

Her Body Cannot Tell A Lie

Experiencing Emotional Somatic Awareness Through The Arts

Ellen Gayda

ABSTRACT

Her Body Cannot Tell A Lie is a creative spoken word piece that reveals the anatomy of emotions through the embodied language of somatic expression. The inspiration came through me to give voice to the wide range of emotional experiences that are archived within the feminine body. Having supported women professionally for over forty years, I have been a witness to the feminine journeys they have taken to birth into consciousness their substantive truth. Giving a language and platform to this intimate healing process is my tribute to them. Pulling back the veil to demonstrate the emotional articulation of the feminine, through the lens of the multilayered wisdom of somatic psychology and body psychotherapy, required a creative presentation in a live arts venue. Through spoken word verse, and movement with music, their untold stories could be experienced and received by a wide audience.

Keywords: Her Body Cannot Tell A Lie, creative spoken word, embodied language archived within the feminine body, emotional articulation, live arts, body-based wisdom, feminine journey

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*Women in the audience cried,
sharing that they felt
the unrevealed stories
buried deep within their own
body consciousness becoming known.*

The language of this spoken poetic verse introduces the audience in an unfamiliar linguistic realm, much like a traveler entering foreign territory.

Yet within the fertile ground of body wisdom and conscious awareness, one can recognize, through felt meaning, a resonance that feels familiar. Utilizing the emotional somatic framework of body psychotherapy in the literary and performing arts highlights the significant role emotions play in shaping our ability to feel safe in our bodies and in the world. The necessity to awaken our attention to communication with emotions held hostage within the fibers of our soul body calls for a holistic approach to healing. Experiencing the capacity to embody our truth with freedom of expression and comfort that cultivates health requires the skills found in integrative somatic psychotherapies. My desire to teach about healing through the creative process, I chose is an effort to direct awareness toward the essential relationship we must cultivate with our bodies in order to fully inhabit them. The invitation to healing and renewal is al-

ways a cyclical journey in learning to approach our vulnerabilities with soft eyes. Aspects of the emotional soul and body that have been neglected, repressed, abandoned, or minimized through actions and judgments that render us powerless have left wounds of trauma awaiting healing through the healthy forces of love, will, and forgiveness. These healing impulses are part of our birthright. This body of creative work reminds us that there is no final destination, only new beginnings.

In the poetic expression of *Her Body Cannot Tell A Lie*, I have chosen to reveal an interchangeable articulation of self – expressing self that highlights the feminine body as the archetype of embodiment. She holds then pours empty, in accordance with the monthly moon and womb of her anatomy for decades on end. Her emotional body flows with blood and tears that keep her close to nature and the cosmos. She takes care of business first, then, with any luck, attends to herself. Finding room for her to embrace self-exploration can seem like a luxury for a good portion of a woman's life. Prioritizing the needs that emerge within the depths of her consciousness becomes an invitation for her to review, clear, heal, and claim what belongs to her and what does not. Then, dwelling within herself, she may hear her own true voice that can help her navigate through life choices. Learning to trust her instincts and listen to whispers of her intuitions will support her in staying grounded. Her healing impulses will call her to turn toward herself. Then she begins her journey. She has an emotional intelligence that knows she will need the support of her soul doula. The body psychotherapist that is present to her will be a constant reminder to turn toward herself with the attention required for constant personal connection. Remaining receptive, she learns to nourish herself as well as find good company that supports her. With measured steps and guided help, her desire to know herself strengthens so she can heal. When she is ready to reclaim herself and her truth, she may thrive. This journey is her conscious birth.

The Therapeutic Value of a Creative Presentation

This word verse, originally created for spoken word delivery, was accompanied by movement and original music. It was first presented in 2009 at The Philadelphia Live Arts/ Fringe Festival to an audience of 180 men and women over two days. Follow-

ing the performances, an invitation was extended to remain for an open forum. Many men expressed gratitude for the impactful experiential education they received, which fostered greater emotional understanding and awareness toward their mothers, sisters, girlfriends, wives, friends, and peers. Men candidly shared their selective awareness of the vulnerabilities and challenges women face in achieving physical and emotional safety. The creative delivery aimed to awaken men to a newly realized understanding of the wounding experiences that can affect the feminine soul.

