

MANY VOICES

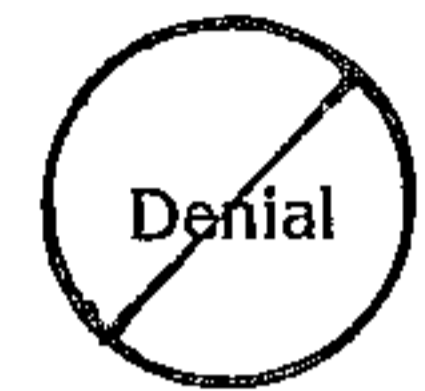
WORDS OF HOPE FOR CLIENTS WITH MPD AND DISSOCIATIVE DISORDERS

Vol. II, No. 2

April 1990

ISSN1042-2277

Dreams and more! In this issue, *MANY VOICES* salutes the inner, mysterious world, with its clues to our past and our feelings. Did you know that nightmares can be transformed into dreams where YOU are in control? Read on! — LW



Away, away. Go on, away.
Please go away.
We can't, for we are you.
YOU. YOU. YOU.
YOU ARE US. DO YOU
UNDERSTAND?
The room, our chairs—you are us
we are you.

We cannot.
We will not.
We dare not.
Go away.

For if we do,
YOU will fall into the
dark
abyss.

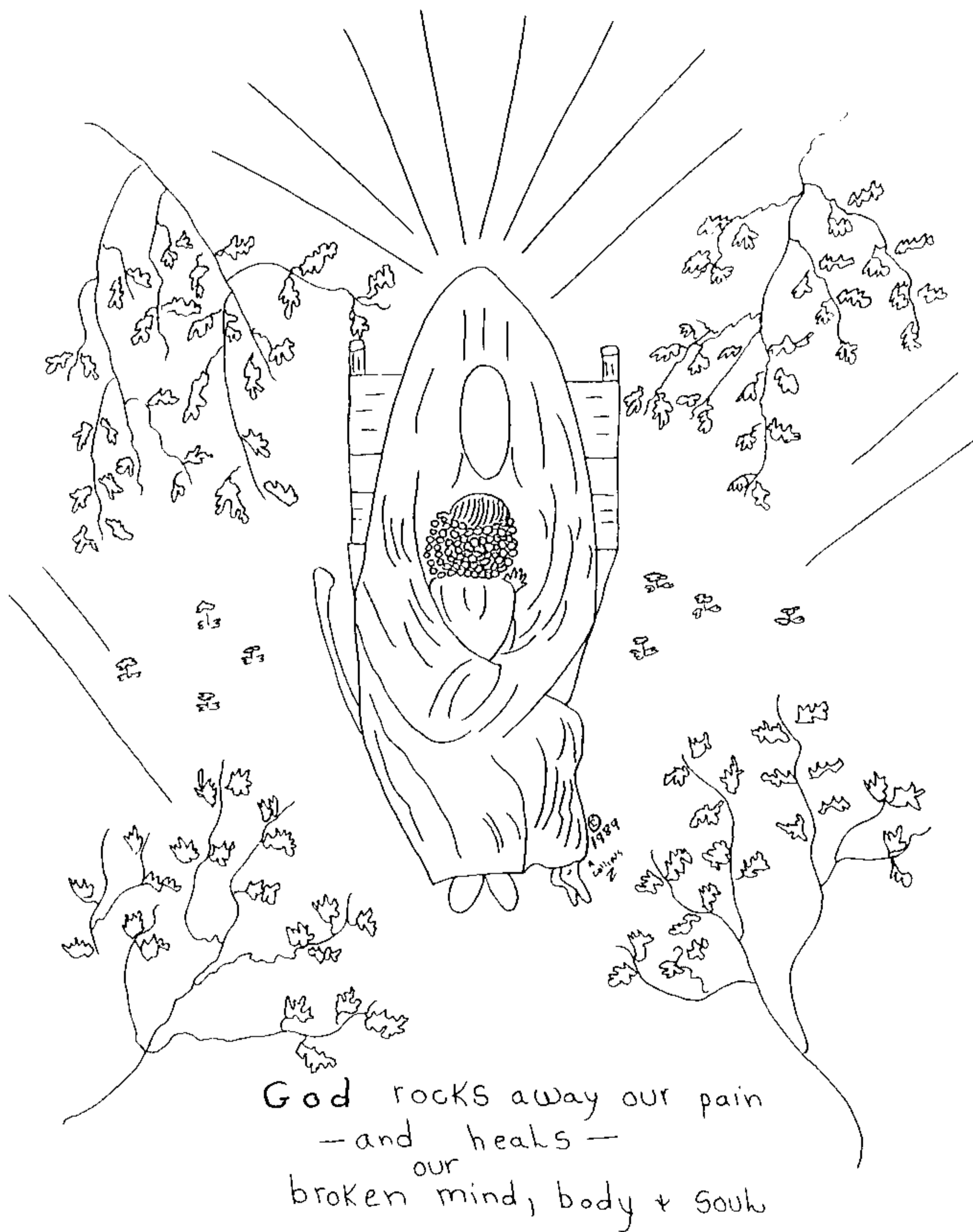
That's why we're here.
That's why we came.
To break your fall.
To soften the pain.
To . . . survive.

Do not shun us now.
We have served you well.
Our work is not done.
We have more to tell.
WE ARE THE SILENCE
BUSTERS!

THE DENIAL BUSTERS.
WE ARE THE TEAM.
EXPERTS.
PUT TOGETHER WITH GREAT
PRECISION.

We are creative. helpful. angry.
sad. alone. together.
lost. found.
desperate. hopeful.
hateful. loving.
ambivalent. unequivocal.
But we know
And together . . .
we'll reclaim the power.
We'll WIN.

By Ellie Lane



Dreams, Memories, and Mysteries

Our readers write about their dream and meditative experiences in the context of therapy and healing.

Using Dreams to Get Even

For many years I would wake with terrible nightmares of my mother slashing my face with razor blades or of my being dead. As terrible as these dreams were, even worse was the emotional affect that they left behind. For days afterward I would feel terrified and depressed, and I would be so afraid of having another dream that I would fear sleep and sometimes go a couple of days without sleeping.

I decided to try controlling my dreams, and to turn the situation around if it started getting hostile. It took me a while before I could get control while I was dreaming. At first I began being able to leave when any situation started to become hostile. After more practice, I started being able to dream myself into a more active role.

My favorite dream of this type involved me sitting with my parents who were hooked up to a machine. I explained to them that the machine caused pain, and that I could control the dial that determined how much pain the machine delivered. All I wanted them to do was to admit to me that the machine caused them pain. As soon as they admitted this to me, I would turn the machine off.

