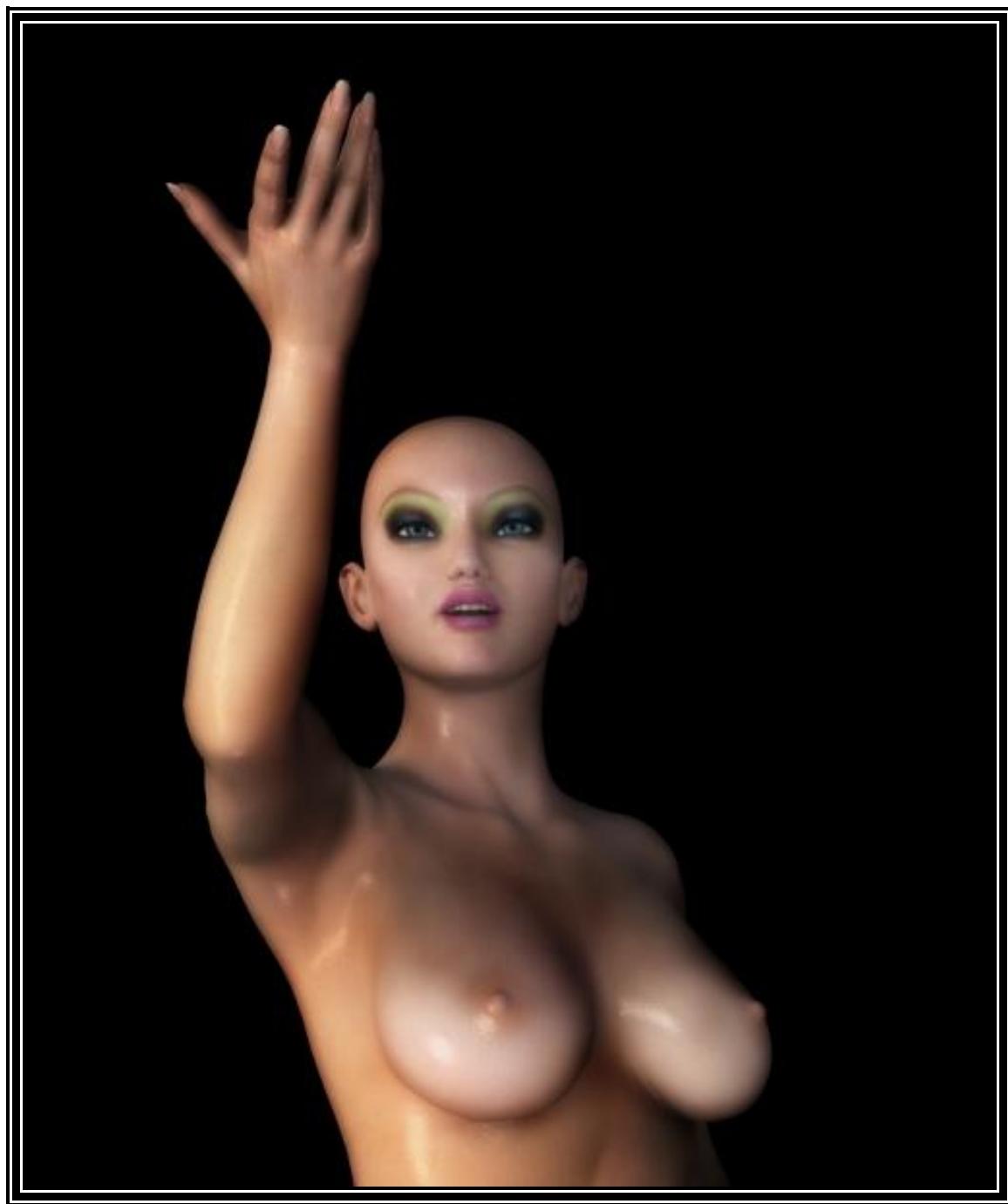


Divine Love

Bradley Stoke



Sister Divine took her faith very seriously. The Lord God had given everything, His love, His dignity and His life, for His people and it was only right that she should give up everything for Him in return. And so she had chosen sisterhood in the Convent of the Blessed Mary, in the very ascetic order of the Damascene Nuns. Here there were no soft options in her dedication to her faith. Her possessions were left behind in the secular world beyond. Her hair was shaved off her head and off her body. And she was bereft of even the venal vanity of clothing. In this way, the Damascene sisters had nothing between themselves and the Love of the Jesus Christ.

