

MANY VOICES

WORDS OF HOPE FOR PEOPLE WITH MPD OR A DISSOCIATIVE DISORDER

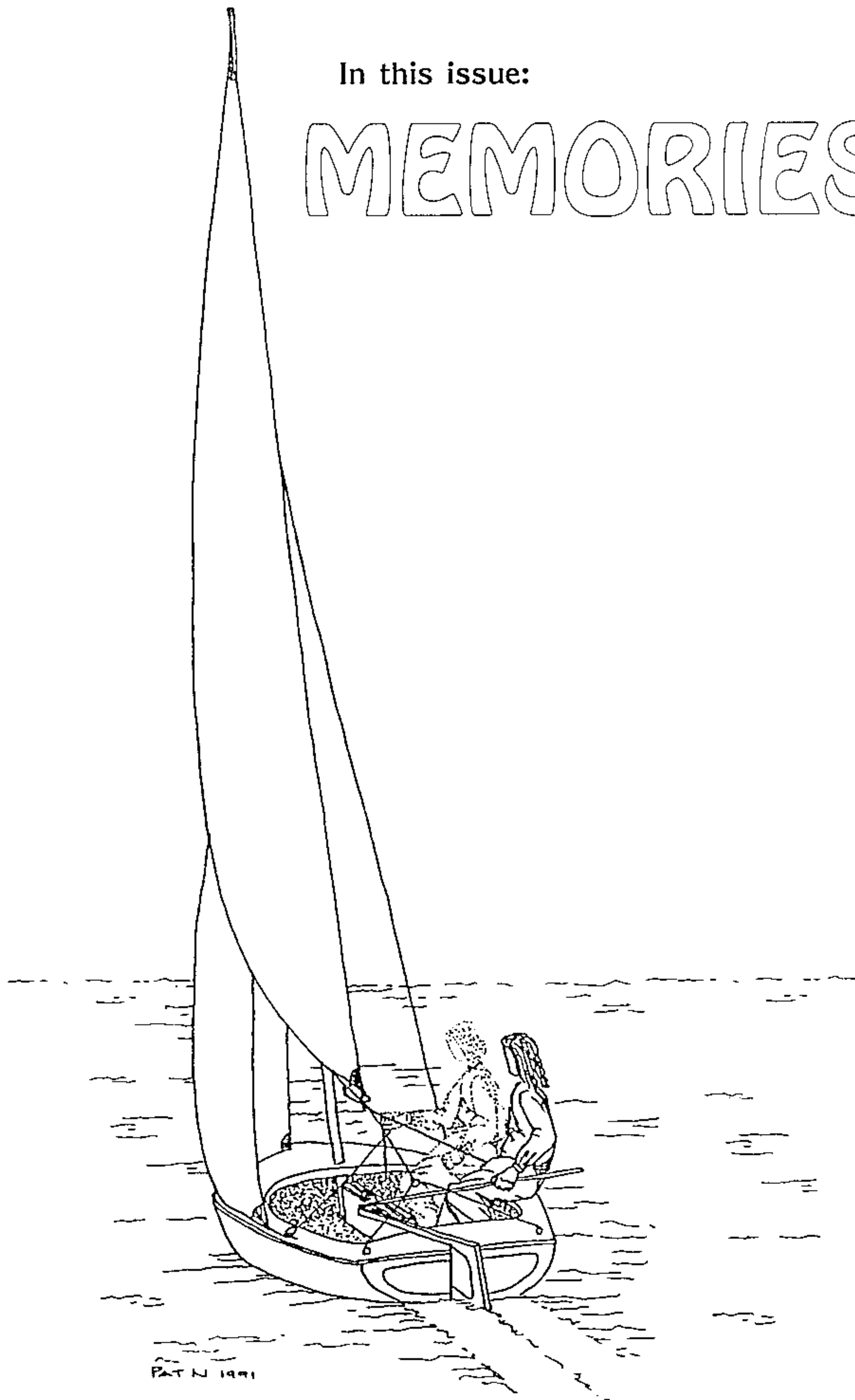
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Facing Down Distortion

By Lynn W.

T rue Confession Time. Those who know me know I can be skeptical of memory, especially my own. Those who know me *well* understand where this tendency comes from: I've had actual, verifiable, first-hand experiences of distorted perception. I have seen things that aren't there (positive hallucinations.) I have *not* seen things that *are* there (negative hallucinations.) And I have created completely different "looks" for things that exist, to suit some unconscious need for expression. (There's probably a great technical term for this, but I don't know it, so I call it simply "distortion".)

Whenever I catch myself in one of these unplanned "mistakes" (and thank heaven they are not frequent...or I don't catch myself frequently) I am first shocked, then embarrassed. Faulty perception makes me wonder if I'm *really* "crazy" after all.

But since most of my life is conducted in the same world with the rest of you folks (& we can usually agree on what we see, hear, etc. in general) I've decided I'm not *seriously* crazy. Instead I take the misperceptions seriously, and try to figure out why they happened, or what meaning they have for me.