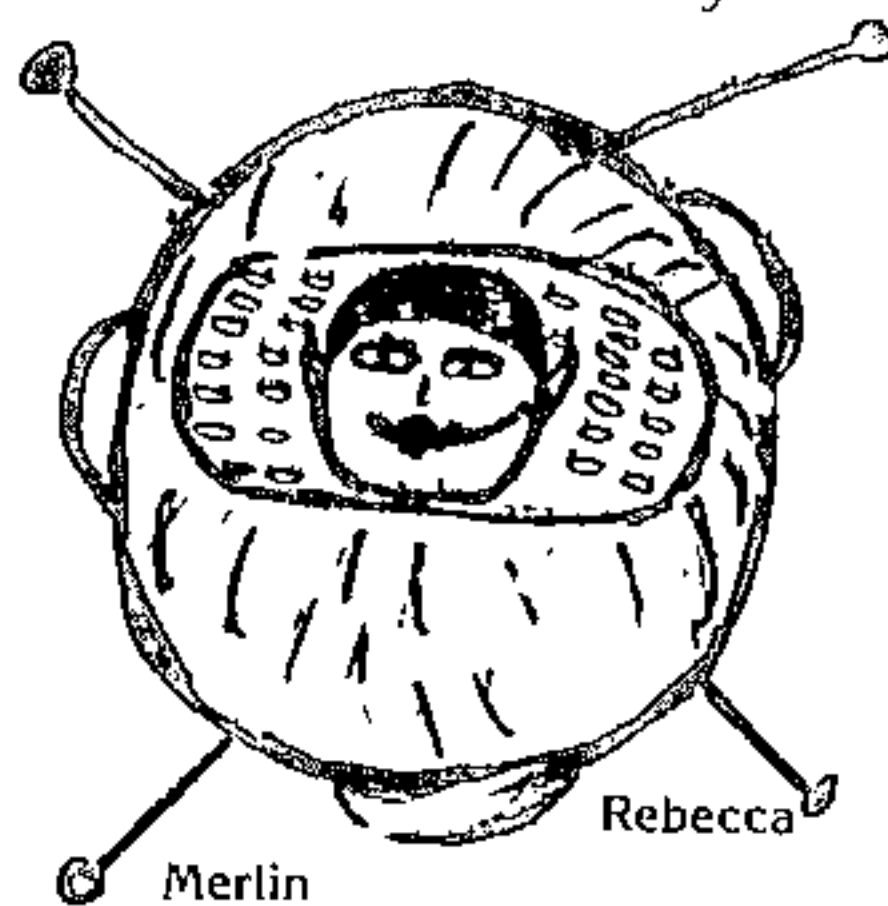
I started turning the dial until I knew that the machine was causing a small amount of pain. They refused to admit they felt anything. I turned the dial more and sweat started appearing on their faces, but they continued to wear those "everything's fine" expressions. I repeated that I would stop the pain as soon as they admitted that it hurt. They continued to deny it. This went on for some time with me increasing the amount of pain.

I could tell that they were in pain, but they continued to deny it. My job, however, was not to figure out how they were feeling,

but merely to turn the machine off when they admitted they felt pain. Finally I had cranked the machine up as far as it would go. They still wouldn't admit it, but it was obvious that they were in very great pain. I enjoyed knowing that, for a change, their denial and I were causing them pain instead of *their* denial and *them* causing *me* pain.

After having this dream, I woke feeling wonderfully powerful. There is no way in the real world that I will ever be able to "get even" for the amount of torture they put me through. Surprisingly, however, experiencing that feeling of justice through my dreams was extremely satisfying not only at the time, but for days afterward. The positive emotional affect of power dreams stays with me now, just as the negative emotional affect of victim dreams did in the past.

By Harriet T.



Merlin the sputnik orbiting ISH Our Message About the Father — 1988

Dark out. Siren goes off. Look up in the sky. This is just a test, to see how we do. I look up at the building. It's tall and brick. I feel scared that the brick is going to fall in and I'll die. The words that were spoken to me during the instruction are there:

"This is not real. This is just simulated so you can see how it really works. Nothing is going to be destroyed. Remember the instructions."

I open a door to go to the basement. Ok. We all have our parts to do. I remember. It's dark

there — no lights to turn on. But I remember — this is just a drill. I look back to see if the others are going to come.

I'm outside in the yard. I've been sitting, enjoying the outside. I hear the siren. I walk to the front door. There's a baby with me. (I don't see the baby in my dream. I don't see it in my arms or anywhere around, but I know there was a baby with me.)

I go inside the door. I turn to look out. A man is coming across the lawn. He's young (not old, not teenager.) He has something in his hand. It's a cigarette pack. I left my cigarettes outside when I left.

I remember the instructions. I close the screen door and lock it. He comes to the door. Smiling, nice — he wants to give me what's in his hand. I tell him to go away. He won't. He's just smiling.

During the instructions I was told not to let him inside. I am supposed to do something. I feel panic. I tell him to go away again. He won't — just keeps smiling.

I'm supposed to blow a whistle. I don't have one.

I scream. But the scream I hear is not loud enough. He doesn't even hear it. He's still there.

I'm supposed to throw hot water on him. There's no hot water.

I see a bucket. Something's in it, like hard butter with powdery stuff. I pick it up and start toward the door with it.

He just keeps smiling.

I throw what's in the bucket at him. I'm wondering what good this is going to do. How can it make him go away? (I think the powder is sugar.)

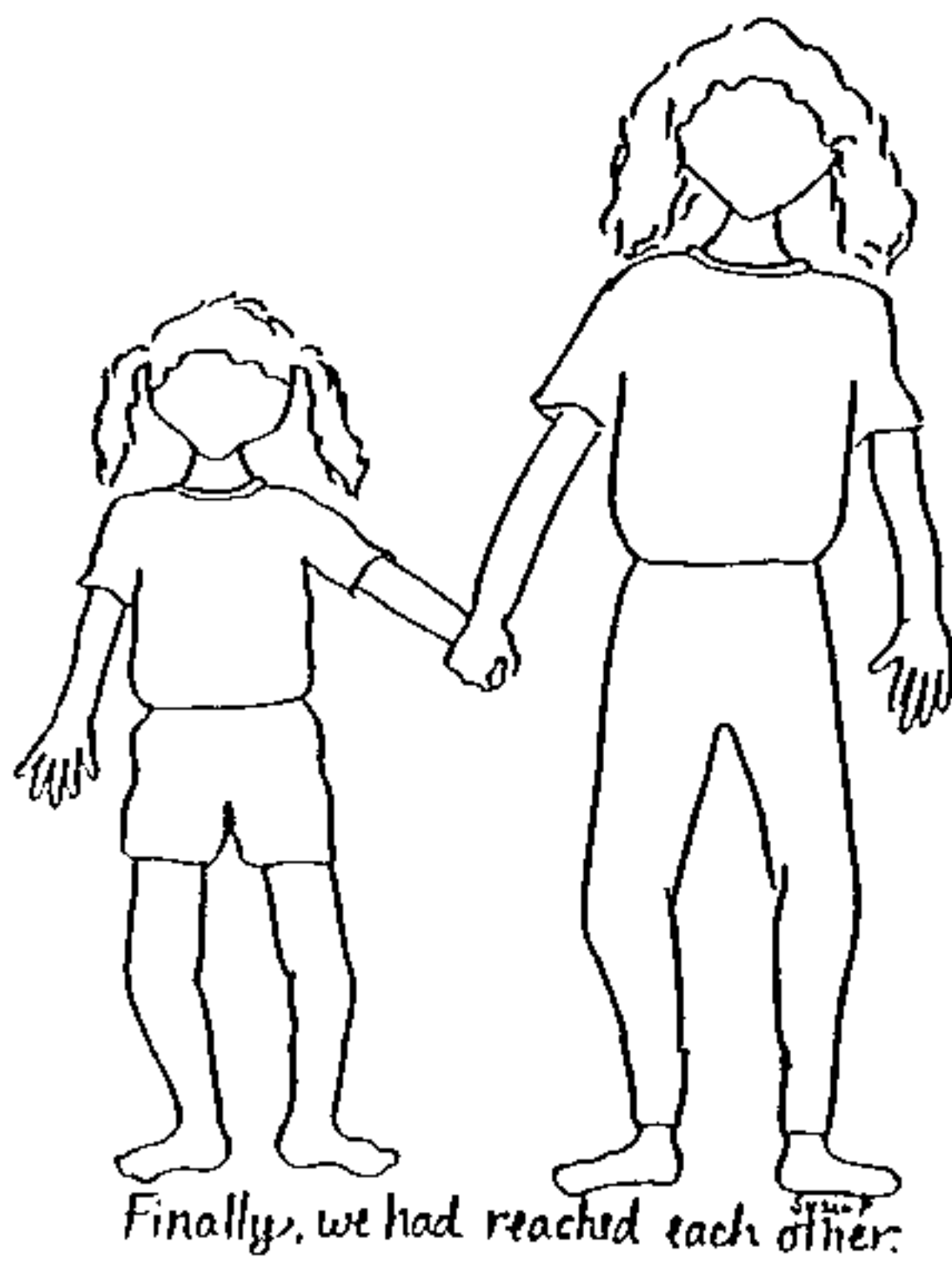
Some of the powder comes out of the bucket and it goes all over his face and shoulders. He still smiles. I keep throwing what's in the bucket at him. He has to get covered with it. I keep doing it.