There was no privacy in the convent. She shared her bare cell with a single mattress and Sister Admonition, another nun who had abandoned the temptations of the Godless world beyond, along with her hair and clothes. Her days were spent, as were the days of all the nuns, in prayer and in the service of the convent, which required all its nuns to work so that the convent would be rewarded by the remuneration for their labours otherwise owed to the material world and which permitted the convent to continue to exist buoyed in Godly contemplation amidst the vice and corruption of the world outside. A world which Sister Divine was forever grateful to have left behind, despite her parents' lack of encouragement in their daughter's faith, to live in a world where everyone saw the wisdom of sacrificing both body and soul to the service of the Lord.

She shared the single thin cotton mattress in her cell with Sister Admonition with only linen sheets between them and the coolness of the convent's air. Although she loved Sister Admonition as one loved anyone who was equal in the eyes of the

Lord, sometimes as she gazed at her dozing cellmate as the sun sunk beneath the horizon she was reminded of another love: one which she had forsworn. A love which she suppressed while regarding her cellmate's bare shoulder, her head resting on the thin bolster which supported their heads, a possession which neither were allowed to own exclusively as was only right in an order which forbade any material avarice. Sister Admonition was a delicate, pretty young thing, slim and pert-breasted like herself, but whose flesh was as forbidden to her as the pleasures of the touch of her own skin.

She wished only that Sister Admonition had as strict a regard for the privations of the order as herself. So often in the night she would be awoken by her cellmate's soft moans as she stroked her crotch or nipples, perhaps unaware that Sister Divine might also have sleepless nights. This knowledge was not something that she would ever divulge to her cellmate. It was surely between Sister Admonition and the confessional whatever lustful thoughts she harboured, as her warm bare flesh lay so close beside her.

Every morning, she and Sister Admonition would administer to each other the rites of purification as they shaved each other's pate and the hair of their crotches. Sister Divine felt a kind of aching pang as she removed the last trace of stubble from Sister Admonition's labia, most especially when she was aware that her cellmate looked down on her at her labours. And she hid as best she could the warm feeling emanating from within when Sister Admonition returned the favour and shaved clean her own vaginal folds. The sacred shrine of her sex was reserved only for the Lord and

only He, should He so choose, would ever have the opportunity of penetrating her there, as He surely did the Virgin Mary on that fateful day before the Dawn of Christendom.

Sister Divine, however, became increasingly aware of Sister Admonition's looser interpretation of the sacred vows as her stay in the convent lengthened. Her days were spent mostly in prayer and work for the greater good of the convent. She worked on the design and maintenance of the convent's website - a pictureless site, devoid of all but the God's word, attempting to inspire in others a devotion to the Lord's Grace, and, incidentally, to attract donations towards the upkeep of the convent nestled as it was in the trees and fields of the countryside, where only the smell of the farmer's manure and the distant roar of the combine harvesters were there to remind the sisters of the secular world beyond.

One day, Sister Divine returned to her cell early, troubled by a headache which had been brought on by so many hours of concentration at the Holy Scriptures and the Arial font of the Website of the Convent of the Blessed Mary. She expected only to see the bare mattress where she could lie for an hour or so, unaided by paracetamol or other such forbidden drug (all drugs were forbidden). Instead she found the mattress was not empty, as she'd expected. There was Sister Admonition arm and leg tangled with those of Sister Adoration, two shaven heads close together, lit by the glancing rays of the sun through the narrow windows of the convent cell. She stood silently by the door as she became aware of a groaning and a panting coming from the two girls and aware also that their hands were slowly and tenderly caressing the crotch of the

other. She hovered for a moment as her mind was filled with images of passion and damnation in equal measure, before deciding on discretion and escaping to the chapel where for an hour or so she knelt before the altar of the Lord Jesus Christ asking Him for forgiveness and leniency towards Sister Admonition and her own sinful thoughts.