Example 1: I was loudly calling for my teenaged son in the empty living room...and after some time learned (to my dismay) that he was actually lying on the sofa I saw as vacant. (negative hallucination.) I found this incident described in an old journal, and after long consideration decided that I was angry and somehow expecting him not to come when he was called...and I fulfilled my expectations by "erasing" him from the scene.

Example 2: Engaged in a "bad therapy" duet (not with my present therapist, who is wonderful) I found myself going increasingly downhill. I kept trying to understand why, and realized it might have something to do with her treatment room, which had blue

walls, heavy blue drapes and overstuffed blue chairs. It was a very depressing place to me, and I discussed this thoroughly with friends. Finally I decided to get up my nerve and mention it to her, even though it might not help. When I walked into my next session, I burst out laughing: The walls were beige, not blue. There were no drapes — just venetian blinds. And the chairs were beige with wood arms, not overstuffed blue. It was a completely different room from the one I had been "seeing" in my mind! (I did discuss this with the therapist, but we still never worked well together.) Somehow I'd managed to make my mood concrete by projecting it onto the space around me!

Example 3. While checking into the hotel for an MPD conference, the clerk asked me if I'd accept a room with two double beds, rather than the single, king-sized bed I'd requested. I was a bit irritated, but said OK, since I was tired and there was no point arguing. I went up to the room, put away my luggage, I went in and out a few times, exploring the hotel, then off to a party with other people from Ohio. At the party, I entertained acquaintances with my little "joke"...My room had two beds for my one body—perfect for a diagnosed DD-client! Everyone laughed, including me. But I stopped laughing when I went back to my room after the party. There was only one bed, not two! I saw the one bed before me, but could still see the two beds plainly in my mind! The two perceptions seemed equally real. (positive hallucination.) Realistically, I knew the hotel staff hadn't set me up on purpose...they didn't put two beds in the room and then switch them while I wasn't looking. I fell hard into despair and massive self-doubt that lasted several days. Finally I came to terms with the reality, knowing that I can be extremely suggestible, especially under stress. When an authority (the hotel clerk) told me to expect

to see two beds...I saw two beds! I let the words of another person have more inner validity than my own eyesight.

These were all rather mundane experiences, not involving major abuse of any kind. So I have to wonder, if I create such dramatic distortions in minor situations, what percentage of my remembered childhood images are distorted? (For example, I'm almost 100% sure that several horrendous visions in my past came from an illustrated copy of *Dante's Inferno* I was exposed to as a young child. I have the book—& the pictures match up.)

After months of contemplation my decision about this is to call almost all of my recollections "images", not "memories". I choose to not get intensely invested in the validity of details, but to work instead on what this picture or series of pictures represents to me, how I feel about it, why I might feel that way, what can I take from it to learn about myself and my world. I believe that *every* image, real or not-real, has meaning for me, and I refuse to get mad at myself if I can't prove something is real or false. I simply try to use the image as a tool for understanding.

One other problem I have with memory, that a few of you may share: Although many people claim that everyone stores all memories in complete form, that doesn't seem to be true for me. My therapist and I have worked for years trying different types of memory retrieval. She is an excellent therapist, and I am a hard worker, but we don't get much in detailed results. (There's plenty to indicate that I had a very chaotic and traumatizing childhood...but only a few memories go beyond an instant or two in time and much seems to be missing.) I fretted about this problem for months and months. I believed I couldn't heal as others do, because I couldn't work

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(Distortions cont'd)

through memories.

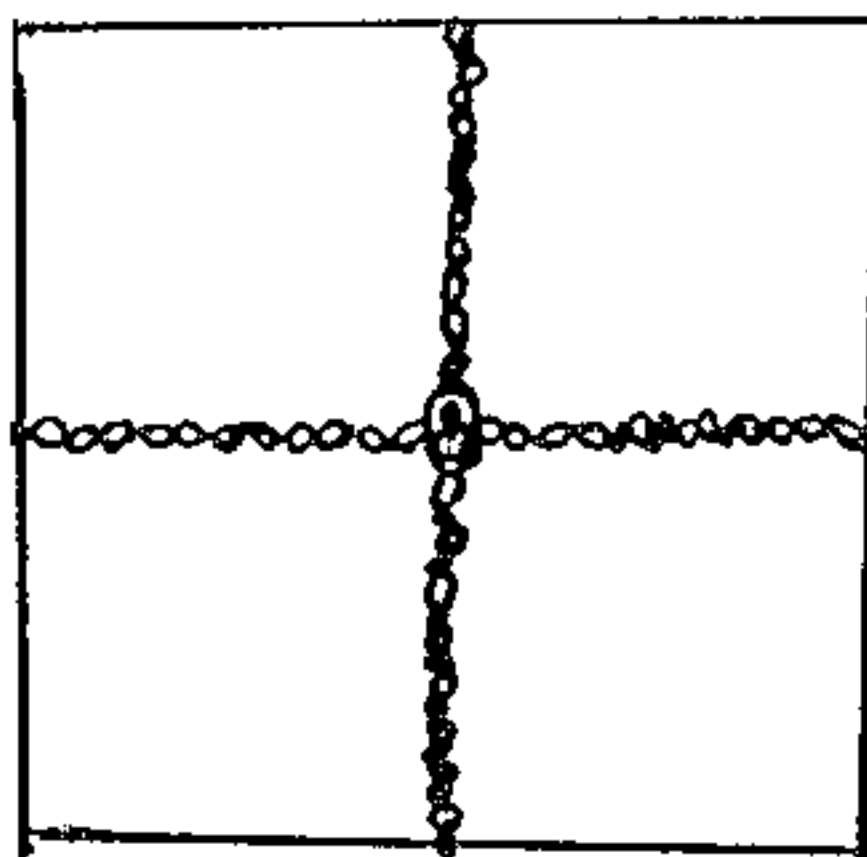
Finally my therapist suggested that, maybe, the memories really were *not* stored . . . or at least weren't coded in a way that they could be retrieved. She said that because my abuse started very early (perhaps within the first week of infancy) and because the home was incredibly chaotic (no sense of time passing, no regular schedules, no order of any kind) it's possible that my tiny brain didn't get the right signals to set up the usual memory-bank that most people have.

