear her. Then Wim comes round the corner,

smartly dressed, on his way to a business meeting and our eldest daughter rushes up to him. 'Daddy!' The artwork swirls onto the gravel.

He puts his leather briefcase down and swings her onto his arm. 'Hello darling, how was your day?' His free arm he wraps around my waist.

Involuntarily, I shrink back for a minute, my hands instinctively pushing him away, my heart beating in my throat, and I break out in a cold sweat: *that black hair, that slim posture, the impeccable clothing ...* Upset, I shake my head to brush away the memory of my father. *Stay here*, I say to myself, *this is your husband*. Awkwardly, I smile at Wim. 'Sorry, I'm not completely with it.'

He kisses me on my temple. 'Are you still so wobbly? Have a lie-down, and I'll be back in time to help cook dinner.'

Grateful, I squeeze his hand. Then I turn away and disappear with Anne Sofie in the direction of the kitchen door.

'Did you pick up those papers from the printer?' Wim shouts over his shoulder while he puts his things on the back seat of his car.

Blast, no, forgot! 'I'll get it in a minute.'

But a moment later, that promise too has gone right out of my head.

Inside the house, our new sitter is feeding Juliette, our almost-two-year-old daughter, while Frederique, our toddler, is playing with her dolls. The sweet Surinam housekeeper, who'd been taking care of our house and children three days a week for some years past, has terminal cancer. Apart from the sorrow of the inevitable farewell, it has landed us with an acute practical problem. Luckily, I found this young woman via an ad in the local paper; she doesn't want to clean, but fortunately, she wants to babysit. Together we discuss how the morning went, and then I search in my bag for my purse. What? Is it empty? But didn't I withdraw money yesterday? I clearly remember standing at the ATM. Or did I imagine it? Has my memory become so confused? 'I'm sorry,' I

say, embarrassed, 'I thought I had money on me. I'll pay you tomorrow.'

'Okay, no problem.' With a wave to the children, she walks out the front door and a moment later, bikes energetically off the estate. Through the window, I watch her leave, my feelings mixed. Pity she couldn't stay a bit longer, I would have liked a short nap.

To keep the children busy, I take the wooden mini-table plus chairs out to the terrace and put out pots with coloured pencils and colouring books so the little ladies in their bikinis can get cracking. Then I stretch out on a colourful cloth on the grass, to be able to rest while still keeping an eye on them. Juliette enthusiastically totters after our red tomcat and frantically tries to catch his tail. 'Watch out, little girl, he doesn't like that, and he'll lash out at you,' I warn her. But she laughs and carries on.

Suddenly, a cup of lemonade falls over, and the sticky stuff, gushing over the drawing things, drips through the slats in the tabletop onto the flags. 'Damn!' I scream much louder than necessary and haul myself up again. 'Pay attention to what you're doing! What a mess! Look, now everything is dirty!' I grab Anne Sofie's little arm and shake her roughly. Inner alarm bells start ringing. 'Chantal, control yourself, this doesn't make sense!' But I can't control my emotions and grumbling loudly, I mop up the sticky liquid, as the girls stand by, looking bewildered.

Later that afternoon, when Jules is in bed, and the older ones are watching a video, I sink on the terrace outside, next to the kitchen door and rest my head on my knees, my trembling fingers sliding nervously through my hair and over my skull. Why do I find this so hard? Why is something as simple as taking care of my children, such a struggle? My body seems filled with barbed wire; every movement hurts. Warm tears drip onto my bare legs.

Then I feel a small hand on my shoulder. 'Mummy, what's the matter, why are you crying?' I lift my head and look into Anne Sofie's alarmed blue eyes. 'Do you miss Granny?' Carefully, she wipes my eyes with her small finger.

'Yes, sweetheart, I miss Granny.' It's the simplest explanation. 'I'm sorry I yelled at you.'

'Are you not angry anymore?'

'No, I'm not angry anymore. I know you didn't do it on purpose.' I stroke her head.

'Mummy, the new sitter smokes.'

'What? Really?' The lady in question never told us.

'And we are never allowed to play outside; I don't like her.' My little girl's tone expresses genuine indignation.

I drag myself up and take Anne Sofie by the hand. 'Come, let's make some tea.'

As promised Wim is indeed home by dinnertime but his face spells trouble.

'What's wrong?' I ask startled.

'We've been screwed.' He chucks his keys onto the sink. 'His lordship is going into business for himself with immediate effect and takes 'his' clients with him.' He is referring to the oldest partner in our business, or rather our former partner; we repurchased his shares only last year.