Then someone says, "You did just fine. You didn't let him in."

(I woke up.)

By Iris M.

A Dream of Hope



Sometimes a dream comes along that makes all the other dreams worthwhile. A dream like this one, which leaves me feeling "okay" and "relaxed" with the reality of parts. A dream that renews my hope and encourages me to continue in the process.

The dream: I remembered talking on the phone with her and deciding on a place and a time to meet. She was a young girl of about 8 years. She had held something for me, while I had attended a program or a play, and she brought it with her each day to our meeting place — the cafeteria. But the cafeteria was huge and we were unable to find each other.

Then finally we were *both* there — at the same place and time. We had reached each other. She came to me and took my hand. I was cautious, almost scared. She led me back, through many tables of children, to her table where we sat as she continued to hold my hand.

I was glad to be there with her; she wanted me there. She wanted to talk and to return to me whatever it was that she had been holding for me for so long.

I was still scared, but I began to relax as I realized that she needed me . . . and that I needed her. And as she continued to hold my hand, I began to hold hers too.

By Susan P.

The Power of Music

By Libbie K.

In the same way that some say "God is love", so one very young alter told our psychologist, "Music is God, God is music." That child is too unsophisticated to be sacrilegious. In repeating her words, I do not mean to be so now. But for us music has been a release from pain, the experience of our only joy, the imaginings of freedom and exhilaration, the contemplation of peace, the deep rumblings of despair, the agonies of sorrow.

I remember standing in church, where our abusive father served as a minister, listening to the many voices raised in song. Looking at the song book in my hand, I remember the sudden mind explosion in realizing that as the voices went higher in pitch, so also the little dots on the page went higher on the page. My grandmother then gave me piano lessons; but not for long. My mother stopped them. That was the beginning of learning and loving music while my parents took it away, systematically, methodically. Personalities came and went, musical knowledge and ability were gained then lost, either walled-off or killed. Somehow the music survived.

Two years ago, beginning MPD therapy, I was a musician, but incomplete. As my psychologist uncovered each alter, especially

the other musicians, the melodies and harmonies, rhythms and instrumentation became richer, fuller — alive. As she facilitates the resolution of my pain and conflict, I become more of "me", and that "me" becomes more music.

"God" has all but been obliterated through horror; the war over music/guilt/religion/sex continues. But spirituality exists. Hearing a magnificent creation of music I see spirituality in the complexity of the composer's mind, in the musicians' subsequent capacity to perform the creation, in the listeners' heartfelt savoring of the sound. Music is God, God is music.

When I feel something inexpressible, inexplicable, I pick up my guitar, wander to a quiet place alone with my soul, and play what flows from me, singing what yearns to be sung. All those separated, hurting, bleeding parts of me turn inside to the music and find expression and release, comfort, peace, and a very unique harmony. I will never be a "great" composer or musician; like all of us, most of what I "could have been" was taken from me as a child. But in the compassionate care of the therapy process I am recovering my God, my self, and my music.

(We are honored to let readers know that Libbie has prepared a tape of songs she wrote during her healing process. Each tape ordered through MANY VOICES will be accompanied by a copy of the lyrics and a letter from Libbie explaining a little about each song. Price of the tape is \$10.00, plus \$1.50 for postage and handling. Send your order and payment to Libbie K., P.O. Box 48484, Phoenix, AZ 85075-8484.)

Inner World

My journey takes me far within
to the cave of darkness
made of ghosts and men.

No other can take these steps,
No other can take my stand,
No other can determine
if I'm woman or I'm man.

By S.B. for Haven's Folkes

Therapists' Page

By Moshe S. Torem, M.D.

Chairman, Dept. of Psychiatry, Akron General Medical Center; Professor & Chairman, Psychiatry, Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine; First President, Ohio Society for the Study of Multiple Personality & Dissociation; Winner of the Cornelia B. Wilbur Award (1988) and the David Caul Award (1989).

If you are reading this as an adult survivor of childhood abuse, you already are aware that your past was not pleasant. The unfortunate circumstances you lived through have shaped you in many ways.

Some of that shaping is constructive. You are most certainly a survivor, a strong, creative person who cares deep down about living, or you would not be here.

But at the same time, the pain of the past likely distorts your relationship with the world of today.

Because you are creative and resourceful, you have the capacity to correct these harmful distortions, once they are understood.

In this paper, I would like to help you become more aware of the special strengths and vulnerabilities common to many adult survivors of childhood abuse. I would also like to suggest some guidelines for day to day healthy living that you may begin to apply, right now, to make your life in the present more comfortable and satisfying.

1) Become aware of your tendency to please people in authority. The overwhelming need to be appreciated, loved, complimented, or told you are a good person may lead you to do things you don't personally believe in. Just to keep others happy, you may become involved in relationships with people who are troublesome, sick, or dangerous.

2) Become aware of mood swings or rapid changes in your feelings and emotions, especially those that seem unconnected to actual events now taking place. These moods reflect an emotional reaction to something in your past which has been triggered by current reality. Noticing what triggers these emotions can help you and your therapist guide you into a more stable emotional pattern.

3) You may experience all emotions very intensely. Do not make decisions when you have intense feelings, because you are likely to overlook logic, rationality, and the consequences of your action. Wait until you are able to think clearly.

4) You may have a difficult time accepting success. When you are successful, you may feel like a fake, and fear that others will find out the 'real you'.

The terrible 'real you' inside is imaginary. It originates from poor self-esteem. Known in psychiatry as an "internal persecutory introject", this image may constantly echo phrases used by your abusers: "You are no good." "I wish you were never born." "You are stupid, careless, lazy." "You have the genes of your father, who was an S.O.B."

It is natural that you believe these internalized messages, because they were told to you, over and over, by abusive authorities and caretakers. Those people were wrong. When you notice undermining words or behavior in yourself, take a few moments to realize where they originated, erase these beliefs and substitute new, healthy ways to nurture and appreciate yourself.

5) You may have a tendency to be a workaholic. You may ignore compliments from others, because you don't believe them. Again, the internal persecuting introjects try to make you feel worthless no matter how hard you work or how much you accomplish. Low self-esteem causes adult survivors of childhood trauma to compensate, pouring all their energy into work. Give yourself permission to relax!

6) Be aware of your behavior in close relationships. Although deep inside you want to be genuinely loved and cared for with respect and dignity, when you finally find someone who treats you this way, you may become suspicious. At heart, you feel unlovable. You may wonder "How could he or she really love me?" or think "If he really knew me, he'd leave me." You may repeatedly ask "Why do you love me?" to the point of annoying your partner, (since you don't believe the person when he or she explains.)

Sometimes you may provoke this individual, create obstacles or start fights, just to "test" if that person will love you "no matter what."

At other times, you may diminish

the person who loves you by putting him down, saying "He's a jerk," or "He's an idiot." Or you may unconsciously but purposefully seek out someone who is a "jerk" or an "idiot", because deep down inside you still hold the belief that you don't deserve anything better.

It is very important to consciously counteract the belief that you don't deserve happiness, health, stability, or a good relationship. Otherwise, you create an environment or attitude that reinforces rejection, depression, and abuse.

7) Become aware of your tendency to disown yourself by not accepting yourself and all your feelings and experiences. You may have used splitting, amnesia, or dissociation to help you survive the traumas of the past. But if you allow thick, solid barriers to continue separating the inner parts of yourself, you will not recognize your genuine strengths. This adds to your low self-esteem. Because you are not accepting all of yourself, you may feel like an imposter at times.

8) Be aware of your tendency to dissociate and behave like a timid little kid who views the world with the eyes and mind of a little kid. Be especially cautious in business transactions or financial matters. A little kid is no match for an unscrupulous salesman or con artist. If you do not feel sure you can function and reason as an adult in a business or financial situation, you may choose a safe, knowledgeable person to assist you. Our world has many wolves, looking for a lamb. There is no need for you to be one.