I've really fought this explanation. I keep hoping there's just some massive thick barrier separating me from the "real past" . . . that someday it will open and I'll know what happened for sure. But as time goes by, I am beginning to accept the possibility that I will *never* know, that I *can't* know because the record isn't there. And that I must somehow learn to go on and progress in spite of this handicap. That's what I'm trying to do. MV



We put all our scary thoughts, memories and feelings in a mason jar with a screw-down lid and leave it in our therapist's office. If we try to ignore it, it will leak, but as long as we remember it's there, it stays put until it's really time to deal with it. It may sound corny, but it works!

By Ashley's gang



This is a box that is wrapped up with a chain. Some of our memories are stored here. There are other boxes just like it that hold sadness, pain, anger and other things. Some of them are really bulging and look like they will pop.

By Robin & Daniel

The Memory Mouse

Team effort, but mostly by Melanie

Some people say I have memory mice in my house. I say they're wrong. I would never have mice in MY house! Just because there's extra shit in my emotional baggage doesn't mean a memory mouse left it. I've never seen one and certainly if they were there I'd see one. People point out the holes in my sense of time, but I say there's no proof a memory mouse did it. I've heard of people losing their whole sense of humor to memory mice. I do hear noises at night in my thought cupboard but those are just dreams. Aren't they? They must be. Oh, please don't let there be a memory mouse in my house. I don't want it to be a memory mouse. They're so hard to get control of. I thought I saw one the other night while I was sleeping. I was terrified. I just want to forget the whole thing like it never happened. Maybe it didn't, maybe it's just my imagination. But then, what would explain the footprints through my sense of reality and the holes in my self esteem? Why are all these things happening to me if there's no memory mouse?

Then it happened. One night I actually saw one. I was so scared I didn't know what to do. I froze. I couldn't do anything to stop it or make it go away. I told my pest controller all about it and she asked if I thought it was real. I

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Clinical Director

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told her I didn't know. She asked me if it mattered whether they were real or not? I guess not, because I've still got the real shit and the real holes and the real footprints whether the memory mice are real or not. My pest controller said that she can't get rid of the mice for good but she can help me learn to clean up the damage and get them under control.

So now I'm trying to clean up what the memory mice leave for me and I'm sort of getting used to having them around. I still don't like them but everytime I see one it's a little less scary. Maybe someday there won't be so many and there won't be so much to clean up. It just seems bad at first because there's so many and no one has ever cleaned before. Each one has a name now and some are bigger than others. They still come out at night when I'm dreaming and sometimes I see them and get scared. But I know that my pest controller will help me clean up and eventually I won't need her to help me anymore.

So if you think you have memory mice too, don't worry about whether they're real or not. Just remember you can clean up the mess without ever seeing a memory mouse. And it's the clean house that's important. MV

Therapists' Page

By David K. Sakheim, Ph.D. and Susan E. Devine, R.N., M.S.N.

*Dr. Sakheim is a clinical psychologist specializing in MPD who practices in South Windsor, CT and Springfield, MA. Ms. Devine has specialized in childhood trauma and is a consultant for the Yale Law and Psychiatry Program and the New Haven Court Clinic. They are co-editors of the book **OUT OF DARKNESS** (see book review this issue), from which this article is derived.*

The phenomena of patients presenting and being labeled by therapists as ritually abused and/or satanic cult survivors is fairly new. It is obviously therefore very important to be clear about what such terms signify. It is important to realize that "satanism" as a religion does not necessarily imply illegal activities and that the groups that get labeled as "satanic" are very heterogeneous. Since there are groups that practice satanism without committing crimes and since many groups get labeled as satanic when others dislike them it is very important to be careful in how one uses the term "satanism." We also must not lose sight of the fact that many children are severely and repetitively abused in non-satanic situations and that members of any religious group can just as systematically and cruelly abuse a child as can any satanist. However for someone abused in a satan worship context, understanding the motivations of the perpetrators can be an important factor in working through the experiences. It clearly has a different impact for anyone if the abuse/trauma they experienced was accidental, random, deliberate, sanctioned by society in the name of religion if they were blamed etc. Thus, it probably makes the most sense in attempting to categorize such experiences, to attend to the severity of what was experienced as well as to note the context in which the abuse occurred. Ritual abuse, therefore is probably the most useful generic term for repetitive and brutal abuse of children that is on the extreme end of the sexual physical emotional and spiritual abuse continuum. One can then specify the context by stating that the patient was ritually abused as

part of a satan worshipping group as part of a multi dimensional child sex ring, within an organized crime family, by a psychotic parent, etc.