I feel the blood drain from my face. 'Then we'll end up in the red' I conclude, worried.

'That's not the worst; he refuses to comply with the contract.' Coaches who start their own business and wish to take clients with them, need to pay compensation contractually agreed upon. 'The clients concerned have already been informed.'

My thoughts go back to the conversations we had with this partner last year, when he told us he did not want to be an entrepreneur anymore but did want to stay connected as a coach. 'How stupid we've been! He must have planned this from the start. I told you we should have engaged a lawyer.'

My husband runs his hand through his hair. 'His exact words were, "I shall only pay if a judge forces me to do so."'

Defeated, I lean against the sink, a half-peeled potato forgotten in my hand. 'And now?'

Wim stares at the floor, his eyes wide open with fear. 'I don't know; I'm going to make some phone calls, get some advice.'

A few days later, when we're meeting with our Advisory Council in the estate's reception room, the picture becomes apparent quite quickly. If we had known last year when buying back the shares that this partner wanted to start his own business, we could have enforced compliance with the contract. Then the acquisition price would have been set off against the purchase price of clients. Now we don't have a leg to stand on, unless we take legal action.

'All that negative energy,' I grumble frustrated, 'I don't want to prosecute.' I lean back in my chair, a lump in my throat and stare at the traffic at the intersection.

'You don't necessarily have to; you can also let it go,' one member of the advisory board remarks. He puts his hand comfortingly on mine. 'The emotional pain does not heal through such a legal action, and materially the outcome is uncertain, no matter how good the contract is. Such legal action costs a great deal of money. On balance you won't necessarily be any better off.' His sensible, bright eyes look at me with sympathy.

Filled with despair, I gaze back, torn between his loving look and my inner panic, considering the option: not taking legal action, letting

fifty grand go, just like that! Heavens, what a gesture! Am I able to do that? Do I want to do that? Will we ever get over it?

'Next month we will transfer *De Viersprong* to the new owner and the highest fixed costs will cease,' Wim observes. 'Wouldn't it be better to focus on the future, to concentrate on moving house, and review the options on how to proceed from there?'

We close the meeting without making a decision. The sense of injustice and betrayal we feel is too great to make a decision so quickly.

During our short walk back to the chalet, Wim and I express our amazement at the fact that anyone, let alone our long-term partner could be capable of pulling the wool over our eyes in such a ruthless way; someone with whom we appeared to have a good relationship, with whom we had worked closely for so many years. 'I don't get it,' I sigh. How gullible we sometimes are, we see ...' My breath stops short. A bit further down, in front of the chalet, someone is lying in the grass, flat on her belly. Good heavens, the sitter! What's happened? And where are the girls? While my brain calculates how long we've been away and what could have happened in that time, I make a dash for the young woman, go down on my knees and shake her arm. 'Hey, wake up!' But there is no reaction; she seems to be unconscious. Again, I move her arm which, despite this beautiful weather, feels cold. In the meantime, Wim runs to the chalet, returning quickly to reassure me the children are watching a video.

'Huh? What?' Dazed, the sitter leans on her elbows, her dark hair hanging tousled around her face, white as chalk. 'Oh, it's you. What time is it?'

'Almost four, what happened?'

She shakes her head. 'I don't know.' Stiffly she gets up and leaning on my arm stumbles inside, where I give her a glass of water and wait for her to get back to her senses. Then I detect a strange smell, and I

remember Anne Sofie's remark that the sitter smokes. She wouldn't, would she?

But yes, a few days later, I hear from a fellow-villager that this young woman is an addict who has stolen money from several addresses; the police have a file on her. Great! We'll have to start looking for another sitter, and until then I need to stay home.

In a way, my forced retreat from work proves to be a good thing, as it forces me to slow down. I try desperately to function in a usual fashion, to get out of bed, take care of the girls, drive Anne Sofie to school and to pick her up again, look for a new housekeeper and arrange to move Soulstation to the coach house so the main house will be vacant when we transfer the estate to the new owner. But despite my sincere efforts, it all proves too much for me. Ever since my mother's death, my typically efficient self is operating in a fog. The slightest tasks cause me to panic, and the smallest setbacks bring me to tears. My body throbs with a nagging, continuous pain. At night, I lie in bed frozen; fists clenched, ankles crossed, my legs tight against each other, regularly upset by nightmares. Later, I will learn that I suffer from dissociation¹, a phenomenon of inner separation that occurs after a trauma causing the buried emotions of the traumatised-girl-in-me to haunt my daily personality. But at this moment, I continue to attribute my lack of balance to my mother's death. I believe I'm just in mourning and not for one moment, does it occur to me that the suppressed memories of the abuse are causing my problems.