9) Remember that alters are your creation. They are not people with separate bodies. Keep your alters private, between you and your therapist. Although friends may accept child alters, you want friends to treat you as an adult, not as a child. An adult/kid relationship between two adults is unhealthy and perpetuates illness.

As you become more aware of inner attitudes that complicate your life,

(cont'd on page 5)

(Therapists' Page cont'd)

these suggestions may encourage daily health and healing:

1) Avoid lack of structure and boredom. Time without plans and purpose leaves you vulnerable to your tendency to dissociate. Set goals for yourself. Do whatever you can to structure your daily living by planning in advance for the day, or even better, for the week. Schedule time for rest or relaxation, followed by a period of work.

Frequently include close friends or trusted family members in your activities. You will realize your plans more often when they are shared with others.

2) Deal with your impulses, feelings, thoughts, and plans for the future by expressing them in words or artistic form. You may choose to write in a personal journal, have an inner dialogue with yourself, or talk with a therapist or close friend. When feelings seem too strong for words, work in an art form such as painting, drawing, clay or playdough, music, or dancing may let you release the feelings in a constructive, healthy way.

3) Learn to prevent escalation of emotions such as anger, infatuation, or extreme sadness and despair. Overwhelmed, you may see and feel nothing but that specific emotion. Blind emotion may cause you to make grave mistakes that may be difficult to undo.

4) Uncontrolled anger is especially risky. When you get in a fight and feel anger intensify, use the method called "adaptive disengagement" . . . in other words, leave the situation, take a walk, go to another room. If you are not wholly aware of your feelings, you may want to arrange with a friend to

signal "time-out" when you show signs of serious anger. When you see that signal, stop fighting or arguing and walk away.

5) I also caution against beating on pillows, punching bags, or screaming, as in primal scream therapy. Although these methods may be useful for some psychiatric conditions, my experience shows that beating or punching can be poison for people with an abuse history. They may become extremely frightened by the intensity of their rage and anger, feeling as if they will literally explode. The anger may escalate to a level that causes injury to the survivor or someone else.

Instead, choose to resolve your anger in a healthy way, by transforming it into words or artistic expression.

6) An adult survivor of childhood abuse is beset with trust issues. On the one hand, it is natural for you to be too naive. You may mistakenly trust adults who are smooth talkers, who don't deserve your trust.

On the other hand, your adult ego state has a natural tendency not to easily trust anyone. That is OK.

Trust has to be earned based on a person's track record of behavior. It is healthier to trust people only when you know them well.

7) Flashbacks, or remembered, relived trauma, will keep coming back until you finally master the experience and can let it go. To heal, you must rethink what happened to you as a child . . . give it new meaning and new understanding with your adult mind and wisdom of today.

The traumas of your childhood were not your fault. You were not bad. You

simply happened to be in a place with people who were sick, suffered mental illness, or were sociopaths. Those who were supposed to protect you didn't do their job.

8) Your tendency to accept responsibility for what happens to you is the outcome of brainwashing by adult perpetrators who said you deserved what happened. Also, by believing that you are to blame for your traumas, you ward off a much worse feeling: the realization that you were totally helpless, and had absolutely no control over what happened to you.

The helpless feeling produces so much panic that you may do anything to prevent it, including imagining that you could have stopped the abusive acts.

9) You will heal faster when you are able to accept that at that time, you were a victim. Today is different. Today, you can transform yourself from being a victim into a victor.

Recall the familiar saying, that "Living well is the best revenge." You have been a survivor all your life. Now it is time to move on from mere surviving, into healthy living.

10) Healthy living means living in the present & planning for the future; to lead a life of balance between your individual needs and rights and those of society; to balance your work, play, family life, and learning.

Remember that the process of therapy is truly a process of growth and self-acceptance. As you allow yourself to examine what really happened long ago, you will be able to free yourself from the prison of the past, and focus on your future as an adult.

MV

Reader Comment

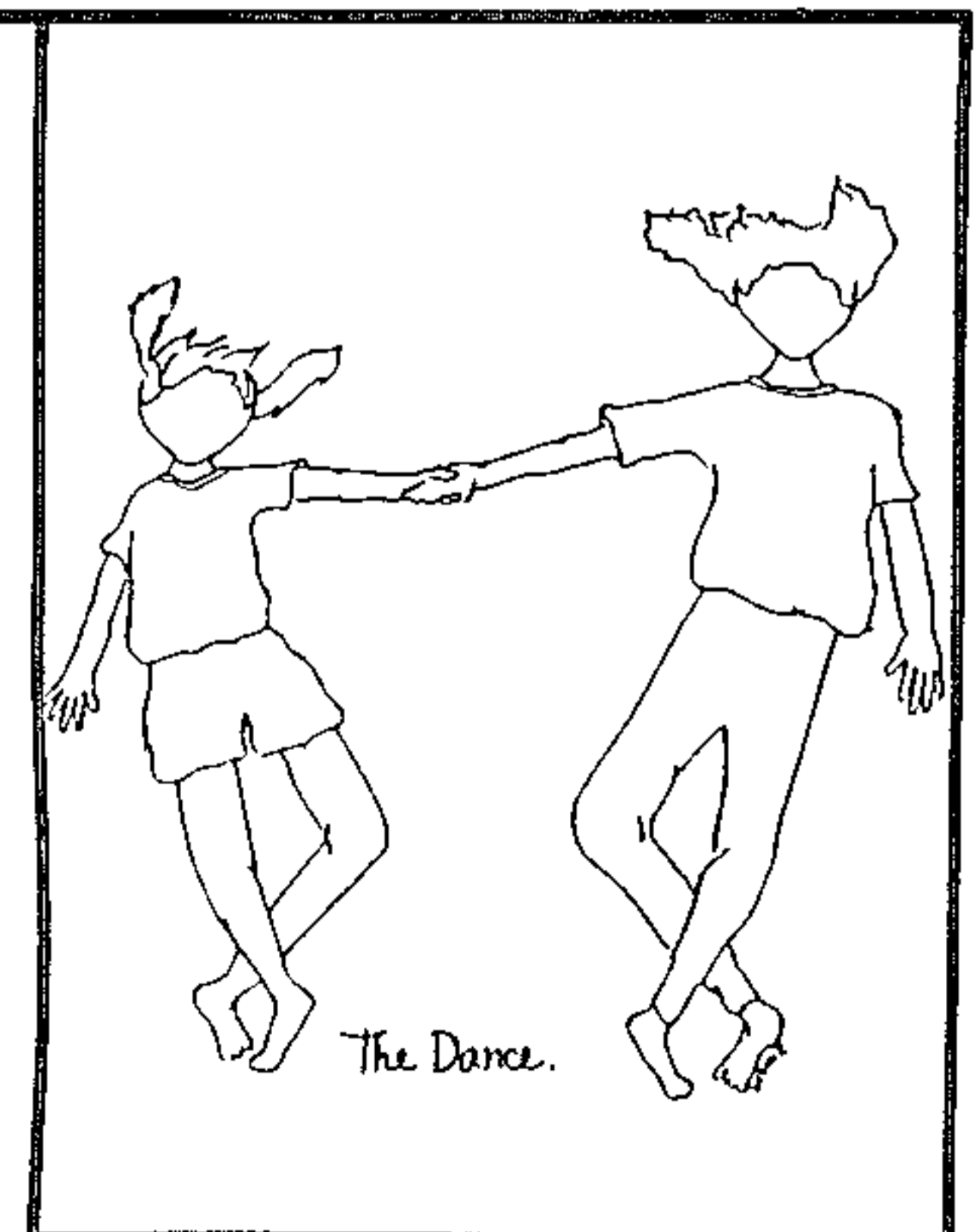
In response to Dr. Lawrence Klein's Therapist's Page (MANY VOICES Dec. 1989): Dr. Klein repeats a colleague's analogy, that someone trapped in a cult is no more responsible for his/her actions than a gun in the hands of a bad guy.

I think this is much too simplistic. I am a cult survivor in my seventh year of therapy, and I think I am close to healed. I fought hard to come to terms with the guilt, shame and horror of what I had done. Now that I have done it, I see that it is this which separates me from those like my parents.