At present the most common area for discussion about satanic cults is to debate the reality of their existence. Opinions vary from assuming 100% accuracy of survivors' recall to assuming that all of the descriptions of atrocities are delusional. Clearly, until more investigative work is completed there can not be any definitive answers to this debate. In fact it seems likely that there will not be one single answer. Patients will probably range from those who are malingering for secondary gain, to those who are delusional, to still others for whom descriptions of satanism are screen memories, to those whom have truly experienced ritualized forms of abuse. It is also likely that many patients will present with a combination of these factors. Unfortunately our field has a tendency to become polarized in such situations, with some clinicians claiming that every patient's story is true and that the rest of the field is heartless, while others claim that every patient's story is delusional and the rest of the field is merely too gullible. Neither of these polarized positions take into account all of the data, and neither will help us to move forward in our understanding of this complex group of patients.

In attempting to understand this area it is important that we maintain both a scientific skepticism and an empathic clinical orientation. We need to avoid the hysteria of overreaction yet equally to avoid the natural denial mechanisms that get triggered when one is confronted with horrible material. Despite

humanity's clearly documented history of interpersonal violence, and despite our psychological understanding of post traumatic reactions, we tend to approach most victims with disbelief. Much as our field has approached the area of incest and other forms of child abuse for years, we demand tremendous amounts of proof before we are willing to believe that people can be horrible to one another. Although we know that this has occurred throughout our history, each time such practices come to light we try to avoid the pain of knowledge. Recent history is full of such events. Examples include: the holocaust, Stalin's mass killings, KKK and mafia violence, the massacre at Mai Lai, activities of the Chowchesku regime, Noriega's "dignity battalions", Jonestown's mass suicide, recent reports of "wilding" and gay bashing, capital punishment, the use of chemical weapons, the massacre at Tienanman Square, the Nazi killings of mental patients, the killings of Brazilian street children, CIA drug experiments, the Rodney King beating by police, etc., etc. The list could easily go on for pages. However all of these have not only been examples of the extremes of human cruelty, but have also been examples of the extremes to which human denial can go. People do not want to look at how sadistic our species can be.

It is also easy to point to hysterical overreactions throughout our history. Hysteria clearly can be as dangerous as denial. It is no coincidence that when one uses the term "witch hunt" it implies going after innocent people as part of a mass hysteria, as in the Salem witch trials. The days of

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(Therapist's Page cont'd)

senator Joseph McCarthy provide a telling recent example. Many in the Jewish community are particularly sensitive to this issue since allegations of "ritual murder" of Christian children have been used for centuries as a way to justify pogroms against Jews. From the false allegations and subsequent murders in Roshana, Lithuania in 1657 to the similar use of such allegations by the Nazis in this century, charges of ritual murder have been used repeatedly to justify oppression.

Over the years the mental health profession neither has been immune to hysterical overreactions nor to the denial of interpersonal violence. It will be very sad if the internal disagreements in our field about how to approach the area of ritual abuse force therapists to take sides before the information is available to do so in an educated fashion. If that occurs each side will misdiagnose important clinical situations. It would be a major loss to our field if hysteria allows us to go far beyond our data, since our credibility rests on maintaining a scientific approach. However, it would be equally tragic for ritual abuse to become the "incest" of the 1990s in the sense that we end up blaming the victims and attributing their stories to fantasy rather than confronting the horrors of their experience.

This is not to imply that a therapist must believe every word of a survivor's descriptions, even if we know for a fact that s/he was abused. Research has shown that people in general are not usually very accurate witnesses even under ideal circumstances. Clearly, the observations of a young child who is deliberately being tortured, confused, drugged, and terrorized will not be without distortion. This is even more likely when the survivor is trying to reconstruct events that occurred 20 or more years in the past. However, the necessity to verify every detail is far less important in therapy than it would be in a legal situation. In therapy it may be enough to accept that a patient's post traumatic stress reactions indicate a history that necessitates

exploration with the therapist present as an ally. On the other hand, the therapist must not be seduced by his/her own needs, nor by the compelling material and the intensely projected affects to give up a therapeutic role and become an active agent for either side of the patient's ambivalence. The therapist's role is to help the patient to better understand his/her own doubts and certainties. It is important to realize that a major part of the trauma involved for these patients is the very fact that their perceptions and memories have been so distorted by the types of abuse that occurred. Healing is made far more difficult and painful by the confusion, dissociations, and non-sequential memories that the abuse created. It does not help this process for the therapist to add to the patient's already profound distrust of his/her own perceptions. It is clearly a major part of the patient's struggle to sort out what is real.

