

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

9	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
11	INTRODUCTION
	PART I
17	CHAPTER ONE: <i>The Call of the Creative Spirit</i>
35	CHAPTER TWO: <i>I Burn, Desiring What the Heart Desires</i>
54	CHAPTER THREE: <i>The Great Battle Between Yearning and Fear</i>
73	CHAPTER FOUR: <i>A Supreme, Fiery, and Feminine Force</i>
93	CHAPTER FIVE: <i>The Never-setting, Splendorous Sun</i>
109	CHAPTER SIX: <i>The Breath of Wisdom</i>
126	CHAPTER SEVEN: <i>The Goddess Hidden in the Body</i>
144	CHAPTER EIGHT: <i>In Body, In Spirit</i>
	PART II
165	CHAPTER NINE: <i>My Lover, My Longing</i>
184	CHAPTER TEN: <i>A Fish Doesn't Drown, A Bird Doesn't Fall</i>
202	CHAPTER ELEVEN: <i>I Must Sing, Dance, Hear, Tell!</i>
222	CHAPTER TWELVE: <i>Love Begin the Song, And Let Me Hear How Well You Sing</i>
240	CHAPTER THIRTEEN: <i>Tantra and the Transmutation of Desire</i>
261	CHAPTER FOURTEEN: <i>Shiva, Shakti, and the Balance of Power</i>
281	CHAPTER FIFTEEN: <i>The Precious Juice of Grace</i>
289	NOTES
305	BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SUGGESTED READING
313	INDEX

# C H A P T E R   O N E

## The Call of the Creative Spirit

If you have picked up this book and begun to read, chances are you have experienced the power of the creative spirit. This power is not a figment of your imagination; it is not an abstract concept. It is real. It is a force that manifests itself, not just mentally and spiritually, but physically. If you don't believe this, the next time you feel the urge to create, sit with the feeling. Go to a place of stillness, become completely in touch with your body, bring your consciousness to bear on this urge, and you will feel it *in* your body: a sensation, perhaps almost imperceptible, that begins in the nest of your pelvis, then rises up, reaches your heart and throat, and bursts into an aching, a longing, a profound need.

Ideally, when this feeling is upon us we are able to let it out, to

allow it to flow into the creation of beautiful words, stirring melodies, graceful movements, or vibrant colors on a canvas. But all too often we use all our might to try to push it back down and dam it up so that it can't escape.

Whether you are a professional in the arts or a person who is just beginning to express yourself creatively, you probably already know that we do all of this out of fear. We are afraid we aren't good enough, talented enough, or skilled enough to create. Or we are bullied by guilt, by the belief that creativity is frivolous and that we have no right to take time from our *real* jobs of breadwinning and nurturing to allow ourselves the "luxury" of creative expression.

You are probably already aware that you *can* overcome all the fear and guilt that block your creativity. This book is here to affirm this awareness and to acknowledge the work you may have already done on overcoming your fears. More importantly, however, it is here to say that not only can you allow yourself to be creative, but that you *must*.

The reason for this is simple. *When you feel you are being moved by the creative spirit, you are in fact being moved by the divine feminine.* The haunting call we feel to be creative is a cry that comes not just from the feminine side of our being but, at its most profound level, from a cosmic feminine force. Now, I admit this is a sweeping statement. And although it is one I have believed for years, it is also one I wouldn't have had the courage to make quite so blatantly if I hadn't learned what I did in the five years I spent researching this book. The reason for this will become clear as you read the stories that follow of the extraordinarily creative women mystics and the ordinary women who have been profoundly touched by the creative spirit. These stories will help you understand how this force is working in your life, how opening up to its power will help you move forward both creatively and spiritually, and why trying to suppress this force is a little like trying to cork a volcano with a coconut.

This awesome feminine force is the single most important factor in our personal creative and spiritual unfoldment, and yet it would be a mistake to ignore, as some contemporary spiritual movements have done, the divine masculine principle. For it too exists and, as will be discussed in some detail later, has an essential role in creative expression. Still, the divine feminine will be emphasized far more heavily than the masculine in the following pages. The most obvious reason for this is, as