

# Will Santillo: La Petite Mort: Female masturbation, fantasies & orgasm

By Barry Braverman

**Will Santillo: La Petite Mort: Female masturbation, fantasies & orgasm**

**If orgasm is the little death, is masturbation the little suicide?**

The title means "the little death," a euphemism for orgasm, but the women who exuberantly masturbate for Toronto photographer Will Santillo in this book are as lively a bunch as you'll ever meet. Santillo conceived the project eight years ago to include a thorough cross section of women: young to old, slim to thick, perfect beauties to those not considered beautiful until seen through his lens. The one constant would be that each would decide and direct how she masturbated to climax while he captured the moment. From previous projects with amateur subjects Santillo had come to believe that masturbation is a far more personal act than most sex play because it is conducted almost exclusively in private. He set out to reveal the diversity and creativity with which women approach self-stimulation, and to portray the beauty of ordinary women in the throes of orgasm—a beauty far richer than the male oriented depictions seen in pornography. Santillo says he seeks to uncover the hidden face of his subjects, and indeed, it's the faces that best show the intensity of response in these artfully explicit photos.

Dian Hanson interviewed 37 of the women, and their candid insights on overcoming inhibition, giving in to exhibitionism, and achieving orgasm in front of a stranger with a camera provide a framework for the lush, sepia-toned photos. For all who are curious about just what the woman next door—or one's own wife—gets up to in her private moments, *La Petite Mort* is a breath of life.

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**Will Santillo: La Petite Mort: Female masturbation, fantasies & orgasm Details:**

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