These last did not abandon her. Their malevolent presence was not helped by Sister Admonition's increasing boldness. Clearly, having bitten into the accursed Fruit of Knowledge, rather than repent she yearned for more. Sister Divine thought again and again of her secret encounter as she shaved her cellmate's crotch and head, the razor blade sliding over the shaving gel and removing that persistent stubble that the Lord had chosen to replenish each day. And as she lay on her back, facing the window of her cell, as the moon crept achingly slowly across the sky and her cell-mate dozed with none of the nightmares of remorse that plagued Sister Divine, despite her prayers to the contrary. In fact, Sister Admonition's sleep did not seem to be troubled in even the smallest regard.

One morning, she awoke from an especially deep and blissful sleep to find Sister Admonition's arms around her; legs tangled together, her warm cheek resting on her shoulder. The feeling was so delightful that it filled Sister Divine with terror. The following day was spent mostly in silent meditation and contemplation, as she asked the Lord for guidance for the torment that this unnatural emotion had aroused in her.

However, Sister Divine chose to ignore any of the small tendernesses that Sister Admonition increasingly expressed towards her. The slight lingering of her

palm over her shaved crotch, the chin resting so much more frequently on her shoulder, the glances she observed between Sister Admonition and not one, but several, of the other nuns. She made no comment on those nights when she awoke many hours before matins to find herself alone on the mattress and Sister Admonition elsewhere, perhaps with one of those nuns whose glances had been so obviously reciprocal to those of her cellmate's. She chose instead to bury herself deeper in the Holy Scriptures and in lengthy prayer, whenever time permitted.

There were only a few places in the convent that the nuns met each other in their daily routine. One such place, of course, was in the chapel, where they would bow in prayer or intone in Latin the sacred texts that the Lord had been so kind to bequeath His unworthy subjects. Another place was the convent mess-room, where there would be a large twice-daily gathering of naked, shaved flesh, heads bent down in prayer before partaking of the meagre meals that the convent allowed the sisters. It was only here and, of course, in their cells or at work (if it were possible) that the nuns could ever talk to each other.

Sometimes Sister Divine would contemplate the friendships that were known to the secular world and, of course, the sexual relationships sanctioned only by marriage. Had she sacrificed more than she should for her devotion to the Lord? Perhaps Sister Admonition's apparent contentment in her freer associations with the other sisters was a message to Sister Divine that her own commitment to the order was insufficiently deep. Thoughts such as these, however, were enough to drive her to greater contemplation and prayer.

One day at lunch, as she bent over the vegetable stew that the Lord had bestowed on her she saw that she was sitting opposite a new sister whom she'd not seen before. Like herself, she wore no clothes, and her head and, no doubt, her crotch were shaved. Unlike Sister Divine, or indeed any of the other nuns, she was black-skinned. A sight rare enough in the town where Sister Divine had led her life before surrendering herself to the Lord, but previously totally unknown in the convent. Although she knew that all God's creation, of whatever hue or colour, were as one in the Lord's eyes and that she should view not one of them as different from another, she found it very difficult to remove her eyes from the new nun's very dark skin, the long slender arms, the proud light brown aureole nipples on the darker fuller flesh of her breasts, the long slender neck and the thick lips through which, so delightfully, shone a set of strong white teeth. That long arching neck culminating in the round shaven pate. Those luscious long eyelashes that intermittently obscured the piercing cornea of her sparkling white eyes. So this is what a black woman is like, thought Sister Divine. So wondrous and varied are the Lord's creation!

Like Sister Divine, Sister Love, as this black nun was known, had been a software engineer before she chose the Way and the Path of the Lord. Her own Damascene conversion that persuaded her to make such a step was brought about when she reflected on the trivial nature of her professional work and how the fruit of her labour was costing others the wages of the labour it replaced. Consequently, like Sister Divine, she too was chosen by the Mother Superior to work on the convent's Website together with Sister Divine and Sister Litany in the convent's office.