Hoping to regain a little of my stability, I call Maeike, a colleague of my beloved regression therapist Tineke, who is away on holiday. Usually, I would postpone my appointment until Tineke's return, but now I can't wait. Before the summer, Maeike and I exchanged a few sessions; I gave her healings, she gave me regressions. That work built enough trust

between us to enable me to turn to her in my present vulnerable state. I must, so I believe, tackle the emotional problems relating to the death of my mother.

'Connect to your body, make contact with the frozen feeling that bothers you during the night and discover what has caused it to become part of your system,' Maeike starts the session.

Willingly, I follow her instruction but first all I can hear from this three-bedroom Amsterdam apartment, is the sound of the big city outside, people rushing along the street and pursuing the business of the day. Then slowly, I sink into the images that, for weeks, have been gnawing at the edge of my consciousness.

I lie in bed, sleeping when a movement wakes me. My father has come to lie next to me under the blankets. His tall body creeps close to mine, his breath damp against my skin. I'm three, maybe four years old. Oh, help, no! For a moment, I have the urge to throw the blankets off me and stop the session. At the same time, I realise that my unconscious shows me these images for a reason. Okay, right then, breathe. The door opens, and my mother comes into my room. Her face freezes in bewilderment, dismayed her eyes go from my father to me. The silence of the night is palpable. Then, without saying a word, she turns around and softly, the door closes behind her.

Mummy! Noooo! Don't leave! Desperately, I stare at the closed door. It feels like I've lost my mother forever.

At that moment, I can see a large part of my soul splits off and ends up in a child's orphanage in the energetic world, where it's safe, and energetic beings take well care of that soul's piece.

'Do you still have contact with your body on Earth?' Maeike asks. Because of her training in reincarnation therapy, she's not surprised by my description of this energetic split.

'No,' I sob. 'I don't want to know what is happening there.' She lets me repeat that a couple of times, which invokes new images.

The days pass, sometimes I'm alone, sometimes with my father. My mother isn't there. One time, I lie with my hands tied behind my back on the bed, my father's member pressing against my face. Then there's the sound of the kitchen door opening, next to my room. That must be mummy, so close! But my father's hand has a vice-like grip around my throat, and the other forcefully covers my mouth. His dark eyes blaze with fury. 'Don't you dare!'

'He's changed; it was never like this. He now enjoys hurting me!' Horrified, I hear my own words. My hands tied behind my back and his member against my face? He enjoys hurting me! Impossible! This can't be true? Please let it not be true! Will she believe this? Shouldn't we stop?

But Maeike remains sitting next to me, unmoved. 'Feel what that's like for you, that he enjoys hurting you,' she encourages me with a soft voice. That question opens the floodgates even further, and I disappear into a swamp of pain. While waves of sadness and shock crash through me, I use tissue after tissue. When the storm has passed, the next question comes. 'What do you give up, Chantal, the moment you realise that he enjoys hurting you?'

'The hope that I will ever get out of this ...' Frantically, I rub my wrists which feel bruised, as if there was a tight rope around them.

Thoroughly beaten, I drive home after the session. Are these memories really about me? Is this the sweet, kind man everyone talks about? It just doesn't fit. Let it not be true! It just can't have happened! Did my mother know?

After the regression, I'm in shock and can hardly function. Anything I decide to do, I forget five minutes later. What people tell me goes in one ear and out the other, and often I suddenly don't know where I am. I do my best, but that's not enough; I'm not there, as for days on end, I can't stop crying, and my whole body hurts, my wrists, ankles, hands, feet, back. At night I lie under the duvet, arms and legs stiff, tormented by

the regularly recurring question: did this happen? Please don't let it be true; it just can't be true!

On the morning of the long-awaited day of the transfer of *De Viersprong*, I go on a quick errand to the village with Juliette. My step is light, reassured by the knowledge that this heavy load will finally fall from our shoulders. But then I trip over one of those concrete bollards and before I know it, I'm flat out on the pavement, complete with child, shopping and all. Fortunately, my arms prevent Jules' fall, and physically there's nothing wrong with her; still she does roar with fear.