Women in the audience cried, sharing that they felt the unrevealed stories buried deep within their own body consciousness becoming known. Naming the invisible and hearing other women share similar experiences enabled some to speak for the first time. They discussed their self-awareness related to the armored somatic postures they had developed in response to vulnerabilities they felt but had never addressed or been aware of before that evening. The effort to produce a presentation that interwove the healing and creative arts achieved the desired result of initiating self-reflection toward their relationship with their bodies. A new understanding emerged of being living holistic organisms always in communication. In men, this stimulated a new and deeper understanding of the feminine as a living vessel encompassing her worlds in both body and soul. The cross-pollination of conversations between men and women was a fruitful gift, providing a rich, sensitive, and honest opportunity for authentic sharing. It was a perfect introduction to the world of somatic psychology.

I have also explored *Her Body Cannot Tell A Lie* in various healing contexts, adapting the format as needed for presentations. I have altered pronouns for equal gender relevance and participation. During a mixed-gender weeklong Gestalt workshop at the Esalen Institute, I served as an accompanying facilitator alongside master therapist Mariah Gladis, and introduced the verse as an opening experiential exercise focused on body awareness and emotional inhabitation.

In a women's wisdom workshop, the spoken word verse awakened felt bodily awareness, while the invited guest, Continuum teacher, dancer, and body psychotherapist Ellen Cohen, responded with spontaneous movement as an interlocutor. Women connected with their emotional content

and acquired a greater capacity for self-reflection on the relationships they had adopted regarding their body image issues. It opened the opportunity to examine the degree to which they had objectified themselves. The experience of enhanced self-awareness and sensitivity fostered a greater openness to explore embodiment while reclaiming and accepting themselves as women moving toward wholeness. This creative, curative opportunity held women safely in a womb of emerging body wisdom, fostering shared processing and a language of meaning that encouraged them to embrace their emotional capabilities and embody their feminine selves.

Final Thoughts

My intention is to offer a reflection on the value of combining creative arts with healing arts as a viable form of communication. This approach can move the process of somatic awareness out from behind closed therapeutic doors to reach a larger audience. The educational awareness gained by introducing a complex inner territory through a simpler, more compelling presentation can help demystify the profession for the mainstream, while expanding the acceptance of body-based wisdom as an essential resource in the pursuit of self-healing and integrated health.

Her Body Can Not Tell A Lie

by Ellen Gayda

Part 1

Woman, nature's walking wonder
Card carrying holder of the whole human race!

You, who took the risk to bite the apple that bled the juices
From the fruit of the Mother onto your precious body.
You, who took the risk to bite the apple that bled the juices
from your Mother became a Lover and a Mother to all the human race.

Little did You know.
That you surrendered your soft clay body to the mystery
That shapes the power that flows inside you
Like the ocean shifts the sands.

Little did you Know.
That you who bit the apple surrendered to the mystery
That shapes your body with hills, valleys and
Shifts your soul with waters that flow
from womb to man.

Little did you know.
That you would carry in your dark eternal soul
Those you've loved, those who've died
Those who left you incomplete and
Those you caught between your sheets
In a web of truths and lies!

Little did you know.
That you would carry a silent vault in your womb
Like a tomb, the night your innocence was stolen
And all your stars would turn to scars.

Little did you know.
When sex became a barter for another night of rest
Then love walked out her door and sex walked incognito.
Little did you know.

Woman, within your belly and your breast you carry
Pulsing, pounding, breathing beats of love that never dies
Pulsing, pounding breathing beats of love that never hides
Within your belly and your breast, a life that grows inside
A life that couldn't thrive, a love that you denied
Within your belly and your breast
You gave, you gave, you gave your best
To love that never dies, life that never thrived
Love you had denied, life that grows inside,
Within your belly and your breast, you gave pulsing pounding,
breathing beats, You gave yet carry them all.

You shoulder weight like a soldier would
Then shrug, like Atlas could or should
Shunning, quivering, shivering then at
The thought of bearing more.
Shouldering like a soldier would
Squared off and center.
Shrugging, shunning, quivering, shivering,
Sighing, at the thought of more.
Shouldering like a soldier would
Shrugging, shunning, quivering, shivering,
Sighing, at the thought of more.

So, armored you withstand
With pointy elbows sharp as spears, guarding edges so none come near
As your gut begins to kNOt.
Pointy elbows sharp as spears, guarding edges so none get near
Knowing another NO is coming, knowing another NO is coming

As your gut begins to knot knowing another know is coming.
Pointy elbows sharp as spears, knowing another no is coming.