Sister Divine and Sister Litany rarely spoke to each other during the day. Her colleague was a plump woman with a face much like a bulldog and with harsh, nobbled hands. Never would Sister Divine have ever been tempted from the Word of the Lord by her colleague's charms, although she did her best to hide her distaste for the nun's shapelessness and plainness by reflecting that the Lord created all men and women in His image. However, it was difficult to be as indifferent to Sister Love who in addition to her fleshly beauty was blessed with a beauty of character, which beamed in an aura of kindness and generosity that came naturally from within her and needed none of the Lord's Good Word to be coaxed to the surface.

Sister Divine and Sister Love worked well together. They shared a light sense of humour and found in each other's company the extra incentive to work that much better in spreading the convent's message of the beneficence of the Lord. Sister Divine truly looked forward to each day in the office where she could share again in her sister's smiles and, more guiltily, to admire her body. She wasn't sure, but she felt that this admiration was reciprocated. The odd brush of Sister Love's dark skin against her own when they sat next to each other gave her a frisson she carried away with her for many days later. She would often look across the desk at Sister Love, chin resting in hand, her bald pate and proud breasts so beautiful, so arousing, so tempting and so close. It was all she could do, as she nestled by Sister Admonition's bare body on the mattress to keep her fingers from her crotch, which burnt so much with desire.

One week, Sister Litany was ill and had to be confined to her bed. Sister Love and Sister Divine visited her and prayed for her good health, promising to carry out

her duties in her absence, but, in Sister Divine's case, secretly glad that her sulking brooding presence was absent for a while. And indeed, the atmosphere was so much lighter and cheerful when the two nuns returned to their work: the office echoing with their cheerful laughter.

“Oh! Sister Love!” shrieked Sister Divine after her companion had shared an observation. “You’re so witty! Surely the Mother Superior would never contemplate such things.”

“I’m sure she wouldn’t,” agreed Sister Love, absentmindedly running her hand down the back of her neck and onto her breast. Sister Divine, sitting right next to her blushed as a spasm of desire ran through her. Sister Love noticed her deep redness.

“Oh. Sister. What is it?” she asked placing a comforting hand on Sister Divine’s arm.

“Sister Love. Sister Love. I don’t know,” she confessed, bowing her head. “It’s just that when I’m with you, I have these thoughts … They’re wrong, I know. But they come to me. You’re so very beautiful.”

“And you too!” agreed Sister Love, who suddenly took Sister Divine by the back of her neck and pulled her face towards her, and placed her thick warm lips against Sister Divine’s own. The nun was suddenly filled with doubt, fear, terror and desire.

She pulled herself off. And then pushed herself back on. And then back off. Her hands hovering over Sister Love’s perk and lively nipples. She allowed a hand to fall onto one, feeling in a moment such heat and warmth and softness. And then

pulled it away. And then compelled onto it again. She pressed against Sister Love, lips on lips, hand on breast, while Sister Love's hand wandered over her sister's pale freckled skin.

"Oh! Sister Love! Sister Love! This is wrong. This is *so* wrong!" she exclaimed.

"It doesn't feel wrong to me," retorted Sister Love, pulling Sister Divine's bare body hard against her chest.

The two nuns clung to each other, uncertain as to how to continue. Sister Divine truly had no idea at all, and Sister Love seemed fairly unsure herself. Neither nun had had much exposure to the images and films that instruct most people outside the convent walls. Sister Love's arms were around Sister Divine's back, her bald pate resting on the other nun's shoulder. Sister Divine closed her eyes tight, smelling deep the rich odour of her companion's warm, slightly feverish body, her own hands guiltily clutching the rounded orbs of Sister Love's buttocks.

And all the while, her black companion's hands were caressing and stroking her thighs and arms, gasping with a passion that Sister Divine could feel in her own self. Inevitably, their mouths sought out the other again, and their lips, tongues and teeth clashed again: liquid heaven as Sister Divine could taste the salty saliva and metallic fillings in Sister Love's mouth. And where were those long black fingers probing but higher up Sister Divine's thighs to the hot warmth burning between her legs?