'Hush sweetheart! Hush!' With the help of an elderly couple, I scramble to my feet, while I calm my child. Trembling like a leaf, I rest my bum on the concrete bollard while I try to get over the shock. Then I thank the couple, find my way back to the car with Juliette held tightly in my arms and return home. These kinds of accidents don't happen for no reason; I know that only too well. What could this mean?

I don't have to wait long for the answer. At home, Wim walks towards me, holding a fax in his hand. He is crying.

Quietly, I take the piece of paper from his hands, recognising the landowner's logo, and I scan the text. 'To our regret we have to inform you that the permission for the transfer cannot be at the location in time...' But forbearance is no acquittance, surely? My eyes search those of my loved one, against my better judgment hoping for reassurance.

'I just spoke with the civil-law notary, the buyer is furious. He invokes the last resolatory condition and has had his down payment retransferred.'

Shocked to the core, I stagger away from Wim. The scurrying grey clouds, the rustling trees at the edge of the lawn, whizzing cars on the by-road, odd how sharp my awareness of everything around me is at this moment. I let myself sink into a garden chair moaning like a

wounded animal. 'No! Damn, no, no, no!' I roll over like a foetus and rock myself back and forth.

The sale is off, and we're back to square one. After three and a half years of costs, viewings and bridging loans, we're left empty-handed again. How in God's name are we going to get through this? If it had not been for my inheritance, we would now be bankrupt. After several heated telephone calls, it becomes clear the buyer has definitively pulled out. He has no intention of doing further business with this haughty aristocratic family from whom we lease the land and who, according to him, behave like they still live in the seventeenth century, treating him with such disdain. I can't wholly disagree with him as I'm also fed up with their behaviour. Later, I do however discover that the situation was not entirely inconvenient for our buyer, as the deal hadn't gone down well with his board members and the rate of his listed company had lately plummeted. Still, this mess does lead to one unexpected, positive outcome. During a lengthy meeting in which our estate agent threatens to go public about the course of events, the landowner finally agrees to a change in 'intended use', allowing the estate the option of use as an office.

In all this commotion, I again make an appointment with Maeike for a regression. I still haven't found my ground and know only one way, to push right through it. Automatically, I choose a therapy form that has given me so much help in the past years, regression. Later, when I realise that I'm contending with signs of trauma, I will discover that there are more suitable forms of processing. Trauma, as I will learn then, is primarily a biological affliction, involving damage to the nervous system which only heals through body-oriented therapies. But at his moment, I believe that I can solve my imbalance with a couple of regressions; an illusion, alas.

Probably, my guides are trying to tell me the same thing, because on the way to the appointment it seems like something is trying to prevent me from arriving at Maeike's apartment. I get lost, drive in the wrong direction and am time and again hindered by roadblocks. Perhaps I should have turned around, but pigheadedly, I persevere. The theme I bring in this time, intimate, but it must be faced, is the coldness and numbness in my vagina. Quite frankly, I expect to delve into a past life, but to my horror again, images of my father come up.

Daddy, don't! Get off me! I feel how he enters me. It hurts, something tears, and I start to cry. My parents wrap me in a blanket and take me to the hospital. Doctors look with a small light in my crotch, and after that, I have an emergency operation. I hear the doctors talk during the surgery, 'she's still so young, she'll be lucky if she can have children.'

When I come round, there is silence; nobody talks about what happened. My father leaves me alone for a while, and I relax into being alone. After some time, he starts coming back to me during the night, but he never tries to enter me again.

Did this really happen? Is this truly about my life, about me? If only my mother were alive, I could ask her.

With time, I will understand that not all my 'memories' of this life have truly happened. Actual situations may have become mixed up with those from past or parallel lives, with the experiences of other members of my family line and even with those of other incest victims. In the energetic world, likes attract likes. But at this moment, I still think in terms of 'I', 'my consciousness' and therefore 'my life'. That leaves me two possibilities; either the memories are correct and then everything I was told about my childhood is a lie, or the images are a fabrication of my mind in which case I would be on the verge insanity. But how is it possible then that I feel everything in my body? I don't know what to make of it.

Despite this confusion, the regression sets something right, and I'm able to function in the outside world a bit better. Not at anything like my old level of competence, but I can handle common-or-garden situations again.