It will be very important to learn if completely fantasized trauma (as opposed to real trauma or a screen memory that does, in fact, have a traumatic etiology) can produce a PTSD syndrome. It will also be important to study how treatment approaches will need to differ for such different sub-populations. Clearly, as we learn more about the subtypes of patients who present with PTSD symptoms (eg, genuine traumatic etiologies, patients with screen memories, Munchausens cases, patients who are malingering, delusional disorders, "pseudo PTSD", etc.) as well as about the prevalence, symptom pictures, course, etc., of each type of subgroup, we will be able to make a more credible assessment as well as to offer more helpful treatment approaches.

At present we do not yet have this information. However, it is interesting that we have such a difficult time believing that patients have been severely traumatized even when there is corroborating data. This is especially striking since nothing they describe is really unknown to us. Taken separately, the crimes

that ritually abused patients report (child abuse, torture, infanticide, cannibalism, child pornography, drug abuse and sales, cruelty to animals, murder, etc.) are all ones that we know to occur. In part, it is probably our difficulty with imagining the combination of horrors that makes us so skeptical. However, it is important to realize that working to understand this far end of the continuum of human cruelty through research and treatment with survivors, we will probably be far better able to understand and treat less severe forms of abuse and trauma. A focus on satan or other more mystical and sensational aspects of this area can take us away from the sad reality of the extreme sadism and cruelty that are truly behind the problems that these patients experience. The problems of the ritual abuse survivor are not significant because they are so different from other types of symptoms and reactions, but rather because they contain the extremes of human coping responses to the extremes of potential stressors. As we begin to understand that the etiologies of many diagnostic symptoms are based in defense against trauma (PTSD, Borderline and other Personality Disorders, the Dissociative Disorders, Adjustment Disorders, as well as some Brief Psychotic Reactions, Anxiety Disorders and Paraphilias, etc.) insights gained from the therapy of ritually abused persons will be tremendously helpful.

At present, the degree to which inter-generational satanic cults exist, conspire, and are organized is not at all clear. However, there is not disagreement about the fact that many of the patients in question have experienced severe forms of abuse and that as therapists we will need to find ways to help them heal. Even if we discover that there is no such global conspiracy, we will still need to develop ways to investigate and prosecute the criminal acts that do occur, as well as to develop and provide treatment for the victims in such cases. At present, there is

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(Therapist's Page cont'd)

no question that the existing mental health system often re-victimizes patients and their families through our lack of understanding about their disclosures

It is clear that at this stage in our knowledge it is essential that we listen to those who are undergoing this process rather than assuming that we have all the answers ourselves. What is helpful or harmful is not always what one might expect and can really only be ascertained by being a supportive ally during each patient's process of recovery. Therapy can be tremendously helpful when early abuse is uncovered in a safe and supportive environment. However, it is important to recognize that therapy has the potential to be re-victimizing, especially when the underlying traumatic material is not understood nor addressed.

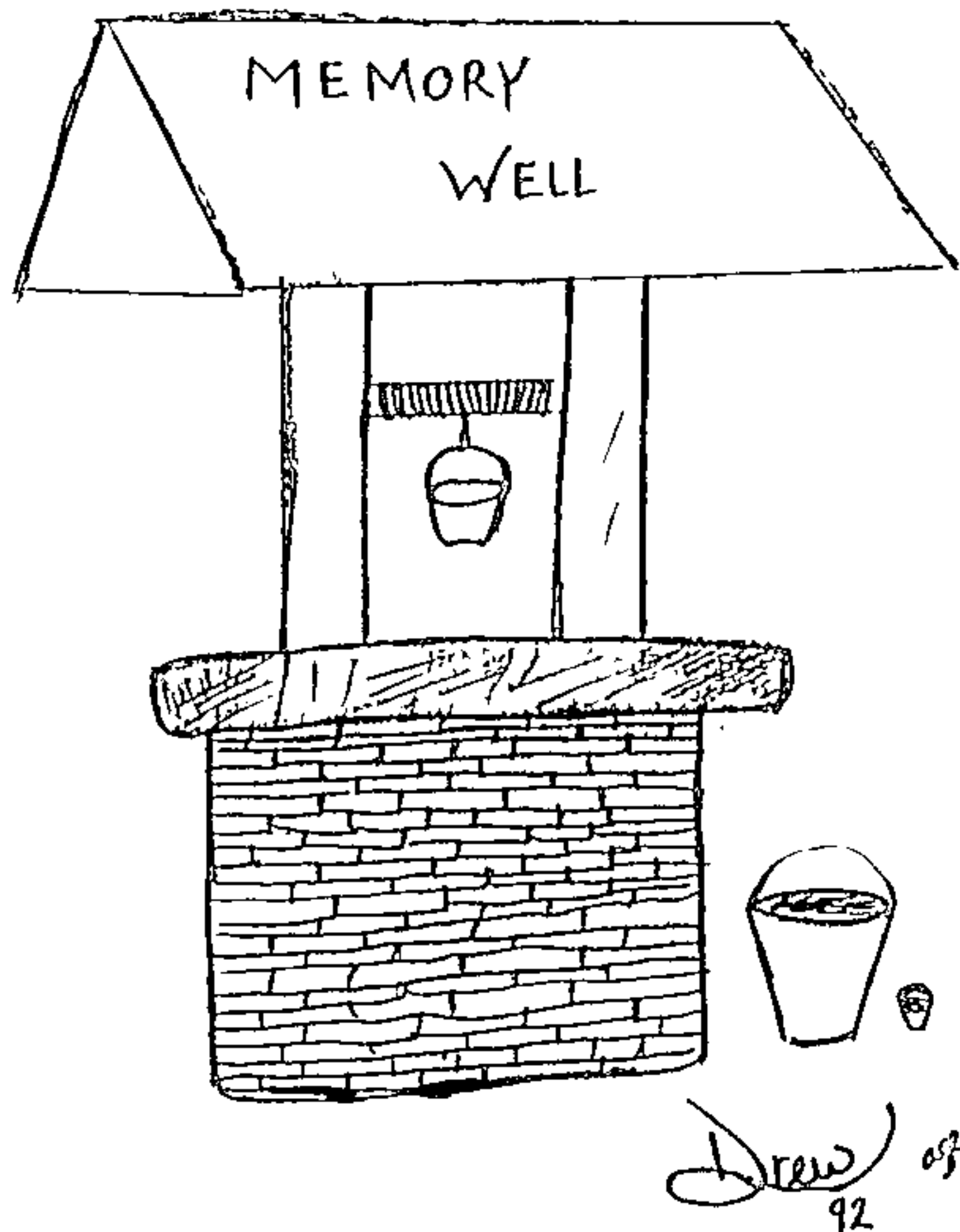
It is hoped that through presentation of various perspectives in the book *OUT OF DARKNESS: EXPLORING SATANISM AND RITUAL ABUSE*, an