"Oh! Sister! Sister! What shall we do?" she asked her black lover.

“I don’t know. I really don’t know! I’ve never touched anyone in this way before. Perhaps we should retire to your room?”

“Yes. Yes. We must. We really must.”

It was agony keeping their hands apart as the two nuns left the office and strode side by side along the corridors and up the winding stairs that led eventually to Sister Divine’s room. She was terrified that other sisters would see them together and ask why they were not still in the office. Perhaps they would see the hot flush of passion that burned across Sister Divine’s cheeks, forehead and breast. She half-formed the lie that they were going to see Sister Litany in her cell. But then what if their bluff was called?

Mercifully, the only nuns they passed were far too preoccupied in their own duties to spare the time to ask the girls such idle questions, and soon enough Sister Divine pushed open the door to her cell where the empty mattress had rarely seemed so welcoming. The door was barely closed behind Sister Lover, and the two nuns were on the mattress, clasped and pressed to each other, clumsily following the motions dictated by their lust. There was urgency in their passion. A drive to go further. But to where? To what end? Just to be together?

Their legs entwined the other’s legs, their arms pulled the other’s bare breasts and hard nipples against their own, their mouths locked onto the other. Sweat and the strangest, richest odours emanated from their skin. What was that smell? So strong. So raw. So right. And the sloshy liquid oozing wetness from between the legs, coming not only from Sister Divine’s crotch but pressing damply against a moist passionate

outflowing from Sister Love. Their hands and fingers trailed down each other's back and along the back of each other's the thighs, and then sought in the other the heat and yearning that ached from within. So urgent. So demanding. So much in need. Was this how love was? Why had she saved herself for so long?

As her fingers eased open the sticky black folds of her lover's vulva, it was Sister Love who expressed her concern. "Is this right? Should we go so far? Are we not sworn to Jesus Christ Almighty and Him alone?"

Sister Divine almost let loose a profanity and cursed herself for her godlessness. Don't mention it now. Not now! Not while it was so perfect. But idle sophistry saved her passion. "It is men we have forsaken. Not each other."

Sister Love nodded, clearly unconvinced, but Sister Divine could feel her fingers slide so smoothly along the length of her vulva, slide down almost inside, touching the tender burning folds of her inward desire, brushing against the hardness of her clitoris, sending her into a fervent torrent of greater desire. Their mouths met again, their tongues deeper inside the other: brushing over the molars, perhaps almost to the tonsils, two hot fleshy probes sloshing against each other. And Sister Divine couldn't resist bringing her forefinger and thumb together on one of her black lover's nipples and squeezing it. So hard and firm! And such delightful crenulations!

She bent her head down, arching her whole body, while her fingers and Sister Love's continued to stroke and pinch and squeeze the other's crotch, and took the hard, fleshy dark nipple in between her lips. Such a perfect match. Lips and nipples together. Her tongue circled its lumpy aureole and eased into the deep indentation at

the peak. Such a salty sweet taste! Why had no one told her that a body could taste so good?

And all the while, she could feel her buttocks tremble, and her hips press backwards and forwards against her lover's flesh. Hot slippery sweat lubricated their bodies, letting them slide so easily together. Their fingers, tongues, lips explored the crevices of each other's ears, the distinct moles on their stomachs, the short hairs of each other's eyebrows, the long sinuous smoothness of the other's neck. And sometimes Sister Divine, and sometimes Sister Love, would take one or other of her lover's breasts and lick and fondle and nibble and tease those nipples, those round contours, those perfect details, admired so often from a distance and now enjoyed more closely than either had ever thought possible.

"There are other places your tongues can go, you know."

Where did that familiar voice come from? Sister Divine started and looked over her shoulder to see Sister Admonition standing above them: a wicked smile flashing across her face.

"What did you say?" Sister Divine asked, less out of curiosity than from a need to gather her wits about her.