Now that the main house is empty and we don't need the space in a business sense, we make a virtue of necessity and move our family to the 1700 cubic sized building at the beginning of December. We lease the chalet and Soulstation remains in the coach house. The girls love it. Elated they dance around the meters high Christmas tree in the large living room, where there's a fire every day; tirelessly they fly up and down the wooden spiral staircase and tell whoever wants to hear that they now each have their own room. I also enjoy the space, often standing in front of the French windows of our bedroom on the second floor, enchanted by the park's beauty. But this newfound peace and space cannot exorcise my inner demons.

One evening, my young daughters, aged four and five, are playing in the bath, their bodies shiny with water and soap. Roaring with laughter, they hit on the water with their hands, large flakes of bath foam flying about. Holding a towel in my hand, ready to dry off a child, I take in the scene, hollow-eyed. Suddenly, an all-consuming rage arises inside of me like a four-headed monster; anger about the noise, about the soaking wet bathroom floor which I will have to dry later, about the children not listening to me and just doing whatever they like.

The voice of a guide warns me in my head. *'This is not about them; they aren't doing anything wrong.'*

Frustrated, I throw the towel on the floor and stamp away quickly, my fists clenched, before I give in to the rising impulse to give someone a big smack.

So, this is how big the falsehood of my personality is, so thin the layer of civilisation. Filled with disgust at my rage, I sink to the floor, with my back against the bed. Tears drip onto my hands, lying powerless in my lap. 'Dear God, get me out of here. Get me out of this swamp. Teach me to laugh again.'

Caught in this inner turmoil, I sit there until Wim puts the children to bed.

What an insane year we've had. First Juliette's eczema, then my mother's illness, a period in which I needed to navigate between her denials and my clear perceptions. After that, the images of abuse, the funeral and the shock. Then our sweet housekeeper who turned out to be terminally ill, the new sitter who proved to be an addict, our partner who betrayed us, the sale of *De Viersprong* which fell through at the last moment and those childhood memories I have a hard time to imagine possible. While my mind is reviewing my life, my pen flies across the pages of the diary on my knees. Sighing, I rearrange the pillow behind my back and pull the duvet tighter around me; in this old building, it's just as cold at night as in the chalet; still, I continue writing. Soulstation is a mere shadow of what it once used to be. Although Wim does his utmost to keep the business going, without our partner and me, it is a lost cause; our turnover has plummeted, and we incur heavy losses. Only my inheritance is keeping us afloat financially; weird, one man's breath is another man's death. Nevertheless, I'm scared of the long term. If *De Viersprong* doesn't get sold, even my inheritance won't save us.

When the flow of words ceases, I descend the spiral staircase to the living room where Wim is watching a football match. 'Ha,' he mumbles distracted, 'are the girls asleep?'

'Sound asleep.' I drop down on the arm of his chair. 'Shall we have a chat?'

He gestures towards the television. 'I want to watch the end of this.'

Enraged, I turn around and disappear back upstairs again. God, how I hate seeing him sitting slumped in front of that stupid television night after night, looking so vulnerable with that tormented look in his eyes. It triggers all kinds of emotions in me, which I know Wim doesn't deserve, but I can't help. *You drain me! You don't take care of me! You're not here for me!* Fortunately, I realise at other moments that I'm in transference; my actual anger is that of a child towards her father. Wim does what he can. If I were in his shoes, I wouldn't be able to keep the business going all by myself either.

At the first opportunity after the turn of the year, I am on the mat at Tineke's again, who, fortunately, is back from her travels abroad.

'I hate you...'

'Repeat it a few times until the accompanying situation becomes clear.'

'I hate you; I want you to leave.'

'Is that something you hear or what you say yourself?'

'It's something, I think. I can't say anything because I have a shawl over my mouth.' I have a shawl over my mouth? Internally, I groan, but I allow the picture to emerge, trusting that my subconscious doesn't bring it up for no reason.

'Can you feel what you are trying to do, when that shawl is over your mouth?'

'I try to protest, to move, but it doesn't work. I'm stuck. My hands are behind my back.'

'What happens when you notice that you're stuck and can't do anything?'

'Then he gets his way again. He does things I don't want.'

'What are the consequences for you if he gets his way again?'

'I feel used.'

As is often the case, Tineke lets me repeat the sentence a few times, and the words bring me deeper into a situation I don't want to see. After that, she asks, 'how do you know when it's over?'

'When I wake up, he's gone. I have a dry mouth, my wrists hurt, I stink.'

'What is most important for you, now you know it's over?'

'Wash my hands, pee, drink some water.'

'And then?'

'Go back to sleep.'

'What do you expect will happen now?'

'I'm left in peace, until the next time.'