Then your heart sinks and your knees fail, as
You just can't stand it anymore.
Then your heart sinks and your knees fail, at
The loss of what you stood for.
Sinking heart of feelings, falling to your knees
Fumbling, faltering, failing feelings
Sinking to your knees, as
You just can't stand it any longer! Whatever, did you stand for? as
You can't stand the feeling of no one standing with you.
Sinking feelings, falling to your knees,
Whatever did you stand on when you can't find your ground?
Sinking heart of feelings who ever understood you
When you can't stand yourself?

Clamming up you shut down, shut up and harden to your world
Hard pressed, you clam up, shut down, shut off your feelings from your world.
Then, you shut up, clamp down, hold in, hold on, hold off and
hold back with fisted hands that speak "GO POUND SAND"!
Hard as a shell you clam up, shut down, shut up and shut off
The hardness in your world.

Then kneeling, bowing, praying,
You begin to feel the need.
You begin to feel the need
When kneeling, bowing, praying.
Deep down the need in you begins to feel again,
Kneeling, bowing, praying the need for you to understand.
Kneeling, bowing, praying the need in you is understood.
Kneeling, bowing, praying you need to open you again
Kneeling, bowing, praying you release to open up
Your outer shell.

Then slowly, s l o w l y your breath returns and
Eyes find you in search of a Higher Ground.
In Search of your Higher Ground, a ground that under-stands you.
In search of your Higher Ground a ground that lets you feel
Your worth in weight, word and deed.
In search of your Higher Ground, that lets you feel your worth
In weight, word and deed.

Then digging in with heels then soul,
You find the ground you stand for.
Then digging in with weighted worth

Your legs do push, then P-u-l-l you up
Right, onto a higher ground, up – right onto your Higher Ground.
With weighty worth your legs do push then pull you upright
Onto your Higher Ground.
Only to see life looking at you, straight in the eye again.
To see life looking at you, straight in the eye again.
Then, looking Life straight in the eye
You catch yourself a wink!

Ah, you breathe in deeply, a Yes to Life again!
Ah, your breathing deepens as Spirit stirs within your spine.
Stirring Spirit spins your spine, breathing, moving cobra energy!
Cobra Spirit stirs your spine rising Kundalini.
Kundalini spins then lifts stirring spine awake!
Kundalini stirs and spins lifting spinning cobra spine
Lifting, turning, breathing spine
Your Spirit begins to rise! Your Spirit begins to fly!
Only to find your wings in motion to feel your wings in motion!
Lifting, gliding, spiraling tall, the flight of the Phoenix rising.
Only to find your wings in motion Lifting, gliding, spiraling tall
The flight of your Phoenix rising!
Onto your Higher Ground, the flight of Your Phoenix rising,
Leading, gliding, lifting you tall toward heaven's earthen gate.

Releasing old, Unleashing new, Your Spirit soars again!



Pause – Intermission Breathe Feel Your Body Feel your Feelings



Part 2

You're back again Feminine Warrior,
Backing yourself up, not backing down nor backing off or backing out
Fighting backlash and back stabbing.
Maybe you're all right maybe you're alright and still, how are you left?
Until, you hear "I've got your back" just how are you left, Woman Warrior?

You're back again, Sensual Mama,
Striding, strutting, swaying your stuff
Like the ocean who rolls her waves,
Like the ocean who rolls her waves.

You're back again, Sexy Woman!
In a world that you straddle with your hips, and your thighs
That shake, rattle and roll
Swaying and rocking, striding and straddling, shaking your rattle that rolls.

You're back again, Loving Lady,
With your lips curled like the crescent moon,
You smile then joke, then tease with laughter as kisses
Find tongue, with tongue in cheek.

You're back again, Earthen Goddess,
Heartwarming Venus, with stars in your eyes
that love to pour your milky ways
Nourishing souls that thirst to grow.

You're back again, Spiritual Sister
Disarming yourself from spears and fears that interfere
With your spirit soaring and
Your spine stretching.

You're back again Sister,
Stretching your spine that L o n g s to be longer and
Belong to a world full of spirit.
Longing to be longer and belong to a world
That no longer remembers.
Longing to belong to a world that longs
To remember the meaning of belonging
To something more than yourself.
Longing to belong to a world that remembers
The meaning of belonging
To something more than yourself.