My parents felt trapped. They never saw any choice in what they did, no more as adults than when they were children. They see themselves as victims.

I needed a way to feel different, to know I was not like them, and my ability to feel guilt has provided me with that. My parents never felt guilt, or remorse. I'm *not* saying I'm not a victim. I am, God knows I am, but one who did horrible things and I'll *never* feel good about that. And because it feels so awful, I know I'll never do that again. I am free, and my children will never be victims.

By J.T.



Recovering

By Rita M.

Q: I learned about several of my parts early in therapy. I gradually got used to them, but now I've found new ones! I feel disturbed and bewildered. Does this happen to others with MPD?

A: Absolutely! I've never encountered a person with MPD who knew immediately how many alters he or she had. It just doesn't work that way. (And if someone claims they do, I'm highly suspicious of it.)

Typically, the person realizes they have "others" inside, and may become first aware of a limited number of alters. They are usually grouped around specific abusive incidents, specific abusers, and/or functions (such as handling specific feelings or tasks.)

I find that alters are more or less "layered", and that as one

learns more about one's past, and resolves traumas, one becomes stronger and more able to deal with additional information held by "hidden" alters. One could not know everything at first, because the amount of pain would be overwhelming.

Q: Do other people with MPD suffer physical pain when certain "emotional states" take over?

A: I'd say this is pretty common. It's usually a sign of impending work (a flashback is on the way), or it occurs as part of the remembering. The pain is *real*, and often does not respond to medication.

I had plenty of experience with physical pain both prior to and during the meaty phase of therapy (when I did most of the flashback or abreactive work.) Headaches!

Gastritis (stomach)! Back pain, pains in my legs, You Name It. It's called "somatization of the memory." The body part that endured the abuse carries the pain, instead of the psyche remembering the incident.

Often, the pain in a particular area takes on a specific meaning. For example, in my case, stomach pain meant I was angry about something. Back pain was a "mother" issue. The important thing I learned was that if I did the work, the pain went away.

I want to make a point here about coping with this type of pain. Medicating it with drugs (legal or otherwise) will not make the pain go away. Drugs and alcohol may numb the pain temporarily, but until you do the work, the pain (physical and emotional) will haunt you. MV

Rita M. is a Licensed Independent Social Worker and Certified Alcoholism Counselor (LISW,CAC), and is also a recovering MPD client. She functions at a very high level (after much therapy) and is "integrated". MANY VOICES is pleased to have her help us provide the special viewpoint of a recovering, knowledgeable, MPD client/therapist. Readers may send questions to Rita, C/O MANY VOICES. We'll use as many as possible. —LW

Ten Self-Affirmations for Recovery

By Moshe S. Torem, M.D.

Note: Dr. Torem suggests that people with MPD read, write, or tape the following statements (or other affirmations that apply to your particular situation.) Reflect on these ego-strengthening messages repeatedly to counteract the negative "brainwashing" inflicted on you by perpetrators. (I listen to my tapes every morning...and it works!) —LW

1. I (insert name) am a (body's age) year-old adult (man/woman). I am intelligent and equipped to handle the realities of day-to-day living as a mature adult.
2. I am worthy of experiencing contentment and happiness in my life.
3. I am worthy of being treated with respect and dignity by myself and others.
4. All disagreements and internal conflicts must be resolved on a psychological level: expressed in words by writing in my journal, inner dialogue, and talking to a friend or to a mental health professional. Some of these internal conflicts can also be expressed through art: painting, drawing, and sculpture, etc.
5. Whatever happened to me in the past belongs in the past, so bygones can be bygones. Past experiences that come to me through flashbacks, thoughts, memories, feelings, emotions, or physical sensations are only remnants of the past. I live in the present and must always remember that these remnants are nothing but lingering memories. As I continue to heal and recover, I learn to let go of the past.
6. Healing and recovery are, in fact, freeing myself from the past, living in the present, and planning for a better future.
7. As a human being I'm entitled to experience the full range of human emotions, whether they are pleasant or unpleasant. I may have all the feelings of anger and sadness. However, I am not my feelings.
8. Every day in every way I am getting better and better. I develop greater clarity and insight in the understanding of myself and the world around me.
9. I am worthy of a great deal of credit for giving myself the courage to own and accept myself as a whole person and move forward on the road to full healing and recovery.
10. I am worthy of recognition for giving myself the chance to face what I need to face, accept what I need to accept, and own myself with dignity and respect as an equal member of our society. I am worthy of seeing myself in the future as fully healed and recovered, free from the past. My mind is open to focus on the present of day-to-day living. I am able to experience joy and hope as a mature, functioning adult. I am ready to move forward in my life and experience the ultimate state of self-actualization, realizing that I am in the world for a purpose, and my life is truly making a difference. MV

Here's a poem written by Carol. She's just recently taken her name. She spent most of her existence known as "ugly".

With our therapy, she is maturing and beginning to express her needs. This was written to express her pain and dreams.

The parents gave her the name and verbally abused her. They always told her she was ugly and they didn't want to look at her.

She's very strong in her dreams. For a long time she wouldn't let the therapist see her. She would appear briefly, but then flee — afraid to be shunned by another adult.

This was a bold step on her part to communicate her purpose.

Sincerely, Jan

Windows

By Carol M.

Patiently I watch for the sun to set
waiting for the darkness to
surround.

When I can open the door
and cautiously venture out.

Slow is my gait, and sad are my
eyes.

Hope springs forth as I pass
each house.

Longingly searching
for the open lights.

Fear pricks me, daring to surface.
But I have a mission that drives
me on.

"It" is out there, I know.

It has to be. I feel its draw.

The aim of the eyes are the
windows.

The ones that are open for the
world to view.

Warm lights that allow
my starving eyes to see.

Bravely, I steal a look into their
world.

Searching for that which is
lacking in mine.

People moving about within,
laughing, sharing — family love.

My soul wonders, what's it like
within that frame?

Its looks are inviting, safe,
happy.

Would you accept me,
if I were in there too?

My eyes lock, wanting to linger
there.

But the glimpse is brief, mustn't
get caught.

If caught, the parents would know,
and hope would end.

There are tricks for longer looks, I
know.

Pretend looking for a house
number, a lost pet.

But still, the tricks can't keep me
there
as long as I want.

It's their world and I'm not allowed
in.

But each glance brings me a
smile and a dream.

My hope is renewed and so, too,
my strength to survive.

Saddest are the blinds that are
pulled.

I'm not wanted there. Their
world is like mine.

Pain lives within there.

I hurry past.

Pleasure is always brief and not
fully mine.

Now the most painful time has
come — time to return.

My heart feels heavy and
wetness fills my eyes.

Into the house I must go, past
parents who hate me so.

to the safety of my room, to
shut tight my eyes to dream

of windows with open blinds,
warm lights and — love.

My People

You came to take my place
When the pain was too great
And there was no way to
understand
When all my innocence could say
was
"Nothing I have done deserves
THIS"

You came to save my rage, my
sorrow, my grief
Somehow you knew I would
someday
Be strong enough to bear
The gifts you'd bring of memories
Of feelings, of answers.

Now I cry for your pain
The pain you took to keep me
alive.

My people, my alters, my real
family

I will honor you by stopping the
lies.

I love you, my other selves.

By Susan & Company

For Tim

Who are you? You are a part of
me.

Our blood is the same — our
body.

We come from the same
beginning.

We have traveled the same path
to get where we are.

Can you not feel me?

Can you not acknowledge my
love —

or even my presence?

I care for you and love you —
I always have, and I do still.

I wish I could hate you —
to erase you from my life
like a mark on the
blackboard.

But instead you stay with me
like a blemish that doesn't
have to be a blemish.

I can't change you. I can't remove
you.

And yet you give me no
satisfaction in loving you.

How can you reject me? — I AM
You!

By S.B. on behalf of
Haven's Folkes

Battling the Bizarre

By Lynn W.