'Tell me what you never said before about the next time?'

'He ties me down with ropes. He once put a bag over my head. And he hits me. He's angry.'

'What does he say then?'

'He says nothing.'

'And if he says nothing, what does he emanate?'

'That it's my fault; that I have to make up for something, and that I have to give him what he cannot give himself.'

'What are you starting to believe?'

'That I'm not mine,' the words come out of my mouth falteringly, my whole body is crying, *'that I will always be unsafe.'*

'What makes him so angry?'

'He feels powerless, for his business isn't going well. He can't handle it, so he takes it out on me. It's like he tries to squeeze everything out of me.'

'What would he like to have of you the most, you think?'

'I don't know. I don't have anything anymore. Everything is gone ...'

'Tell me what's all gone?'

'My connection with God; a part of me has left, gone back home.'

'Where is that home?'

'There, up ... Here the pretence is there's nothing the matter, it's not talked about. But I'm in pain.'

'Do you tell anyone that you're in pain?'

'No, that's not allowed. I pretend it isn't there.'

'How can you keep that up?'

'Just ...'

'Yes, by breaking your connection with God, disconnecting from your body and going back home, until the next time. That isn't nice, is it?'

'It's horrible, and then he dies.'

'Is that also because of you?'

'I don't know. I was wearing his life jacket, so maybe a little. I am glad that he is dead. I have peace now.'

'So, you only have peace when he's dead. Or does he still come after he dies?'

'Yes, but then he's different. He wants to make up.'

'How does he think he can make up?'

'He says he's sorry.'

'Does that help you?'

'No, I'm too scared of him.'

'What would you say to him if you weren't so scared?'

'I hate you! You hurt me so much, and so often! It wasn't once; it wasn't a mistake.' My voice diminishes to inaudible whispering.

'You can say it out loud,' Tineke encourages me.

'I want you to keep off me!' I stammer hoarsely. *'I belong to myself. You empty me out until there's nothing left. I can't build on you; you build on me! But I'm small! You made me scared of life; you made sure that I couldn't trust anything or anybody. I'm all on my own.'*

'Keep talking; talk right through your fear.'

'It hurts so much! I don't want it, please I don't want it! Mummy help! It makes no difference what I do; whether I'm very sweet or bad, whether I'm asleep or awake. I have nothing to say, and I'm not protected!'

'Whatever he says to you, you are not to blame; you must let that get through to you.'

That activates the adult in me. 'I understand what you say, but this is how I felt as a child.'

'Tell him what more is needed apart from, "I'm sorry". He can at least explain why he did those kinds of things.'

'He says he was sick, sick in his head. He says that he heard voices, that he had moods. When the mood was over, he was quite normal.'

'Did these voices incite him to this kind of behaviour?'

'Yes.'

'Did he ever tell his wife that he heard voices and that he did this to you?'

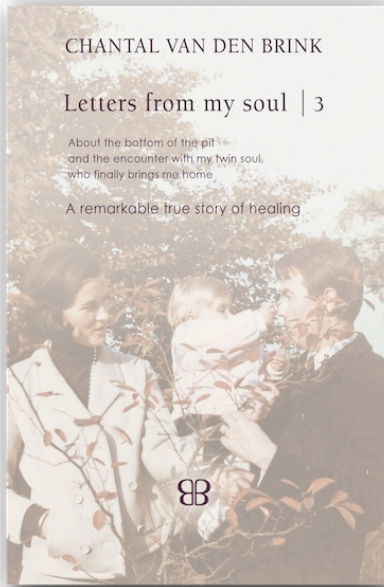
'He says he told her that he wasn't happy.'

'Try to explain to him that for the moment there is nothing to forgive. That this will only come up when he's gone through his mourning process for it. 'I realise that Tineke is giving me the space to be angry. To heal, I need to acknowledge what happened in the past and what it has done to me. 'Tell him about the damage he did to you.'

Noisily, I blow my nose in the tissue she hands me. 'I don't know where I end, and the other begins. That's why I'm like a fuel tank everyone can click on to.'

'So, you were happy when he died, because it finished then?'

'Yes,' I agree, still with my eyes closed, 'otherwise one day he would have killed me.'



The trilogy Letters from my Soul is a remarkable, true story of healing and spiritual growth. It explores the transformation of a woman who has been suffering from chronic fatigue since college. It not only recounts her struggle to heal the pain hidden underneath the surface, but reveals the fundamental process of change in her life.

Letters From My Soul 3

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