Girl, sometimes, you swallow hard to digest and make sense
Of a world that lacks nourishment and soul.
You swallow hard, to accept the rejects
To find the silver lining in spoon fed arrogance
That never came across the taste of Soul food!
You swallow hard to ingest what never made sense
What burns you up and taste like heartburn.
You chew to dissolve, but still choke at resolve,
What Eats at You? You chew to dissolve then

Choke at resolve, what is eating you?
Looking to find the silver lining
In spoon fed arrogance that never came across
The taste of soul food.
You swallow hard. What is it that you stomach? Truth or Consequence?
What is it that you stomach, Truth or Consequences?

Indigestion from suppression, or concession or repression either way,
Jaw grinder, ball breaker, Either way,
You grin, you bear, either way, you fume, then smoke,
Either way, you whine, then piss,
You sleep walk then day dream, with night sweats and night mares
That beg forgiving, for getting or both. Either way.

Then, life circumstances take you on a ride,
Out for a spin, around another bend,
Gives you another turn, turns you around,
Turns you on, turns you off, circumscribes you,
Then circumvents you
Until you find yourself again all alone.
Until, you find yourself again all alone.

Then, circling, circling, circling yourself
In search for your center you spiral downward.
Circling, circling yourself in search for your center you spiral
In circles, circling, circling, circling yourself in search
Of yourself, you spiral down the rabbit hole.

Gripping to grab then grasping to gain
Your hands then fingers strain in vain
Not to lose contact.
Gripping, grabbing, grasping, straining
Down the rabbit hole you go.
Gripping, grabbing, grasping, straining
Down the rabbit hole you go.
Straining in vain, you lose contact with
A world that is too hard to hold.
Strained then restraining you lose contact
With a world too hard and too cold.
You grip, then grasp, then gasp
Falling down the rabbit hole.
Leaving the world as you knew it behind
Leaving the world you know behind.

Only to find yourself landing, by the seat of your pants.
To find yourself landing by the seat of your pants
In your darkness, in your starkness, in the womb of your soul.
Only to find yourself landing by the seat of your pants, in darkness,
In starkness, in the womb of your soul.
Leaving the world as you knew it behind.

Then like a fiddlehead fern you tuck in shade,
Curl yourself back into your little girl hiding,
The little girl who hides, cries and lies
With tears about fears that have no name
But lots of blame and full of shame.
Hiding, crying, lying you curl yourself back
Like a fiddlehead fern, into your little girl dying
From tears and fears that have no name
Yet full of blame and lots of shame.

Until you surrender the moments free
Until you surrender with movements that be
Until you surrender your heart to heal
Until you surrender to a peace you feel
That silently soothes your heavy brow
Then rocks you in your dreams.
The dream of the mother that breathes you alive
In the cradled bosom of love she provides.

Then, you awake once more to see
Today, in a way it's a new day.
Face another day, pace another night
A new day, in a new way, given another challenge
Take another choice, a new day with a new way.
Receive another gain, deceived at another cost
A new day, in a new way.
Bear another life, bury another loss
It's a new day, in a new way.
always turning, then returning Woman
always turning, then returning Woman
always turning, then returning Woman
every day, easy come, easy go
every day, you walk your talk
every day, you give your word
every day, your body says the word
every day, you are your BodyWord.

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Ellen Gayda is an intuitive healer, licensed bodyworker, certified Gestalt practitioner, and co-founder of three wellness centers. Her thesis in 1973 under Dr. Frank Barron at UCSC contributed an original mind map for the assimilation of research data in the field of humanistic psychology.

Immersed in meditation, yoga, and naturopathy as teaching self-healing tools, her interdisciplinary approaches have led her “on a road less traveled.” BodyWord® is her creative therapeutic process. She studied with Hungarian philosopher Georg Kuhlwind, pursued a ten-year study of Zen mindfulness through Urasenke / La Salle School of Chado, and authored *Her Body Cannot Tell A Lie*. For 15 years, she facilitated a women’s wisdom circle that supported perimenopausal transition. She has presented at USABP national conferences, the annual Renfrew Center Conference, and to doctoral students in psychology at the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. She maintains a private practice in Philadelphia.

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