I hoped someone else would send in this type of bizarre experience, but they didn't. It's hard for *me* to put it down without thinking I'm totally nuts. But here goes... because I don't think I'm alone in this.

Night terrors and odd, surrealistic "experiences" affected me off and on all my life. I ignored them (via dissociation) as much as possible to retain a functional comfort-level. But when I was finally diagnosed and started treatment for a dissociative disorder more than three years ago, at age 42, the troubling experiences escalated to a very disruptive level.

Sometimes they occurred when I was on the edge of sleep. I usually "felt" awake, though maybe I wasn't. I would hear or see or feel people/things/ghosts/monsters in the room with me. The bed would (I swear) actually move and creak as if someone was lying down on it beside me... and I live alone.

Usually the unknown people were just watching me, but sometimes they were threatening and I was terrified. In addition to the experiences when I was "awake", I also had bizarre and terrorizing dreams. Some experiences were so vivid that I can only explain them as being "on another planet" or "in another place" (not this world.) The sense was so real I believed even after waking that I'd been "elsewhere".

I have separate internal cadres of scientific folks and spirit-believing folks. At that time the scientific view was quite dominant. When my therapist suggested I use "white light" to keep these troubles at bay, I could only think "Great. One loony meets *another* loony." The concept was beyond me.

But time went on and the bizarre dreams and experiences were even more intrusive. I was desperate for relief, fearing I couldn't keep working, or keep out of a hospital, if this stuff didn't settle down. So I decided to ignore my "better judgement" and try my therapist's suggestions. I called the trials "experiments" so I wouldn't be too uncomfortable doing something I thought was off-the-wall.

My perception of her theory is that some people (like me) who "split" at a very early age, remained partially connected or more accessible to the unseen world. I had never learned about personal boundaries, so I didn't know how to keep the mental-spiritual doors shut. They were wide open for any spirit-type curiosity seekers, attackers, etc. to waltz into my psyche at any time.

She suggested that I learn to close myself off from all intrusion for awhile, so I could concentrate on healing myself and wouldn't be distracted by bizarre experiences. I had to learn to say "No" to intruders, she said. Then they would go away.

First, we used imagery to contain me within a protective blue shield, later filled with sparkling white light. We taped this exercise and I listened to it often, *even though I could not completely relate to it.* (I was desperate, remember?) Over and over and over I listened, and followed the suggestions to the best of my ability.

Some night-terrors diminished after a week or two of this "treatment", but I still had strange, threatening visions and feelings in my apartment. My therapist suggested that I visualize myself and all other alters carrying

flashlight-style beams of white light, and filling every room and crevice of the apartment, even the closets, with this light. It was supposed to chase off anything negative or "dark". (Remember please, I thought this was nonsense. But I did it anyhow.)

Guess what? It worked. The overwhelming experiences subsided. Although now and then I have a hint of trouble, I simply think "Get out of here!" and start visualizing white light cleaning out the corners. The trouble goes away. I can sleep in the dark now, almost every night.

But I am still in the process of coming to terms with what really happened to cause the fears and visions to disappear. My group of spiritual believers inside is now stronger. They shrug their shoulders and say "Of course it works. Why not?"

The science-minded, skeptical group keeps trying to come up with a rational explanation. Their latest version is that the visualization creates symbolic protection within my unconscious that allows me to keep memories and imagination in perspective. I'm now better-able to define reality from the non-real. Occasionally a few in this latter group say "You've substituted one fantasy for another fantasy, and the entire subject is baloney!"

But this system must be functional so I can work, pay for therapy, enjoy living, and grow. In *my* opinion, I no longer care why something works. If it might work, I'll try it. If it *does* work, I'll keep doing it. And if it feels like nonsense, who cares? My goal is to function better and feel happier and more connected inside. I'll do whatever it takes to get there.

MV

An Open Letter to My Alters

By Iris M.

When you first started to communicate in my Twilight Zone you caught me by surprise.

Dreams were not something I'd seen before.

As your communications increased, I declared you my enemy.

"These night visions are a definite sign I'm going crazy," I said.

Visions of perversion that were against my nature.

Not me. My mind is sick to conjure up such things.

I'll be condemned.

But you persisted in your work, and then the pain surfaced.

Fear, doom, darkness, and mystery rooms

Tornadoes chasing, flights from danger, and seeking refuge.

Pounding heart and stabbing chest pains that continued into wakeness. These became the jolts

of my nights.

I did as the therapist asked, and after each dream I allowed the words to flow into the journals.

I found relief as the words were written. But then I put the journals away. I was O.K. I didn't need to read them. My denial continued still.

But I soon found you were not finished with me yet. You increased your vigil. I felt death near. The calls for help in the night increased with the terror. The therapist insisted I must stop and listen.

I fought you, but you didn't quit. Now you slipped into my awake mind. "Stop!" I screamed. "Let me be," I pleaded. "I just want peace," I cried. "Why can't I be free?"

Then came a new stage. I've discovered the pictures are real — real experiences — MY experiences. How can it be?

As the experiences are being

relayed and I attempt to listen, I've discovered a ponderous thing. You're not the enemy. Someone else is.

Now when the terror jolts me awake, I stop and ask "Who are you and what are you trying to say?" Then your words and stories widen the pictures of the night. Sometimes puzzling, sometimes bringing tears or even a smile. But always followed by comforting words from a Steady One within.

We've rounded a new corner of our Twilight Zone. The terrors haven't stopped, but the after-panic has. I'm able to sleep again and I've found that you can take away the pain as well as give.

My friends, I'm ready to listen. I can't guarantee I'll always be able to understand. But I promise not to deny you your expression. Together we'll work to resolve this dilemma. Then perhaps the nights will be safe for us all.

MV

Mother, I Can't Remember

By K.W.

In the whispering silence of a hospital night
did you hold me snugly against your breast
and sing softly into my ear?

Did you perch on the edge of the couch,
hold out safe arms and beg me to come as
I stepped and fell towards you?

Did you finally grasp my tiny hand and
guide me gently through crowds of knees
lining the aisles of countless stores?

When I crashed my tricycle did you bend down
and inspect my hurt fingers or knees,
stick on a band-aid and kiss me better?

When I awoke at night, frightened or alone,
did I trot up the stairs and stand by
your side of the bed? Did you invite me in?

I vividly remember the spankings, often deserved,
but I can't see the hugs.
Were there hugs?

On that first day of school did you lead me through
fearful arches, linger by my side, and maybe,
shed a tear as you walked away?

Before lemonade, did you chase me through the sprinklers
or throw grass in my hair
or pin me to the ground and tickle me until I cried?