"I said: there are other places your tongues can go," her cellmate repeated. She knelt down on the mattress, her arms spread on either side of the two girls' entangled legs. "Places so sweet and gorgeous, you wouldn't believe! Here, let me show you."

"What do you mean, sister?" asked Sister Divine.

"Between the legs. Don't you want to taste the very cradle of your desire?"

Sister Admonition stretched out her hand and placed it softly on Sister Divine's thigh dangerously close to her streaming vagina. She opened her mouth and let her tongue drop out. Sister Divine blushed, and in her shame at being discovered she absurdly grasped the sheet and pulled it over her breast while retracting her legs towards her stomach.

“Sister Admonition. You can’t. It’s not right. It’s not how it should be.”

“Are you saying that what you two are doing is right? Come on, my dear, my love, my sweetest. You know you’d enjoy it. You’ve loved me from a distance for so long. As I have you. And now, together with your beautiful lover, we can learn from each other.”

“Is this what you do with your friends?”

“That and more. Three, four of us. Bodies together. The ecstasy. The pleasure. The passion. You just can’t believe.”

It was Sister Love who spoke for the two of us. “I’m sorry, sister. But what you do and what you want to do is not for us. Love is too precious to squander. The Lord sanctions love but He does not sanction perversity.”

“If what two women do together when they make love is not perverse, what is?”

“It may not be the holy state of matrimony, but I am sure the Lord in His mercy respects love when it is sincerely felt. What you desire is not love but something else. Be gone and pray to your Maker that He may forgive you for your sins of the heart. Sister Divine and I are as one in our love for each other. And we want

nothing more than that.”

Sister Admonition stayed on her knees but she bent back. “Come on, Sister Divine. Do you agree with your black lover? Surely once one has strayed a little, it is a but a small matter to stray yet further.”

Sister Divine sighed. “Sister Admonition. It is true. I have often loved you too much with my heart. And too often I have prayed for forgiveness. But I know that what Sister Love and I feel for each other is not bestial love, but something purer. Something that I am sure the Lord God understands.”

Sister Admonition stood up, with a pitiable expression of disappointment. “So that is how it is to be. It will be difficult now for us to share our cell together, I have not told you before but it was lust for you that drove me into the arms of other women. And now our truths are exposed, we cannot continue to share the same cell. However, I have an excellent understanding with your lover’s cellmate, Sister Devotion, and I am quite happy to exchange cells with Sister Love.”

Sister Divine clung to Sister Love, tears sliding through her eyelids and onto her lover’s breast. “I didn’t know that you loved me. I wish it were different. But I am happy now. Please may the Lord be with you.”

Her cellmate frowned. “And may He be with you. You may think me ‘perverse’, but I still love the Lord and will continue to do Him service. But please understand me when I say that I believe that the Lord sanctions more in His creation that just the love of one person for another.”

Sister Divine could see that her cellmate’s disappointment and regret was

genuine. There was dampness in the eyes that she recognised in her own. But she was nonetheless relieved when Sister Admonition picked up her few things and left her to her own love. The door closed behind her erstwhile cellmate, and the two nuns lay together, their bodies cooler, and the sweat oppressive on their chest and backs.

Sister Love took her lover's shaven head in her hands and pressed it onto her breast where she could feel their softness and also the hard thump thump of her heart. Sister Divine trailed her arms around her black lover's waist and softly wept.

"*I do* love you so much!" Sister Divine said more towards her lover's proud nipples than to her full and dark lips or sensuous sparkling eyes.

"And I you," Sister Love replied. She ran her fingers slowly, but purposefully down her lover's stomach, brushed her navel and stroked the dark stubble above her crotch. Sister Divine gasped as a strange tremor of pleasure sprang from just below.

"I want only you. No one else."

Sister Love smiled. "My love for you is at least as great. But come now, sister, shall we see just what this pleasure is that Sister Admonition recommended for us."

With that she eased herself out of Sister Divine's grasp and slowly but decisively moved her body around so that her face was just above her lover's crotch. She grinned as she looked up at her fellow nun over the mounds of her breasts and the long valley of her slim stomach. "For what we are about to receive may the Lord make us truly grateful."