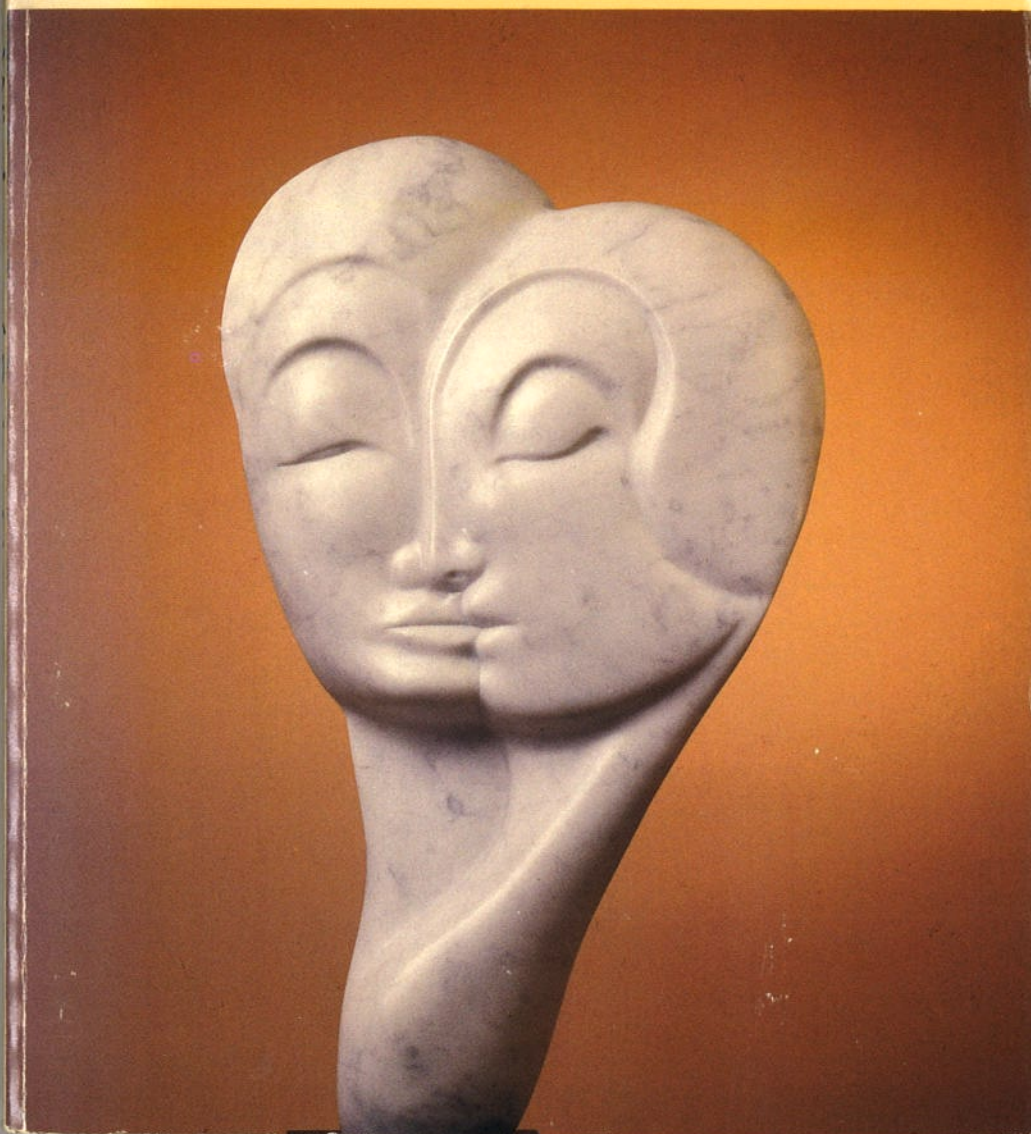


The Wisdom of Being Human

Jean Lanier

With Illustrations by Marion Weber



The Wisdom of Being Human

by Jean Lanier is a healing book that speaks to our hearts and minds. It is one woman's rich and unusual life experience distilled down into a literary form that is relevant for all who wish to explore and restore the depths of their humanness. This book deals with the great issues of love, trust, and freedom in human relationships.



Photo by Betty McAfee, San Francisco

"This is that rare book that makes us pause after every sentence to wonder at the depths of meaning."—**Rollo May**

"A highly original experiment using new forms to deal with eternal themes."—**Riane Eisler**

"I've read the concentrated nuggets from Jean Lanier with increasing joy at every page."—**Harvey Cox**

"A unique vision."—**Jacob Needleman**

"Jean Lanier is one of the finest living poet-theologians."—**Michael Murphy**

"A jewel of practical wisdom for deepening relationships."—**Frances Vaughan**

"A profound message."—**Ken Keyes**

About the author: Jean Lanier, who is seventy, married into a leading banking family and after the death of her first husband took up the study of theology and subsequently psychotherapy. For the past twenty-four years she has been married to Sidney Lanier. She contributes a regular column to Matthew Fox's *Creation* magazine. Her publications include a book of poetry entitled *Diagnoses and Other Poems*.

About the artist: Marion Weber studied art at the Museum School of Fine Arts in Boston and drawing with Nerina Sime in Florence, Italy. She is well known for her exquisite tapestries in which she uses a pointillist technique of her own invention. She runs the Healing Arts Center in Stinson Beach, California.

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Foreword

by David F. K. Steindl-Rast

A sentence that is brief yet clear, sparkles. Jean Lanier's writing has that sparkle. But let's not confuse sparkle with glitter. Have you ever noticed that those two differ as diamonds differ from tinsel? Glitter plays on the surface; it dazzles us and makes us dizzy. Sparkle gives us a sober delight; it has depth.

The three aphoristic stories in *The Wisdom of Being Human* have depth. They have the fire of diamonds. Their brevity does not result from clipping, but from distillation. Their fire is the sparkle of precision. Theologically as well as psychologically, they are precise: no mean achievement. But Jean Lanier knows the limits of precision. She has the grace to celebrate, not to dissect.

Too often, those who speak of the Bible as revelation forget that it is from beginning to end a tale of relationships. When they try to present "revealed truth" apart from those human and divine relationships, they are leading us to a shelf of frozen produce instead of opening a garden gate. With sure instinct, Jean Lanier does the opposite: She zeroes in on relationship. That's why she can afford to be brief: the key word fits. With the precision of a master key the concept of relationship unlocks the whole garden.

And what a garden it is! There is more here than precision. The coldness we tend to associate with precision is overcome by human warmth. Jean Lanier has this warmth, because she gives herself to life, willingly, bravely, generously. Precision is bought at the price of hard work; human warmth is the fruit of suffering. The sparkle of it all is free gift, pure grace.

This short book has grace. There is more compassionate wisdom in it than in many a ponderous tome. There is nothing ponderous about these pages, yet they are well worth pondering. I did ponder them with gratitude and am still thrilled.