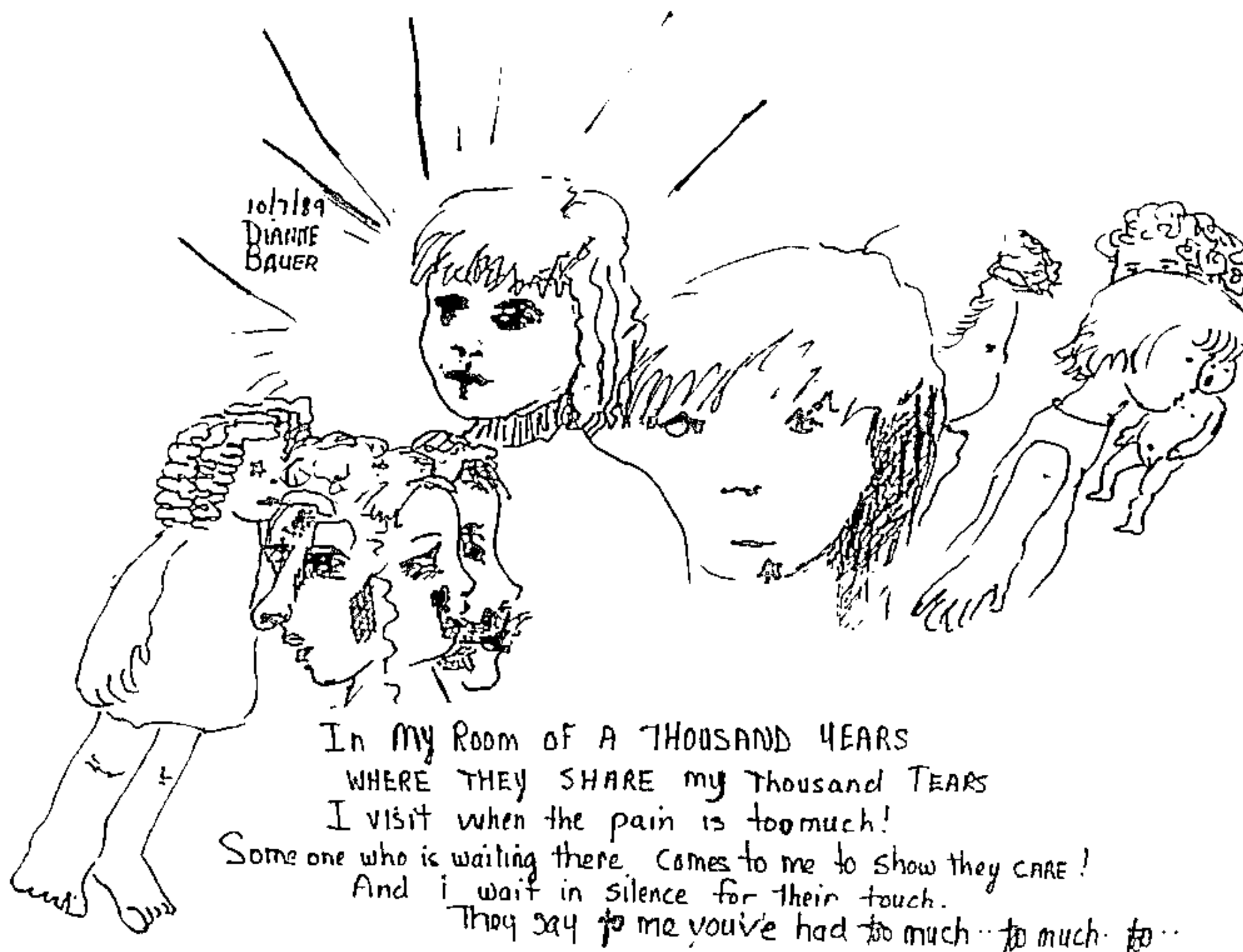
And when the night games ended,
were there bedtime stories? Or lullabies?
Or the braiding of hair?

Did you teach me to read? Or to understand math?
Were you there when I failed the tests
or discovered a new poet?

Were you by my side when I learned to work?
Or sing? Or pray?
Who taught me how to play house?
Did I play house?

When I was lost or cried into my pillow,
who wiped away the tears?
When I felt alone
where were you?

What kind of child
was I
that made me so hard to love?



In My Room OF A THOUSAND YEARS
 WHERE THEY SHARE my Thousand TEARS
 I visit when the pain is too much!
 Some one who is waiting there. Comes to me to show they CARE!
 And I wait in silence for their touch.
 They say to me you've had too much... too much... to...

Research and Resources

DD-Anon Group One offers information to assist friends and family of those in therapy with dissociative disorders, based on the successful 12-steps, 12-traditions pattern of recovery originated in Alcoholics Anonymous. For more information on this useful organization, write to DD-ANON, P.O. Box 4078, Appleton, WI 54915.

Author's Query: Author seeking dream journals of incest survivors for book on the role of dreams in healing from incest. Anonymity guaranteed. Write Karen Surman Paley, LCSW, 60 Central St., Topsfield, MA 01983. (Ms. Paley has studied the dreams of sexual abuse survivors for several years, and has written on the subject in *Genesis*, *Men's Health*, and the newsletter of the Association for the Study of Dreams, Vol.6, #5, Sept/Oct. 1989.)

Mother-Daughter incest is the subject of a confidential study conducted by Bonita A. Portzline, 1 Liberty St., Gettysburg, PA 17325. (717) 334-2063. Volunteers

participate by completing a questionnaire (signature not required.) Issues of concern include vulnerability of the family; red flag indicators; longterm effects; severity of trauma, shame and guilt; sexual preference; the mother's psychology; repression and unlocking of memories; intimacy issues; post-traumatic stress disorder; and the value of confrontation with the mother. Therapists as well as survivors may respond. Deadline June 1, 1990.

Another group is looking for stories that show how one of the 12 steps helped you personally overcome the problems associated with incest and/or sexual abuse. The stories will be published in book form. 3 to 5 typed pages, 5 to 7 handwritten pages, maximum. Sign your work with the name you wish to appear in the publication. You must send a permission note with your material. Anonymity will be respected. Write to 12 Steps, P.O. Box 241046, Detroit, MI 48224.

The Noise on the Stairs

Night. She huddled under the blankets.
 Awake, heart pounding. Was that a noise?
 She clutched her doll, stifled a sob.
 Oh, God, no. Not again. Please.

There. The noise again. Footsteps?
 A shuffle. Clink. Ice in a glass?
 Her heart thudding so loud it hurt.
 She whispered "Please don't let it be..."

Louder but — not a clink. More a clank.
 And a shuffling, coming up the stairs.
 Odd. That doesn't sound like...
 She sat up, cautious. Her door creaked open.

It stood there, moaning, caught in the moonlight.
 She could see the wallpaper through it,
 Through the rotted, hanging folds of its robe,
 Through the glittering, clanking chains.

"Geez, you gave me such a scare," she said.
 "For a minute I thought you were my father."

By Jessica T.



SURVIVOR: MUSIC ABOUT HEALING FROM SEXUAL ABUSE is a full-production cassette of 12 songs about experiencing/recovering from rape and abuse. Original NANCY DAY compositions performed by NANCY DAY. Although not focused on dissociation, this music addresses memories, surviving, the child/children inside, and many other issues that arise for dissociative folks. Send \$10 per tape and \$1.50 for shipping to SURVIVOR, P.O. Box 8317-MV, Pittsburgh, PA 15218.

Books

Katherine, It's Time An Incredible Journey into the World of a Multiple Personality

© 1989 by Kit Castle & Stefan Bechtel.
303 pages.
Published by Harper & Row, New York, NY.
\$19.95 hardback.

This is the latest book by a Multiple about her life as a multiple. Right off, I need to say that this story bothers me. That's not to say that I didn't like this book. I do. The complex of personalities now known as Kit Castle are/were diverse, gutsy, and well-described, in word and in picture. The pictures alone make this a unique story within a population of unique stories. Like most multiples, Kit tells of childhood abuse, adult confusion and pain, psychiatric misdiagnosis, finally a correct, but hard-to-accept diagnosis, therapy and . . . And here we part company with other reported cases. Generally, fusion is described as a coming-together of the diverse parts of the multiple, with no loss of the qualities of those parts. The description we find in this book tells of a mental (physical?) "spinning out" of each personality, leaving Kit and the spirit guide, or internal self-helper, Michael, who was still present at the time the book was written.

I enjoyed the book very much, but I kept wanting to hear more about the therapy — the healing process. And of course, the contents of the foreword and of the Notes to the Reader at the beginning tell us that the story is far from finished, that more personalities have emerged, and that Kit is back in therapy. Expert opinions quoted tell us that Kit has more work to do.

This leaves me hoping. I'm hoping that this courageous woman will continue to pursue the healing and happiness she so richly deserves. I'm hoping that the therapy will prove to be successful, in whatever way Kit wishes to define success. And, I'm hoping someday to read the next installment of this story.

— Dyan.

A Mind of My Own The Woman Who Was Known as Eve Tells of Her Triumph over Multiple Personality Disorder

© 1989 by Chris Costner Sizemore. 274 pages.
Published by William Morrow & Co., Inc.,
New York, NY \$19.95 hardback.

Chris Sizemore — she was "Eve" — she was a multiple — she is a tireless advocate for those in pursuit of mental health.

Chris' story had been told before, but this is definitely the most coherent, complete and integrated approach. Why not? This version was written by the complete and integrated Chris Sizemore.

