Day 11: Splitting

In Theory: Splitting in the object relations tradition, most closely associated with Melanie Klein, is an early form of mental organization in which opposing qualities cannot yet be held together in the same person or experience. People, objects, and ideas are experienced as all good or all bad without integration. Under stress, these divisions can reappear in adulthood, making it difficult to hold complexity or contradiction within a single emotional frame. A person may shift between idealization and devaluation without awareness of the transition. This can shape how relationships, work, and decisions are experienced, often in ways that feel sudden or absolute. It can also contribute to recurring cycles of engagement and withdrawal as experience shifts between extremes.

In Experience: A new relationship, habit, political position, or religious commitment is taken up with a sense of certainty. Then something disappoints, or an internal shift makes the experience feel no longer the same. What was once an ideal may become less meaningful, or more complicated than it first appeared. Something that once felt essential begins to feel ordinary, or worse.

In Thought: More than one perspective can hold truth at the same time. Something can be meaningful and also limited, valuable and also disappointing.

In Print: Segal, H. *Introduction to the Work of Melanie Klein* (1964)

In Attention: Notice a person or situation experienced entirely one way.