integration will begin to occur among the seemingly divergent clinical observations and experiences in working with ritually abused patients. It is also hoped that some light will be shed on the people and practices involved in ritual abuse. This process should help us to assist all people who are trying to recover from the effects of extreme trauma. Hopefully nothing in this volume will contribute to the development of anything like a witch hunt or inquisition. Such activity is often more violent and abusive than the actions it intends to impede. The defenders of right can be as cruel as any satanist and we must keep in mind that it is exactly such activities that create the problems we are trying to solve. History is full of examples of good triumphing over evil by simply being more powerful, coercive and violent. A classic example is provided by Michael Howard (1989) in his description of the Crusade that was launched in 1209 against the Cathars. The goal was to stop the

Cathars' alleged practices of devil worship, human sacrifice, cannibalism, incest and homosexuality. However, the knight leading the battle against the Cathars, when asked by his men who should be killed, replied with the now famous line, "Kill them all. God will know his own." (Howard, 1989).

It may be the case that we will never be able to see nor to stop such victimization by either side unless we can truly comprehend these atrocities through an understanding of violence as a human capability. This will probably only happen if we are willing to look at our own darker sides. As long as we collude in the belief that this is a battle between good and evil and that we must avoid the complexity of human emotion by choosing one side or the other, we will probably always need to deny the reality when evil gets too close to home.

Howard, M. (1989). *The Occult Conspiracy*. Rochester, VT: Destiny Books.



This is our memory well. If it's a big memory the big bucket is lowered into the well to scoop it up. If it's a little piece we use the baby bucket. If it's not too bad we use the middle bucket. Most of the time we want to fill the buckets with cement and drop them in the well forever, but someone keeps using floating stuff and the buckets always come back.

By Drew

Quest

By Dale H.

By method or madness
 Searching... for what?
 Names... ages... images?
 We have them.
 Rejection, acceptance, denial?
 We do them.
 Evidence then? Tangible proof?
 Witnesses, photos, visible scars?
 Oh, we need them.
 But can they be found?
 Where do we look?
 What path do we follow
 On this search of ours?
 This quest, this Transformation.

Recovering

By Rita M.

(Welcome Back, Rita" — LW and others of the MANY VOICES family)

Q: I live by myself and see a psychoanalyst 4 times a week. The memories are few and far between, but it often takes 3 or 4 days to get past them. My therapist can't be available 24 hours a day. What do I do?

A: My initial reaction (although I'm sure I'm going to get quite a few howls and cat calls on this remark), is that you're spending too much time in therapy. It sounds like you are very dependent on your therapist. That is not good for you, or for the therapist! Sometimes, it's like not being able to see the forest for the trees. Backing off a little can give one perspective. . .

I would strongly suggest you pursue other areas of support. . . 12-Step meetings (either AA, if you're a recovering alcoholic/drug addict, Adult Children of Alcoholics, Codependents Anonymous, Incest Survivors Anonymous, etc.) Most large cities have these available. Get a network of support for yourself. You must have a group, or at least a few core support people, or recovery becomes very difficult. Healing cannot occur in isolation. Sharing, opening up, etc., is imperative. We often follow a life-

long pattern of isolation (which is what our families taught us!!!) Reading would be helpful, too. I suggest: *Growing Up Again: Parenting Ourselves, Parenting our Children* (Clareke & Dawson); *Healing the Child Within* (Whitfield); *After The Tears* (Middleton-Moz and Dwinell).

It is not uncommon to need several days to settle from a major flashback or memory retrieval. Remember, it is a process. Be patient and *gentle* with yourself. Please, reach out and find some support people. I know you will find it to be helpful.

