

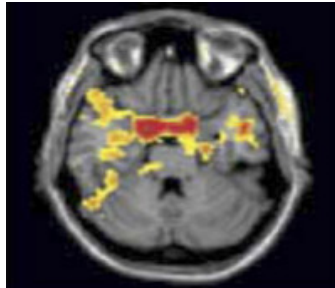
Love Struck by Loss

A Heart Knows

'The heart knows what it wants'
A man in love once told me.
His eyes desiccated with grief
Shrunk from years of searching
For some misplaced thing.

Love makes your heart race; a primal pace that fills the mind with longing and notions of immortality. It invokes adolescence in all of us. We can fall hard and become obsessed, indestructible and even brooding all at once. We make promises we might never keep or create attachments that last a lifetime. As psychologist Helen Fischer might say, the physiology of love creates a 'focused purpose with unattainable goals...yet, it is wired in us as life's true purpose'. That is why we attach so fiercely. That is also why when true love is suddenly lost, so too are we.

Love's Fierce Brain Chemistry



Love is a miraculous attachment. It is etched into our brain chemistry and our physiology. Fischer (2002, 2006) and others argue we evolved with an emotional 'limerence' (attachment chemistry) to overcome the stressors of pair bonding. This attachment chemistry is not just to thwart rivals (our competition), it is the powerful attachment that helps mothers persevere through child bearing.

Opiates released in the brain and oxytocin (a primary neuro-hormone for nurturing and fierce protection of offspring) feels deep and unbreakable. This 'limerent madness' (Fisher, 2002; Buss, 2006) is Nature's way to quickly upload our chemistry and intentions toward intimacy and commitment. These strong feelings are meant to slay dragons and swim oceans. It is no surprise that lost love leaves a hole that was once a place where we kept infinite possibilities.

Love is a mortal risk. Therein lies the rub! But to heal from heart-struck loss, we need some recovery strategies. This text will shed some light on how love's grief is unique and how certain rituals can become salve to the wound.