Chris is not a "typical" multiple. After many many years of therapy, there is no memory of childhood abuse of any kind. Childhood trauma, yes, but not to the extent that is normally required to cause the dissociation and splitting that results in the formation of alter personalities. Her therapy was longer than most (and most multiples are in therapy for a long time.) The fact that Chris' family remained intact (though certainly not unaffected) throughout therapy and post-integration was both atypically helpful and atypically difficult for her recovery.

Obviously, it was helpful to have her family stand by her; she was supported financially, had insurance coverage and some measure of stability in her life (this is not to say that there were not countless problems and adjustments for this family, because there were.) On the other hand, many of us end up starting a new life during and after therapy, and we can shape that life to our changing selves as we go. Chris, after integration, was placed into a ready-made family, which in some ways, didn't know or accept *her* as she now was. I have much respect for Chris' determination to make this situation work.

For years after integration, Chris worked extremely hard as a mental health advocate. In this role, Chris seems to have been most effective. She blossomed in

the limelight, receiving awards and recognition for her efforts.

I would like to hear more acknowledgement that most multiples are not like Chris. Most of us are dealing with the aftermath of severe sexual, physical and mental abuse. Chris' story is much more comfortable for the public to hear, but the public, including the mental health community, needs to see the whole, realistic picture.

I cannot ignore the implied criticism of other multiples, such as Sybil and Truddi Chase. Both of these women endured extremely abusive childhoods. The woman known as Sybil was, and is, a very private person. She did a great service by allowing her story to be told. She was a teacher and an artist and contributed to the world in her own important way. No reason to go public.

Truddi chose to go public even during therapy. At the time Truddi's complex, *The Troops*, wrote a book and hit the talk show circuit, they had chosen not to integrate (the book, and the choice, have been labelled "controversial", but more and more I am hearing the argument for cooperation as opposed to integration as a viable alternative for multiples.) Chris criticizes this choice as being hard on Truddi's family. I think that Truddi's first allegiance had to be her self — or selves, especially since her daughter was grown, and her ex-husband was dead. I find the criticism puzzling in light of the fact that Chris herself describes how her drive to travel over the country 200 days a year was neglectful at a time when her husband's health was failing him.

This is a book worth reading, but it should not be taken as the definitive book on the subject. (I take exception to her saying that "their disorder is a *willed negligence of responsibility* for their lives"! — [emphasis mine]. That left ALL of our adult selves boiling mad!!) — Lynda

THANKS

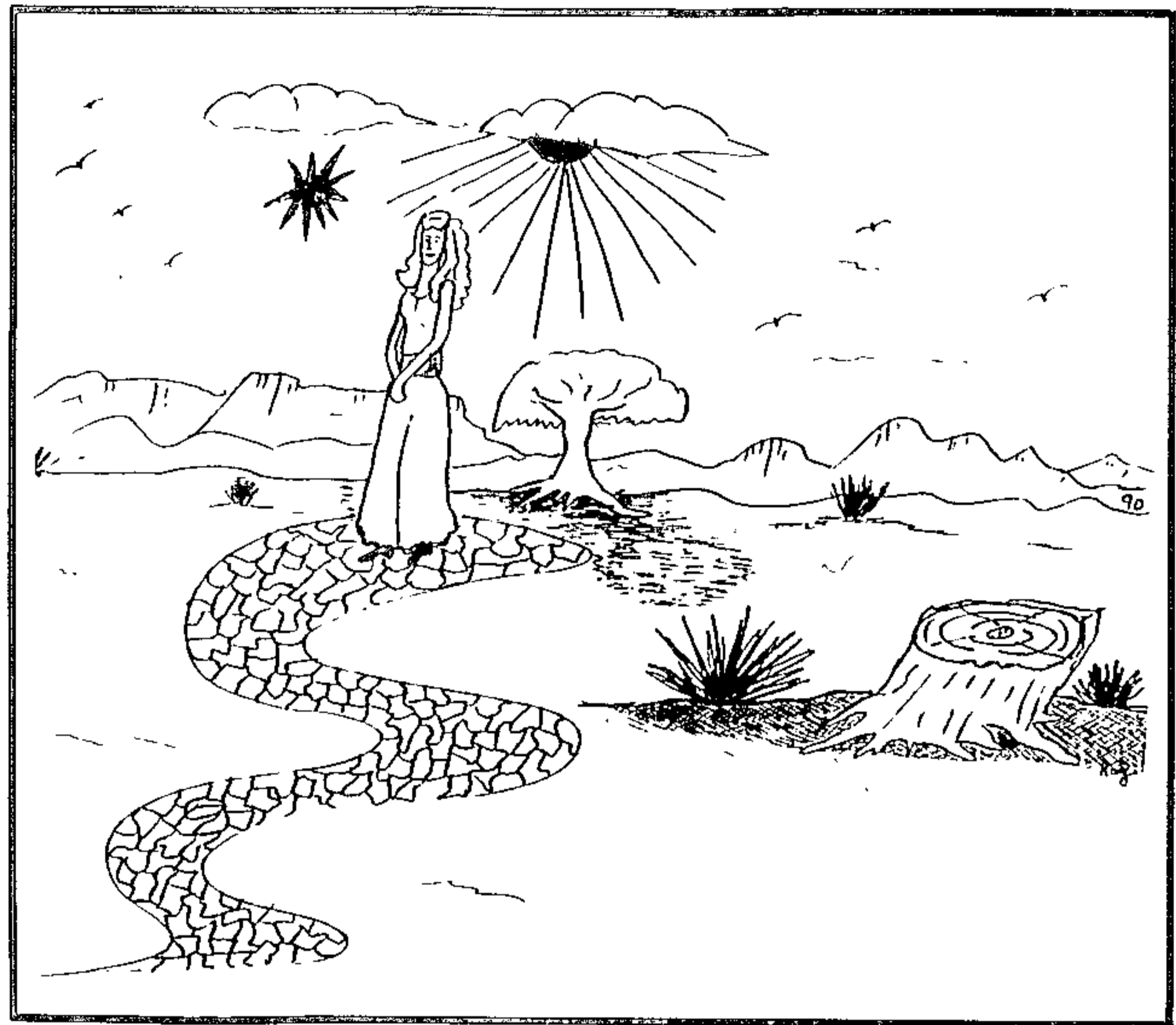
Contributors to this issue deserve a special "Thank You," as do our readers. Without you, we wouldn't have *MANY VOICES!*

As usual we received more "good stuff" than we had room for, but I'm saving some for future issues. And please, even if the first things you send don't appear in *MANY VOICES*, try again. Everything is carefully read.

We are in special need of humor, cartoons, and reproducible art (ie, not too much shading.)

Please note our upcoming issue themes. And feel free to send your ideas for future topics, your likes and dislikes. We want *MANY VOICES* to be helpful to *YOU*.

— LW



June 1990

Accepting diagnosis and developing co-consciousness. Videotaping? Journals? What helped you know or trust your self/selves? ART. Making peace with your parts. DEADLINE for submissions: April 1, 1990.

August 1990

Limit setting and boundaries in therapy. Input from clients and therapists on appropriate phone calls, touching, questions, social interaction. ART. Draw the part of you that knows the difference between safety and danger. DEADLINE for submissions: June 1, 1990.

October 1990

Grief. Accepting loss in order to heal. How to "work through" grief. ART. Draw your path through grief. DEADLINE for submissions: August 1, 1990.

December 1990

Relationships with "outsiders": children, friends, spouses, significant others. Who do you tell about your diagnosis? When and how much do you tell? Dealing with negative response. ART: Draw you and your friends/family. DEADLINE for submissions: October 1, 1990.

Share with us!

Prose, poetry, and art are accepted on upcoming issue themes, (and even on NON-themes, if it's really great.) DO send humor, cartoons, good ideas, and whatever is useful to you. Please limit prose to about 4 typed double-spaced pages. Line drawings (black on white) are best. We can't possibly print everything. Some pieces will be condensed, but we'll print as much as we can. Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope for return of your originals and a note giving us permission to publish and/or edit or excerpt your work.

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