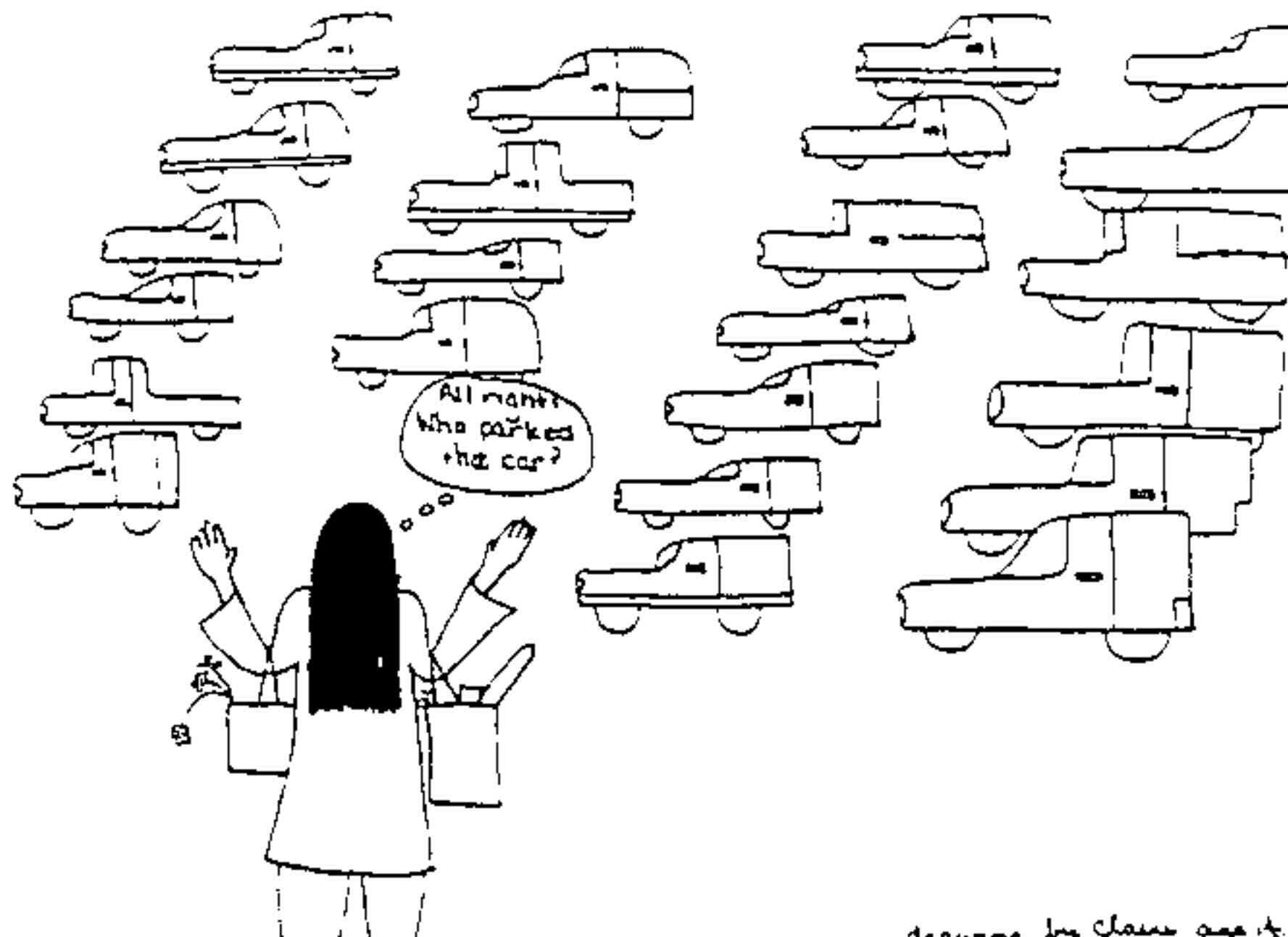
Q: Our little ones are having memories of having been sexually abused and tortured by a Christian cult, but this must be wrong because Christian cults don't do that stuff. The little ones are too small to explain good, so we're left arguing. Has this ever happened to anyone else, and can we find out more so we don't feel so strange and alone?

A: Who said Christians don't sexually abuse and torture children? People can *call* themselves Christian. . . and still be very mentally disturbed and abuse children. Many times, people excuse their abuse of children by

distorting the Scriptures in a way that justifies their actions. The distortion often is so massive that such people claim they have to do these abusive things, as it is in the Bible. Anytime one recognizes the existence of a Cult, one can also assume with great accuracy that some very fanatical, manipulative, and probably abusive things were occurring. I have said in past issues that cults do *not* have to be satanic in nature, and there are "Christian" cults that are just as abusive (and perhaps more) as so-called Satanic Cults.

It doesn't matter what they called themselves. Listen to the little ones instead of explaining to them. They got hurt, and they need to talk about it and work it through. Yes, many others have experienced this type of problem. . . I've worked with many, including recovering and former Catholics! A religion is only as healthy as the people who interpret and practice it. Please, do not let some sick, abusive people from your past alienate you from your Higher Power. . . find your own way and let your Higher Power support and guide you in the healing process.

