

LONELINESS

Gary M. Fisher

I became aware that a grain of sand was separate from the grains of sand surrounding it. Then another grain of sand became my focus of attention, and it too was separate from all those grains surrounding it. My attention then flew to another grain, and it too shared the same fate as the other two grains. Suddenly I realized that every grain of sand was distinct, separate, apart, and isolated from every other grain of sand. The billions of grains of sand of this beach were all separate from one another.

The surf gently bubbled over the beach. I looked at a bubble. I looked at all the bubbles. Each one was unto itself. The surf that gently bubbled over the beach simply bubbled over it and was part of another world—a world of bubbles. The bubbles were not of the grains of sand, and the grains of sand were not of the bubbles. Everything was isolated from everything else.

Then the rocks on the shore caught my attention, and even “one” rock was composed of so many miniscule parts which, although sharing some physical proximity to each other, were again distinct, with very hard, sharp, well-defined boundaries—boundaries which allowed no intruders.

The trees on the bluff were, each one, alone. The sky above was above and alone. The distant hills, remote and alone.

Wider and deeper, this isolation. Wider and deeper.

Then the humans entered and they were the loneliest of all. Each one alone. Some sensing the isolation and suffering from it; some angry because of the frustration in not being able to burst through it; some aching because of knowing it; some aching for others who knew even more of it; some, so dulled by it, ceasing to sense it, but simply being it and not knowing it. Everyone with it.

The past ages began to creep into my consciousness—all the humans that had traveled on this shore, partaken of the waters of this ocean, lived on this beach. And I knew each one's hollow separation from himself, from his fellowman, and from this nature which he touched but felt not. Timeless. Eternities of it.

My awareness spread over the here-and-now land to the peoples of this earth. All of humanity was suffering from isolation. Each human who existed was alone and his cry came from that loneliness. His anger, fear, self-importance, arrogance, tears, pain, sorrow, despondency, grief, and all of his madness—all were his cry of being alone. Then I knew that isolation, and I heard my own cry.

Silence.

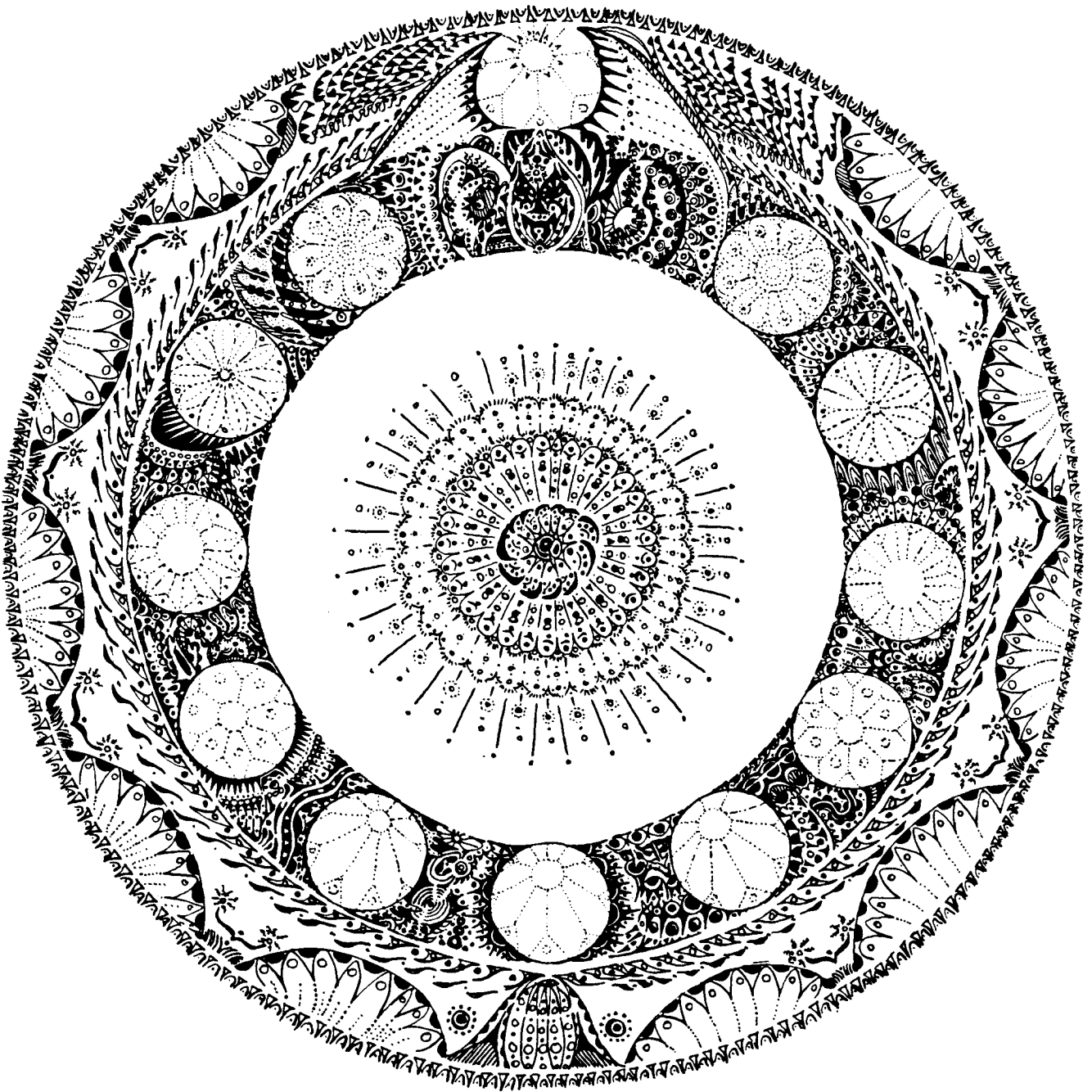
Out of that isolation formed a bridge—a bridge that leapt out to join every manifestation of being with every other manifestation of being. From the loneliness of each individual came forth a bond, and this bond was a bridge to everyman. Not in spite of, but because of this isolation was man able to leave his isolation and to journey to another's soul. Becoming aware of one's own isolation is the beginning of the journey to unity. The only road to another man's heart is this knowing of separateness. Each must walk alone on this path. Each must become profoundly knowing of his isolation from his fellow man which is himself. Only through isolation can one know oneness. The paradox of truth.

This experience relieved me of fear of other people. Their behavior — rejecting, reaching, arrogant, withdrawn, solicitous, threatening—is simply an expression of their loneliness and their attempt to do something about that loneliness as I attempt to do something about mine. My awareness of my loneliness forms a bond with every human I meet. I no longer need so much to judge

him, to compare myself with him, to feel more important than him, to envy him, nor to ponder his behavior. I can share myself more readily with him, and when I can, my isolation is lessened, the pain of loneli-

ness is gone, the cold hollowness is gone and warmth fills my being. And in those moments when he can share himself with me and I myself with him, the bridge is complete, we merge, and we finally love.

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Mandala Drawing by Isaac Abrams

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