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



Multiple-Game

I make my own puzzle
I puzzle myself
I riddle my memories and fiddle
with health.
I juggle identities.
Scramble my brain —
When I wake up tomorrow
I'm different again!

By Deb P.

Remembering — “Through a glass, darkly”

How do I know my memories are real? My preacher once asked me on a scale of 1-10, 1 being least likely and 10 being most likely, where was I in believing the memories. At that time I said about 8 or 9. Sometimes I'm at 1, sometimes at 10. Most times I'm somewhere in between, now usually between 5 and 10.

In the beginning I was very skeptical. It couldn't be real. It couldn't have happened to me. I had to be making it up. But why would I do that? For attention? Whose? My family? My therapist? Not for my therapist, as I was already seeing him twice a week. I had his attention. Not for my family. They didn't believe I needed a therapist and seeing one actually put distance between us. So why pretend to have memories of sexual and ritual abuse?

More often now the question is how *accurate* are the memories? How distorted is what I'm remembering? Will I ever know the *real* truth? Was it a game being played with dolls, or were they real babies? Was it a movie I watched or did it really happen? Or did we watch a movie and then act in out in real life? Will I ever know? Does it really matter?

Maybe the memories aren't entirely accurate but I know I'm not faking the pain, anger, fear and confusion they cause. It's knowing I can't consistently fake the feelings over such a long period of time that causes me to believe the memories. And it's those feelings I deal with in therapy.

By SAM for Sherry M

What are memories like? she asks.

How can you describe in words the experience of a memory: a still life picture that opens and closes so fast you must question its reality. The picture that, as it becomes clearer, horrifies and terrorizes you. How can you describe the feeling of being touched and violated and raped as

you continue to go about your daily routine as if nothing is happening — like a re-run from the past. How can you explain the separateness of your two worlds: the division of reality — like a re-run from the past. How can you explain why your mind continues to rewind and play it over and over and over each time focusing from a different angle, each time a different viewer, sharing her view of the scene until all parts of the scene are clear. How can you explain the need, the desire, the desperate desire to scatter the picture again so you won't have to watch the picture, hear the screams inside your head as you continue to go about your daily life separating your two realities — like a re-run from the past. Questioning, always questioning. Which reality to focus on? Which reality is more insane? — like a re-run from the past.

By Amy

Why?

fear
incest
disgrace
atrocities
preservation

memories flee
just out of reach
of my impatient grasp

By Rosemarie W

I was once at a lecture given by one of the co-authors of the book *Courage to Heal*. I think the most important thing expressed was that even after three years of therapy and research done for the book it took only a 2 1/2 hour session with her mother present to once again find herself doubting the memories of sexual abuse.

I feel that I will always have people in my life who will be able to trigger that small corner of self-doubt about the memories I have

I no longer feel that what I remember may not have happened. I know it did. I also know that others in my family will disagree because they are in denial.

One of the first things my therapists told me was that they were not out to judge whether a memory was true or false. When I had a memory and I felt it was true they would help me come to terms with what I remembered of my childhood. Therapy is not for the therapist. They do not need to know or hear what their patients remember. Therapy is to help the patient heal and become whole and healthy and well.

By Vickie and the integrated gang

I work in a detective bureau in law enforcement. Although I am still a “multiple”, I have learned how to effectively manage memories and the tools I have learned in therapy have worked in my favor. Applying these skills to detective work means I must deal with other people's memories and ability to remember events. The question of “Memory... is it real and does it matter?” is an important part of my daily life.

Memories serve as testimony in our courts, and when it comes to “fact or fiction” in the halls of justice, there is no room for doubt. When it comes to informant testimony, the jury is not allowed to wrestle with the greys (reasonable doubt). In the environment of law, as harsh as it is, real and “imagined” memory definitely matters.

Relief comes in the therapist's office. This is the environment to struggle with our “greys”. Our memories, no matter how fragmented, are not to be judged and to do so is to invalidate and sabotage therapy. What is important in working through memories is the struggle itself. How we struggle and what we do with the information once it is

(cont'd on page 9)

(Remembering *cont'd*)

pieced together is what is important.

Like detective work, each piece is valid and valuable to the entire picture. We adjust our actions and ideas based on each valuable piece of information without judging ourselves, always remembering that hind-sight is a lesson learned and a tool for the future to better ourselves and perhaps help others.

The answer to the question "Memory... is it real and does it matter?" depends on our environment and circumstances. What matters is that we do not judge ourselves when memories come. My experience is, there are enough jurors and judges in this world without bringing them into the therapist's office.

By R.S., Karen, Rachel and Rae

The last three months I've been watching more TV than ever before and that has taught me something: some of my alters are a result of the TV shows I watched as a kid! You see, some channels on cable TV show repeats of the shows I watched as a kid so automatically I'm transported in time. Not only that but as I watch the same episodes I did then, as I'm watching, the new alters tell me who they are and how they came about as a result of abuse *and* ideas from the shows we watched! It has helped me so much!

By Chelsea S.

I am what my therapist calls the "host alter". Our "core" is a very small child who long ago moved inside for good and left me in charge. I have few memories of my own so it has been extremely difficult for me to accept the memories the kids have been telling us. Many of the others inside accept without question anything the kids say but I've not been able to do that. I've always felt that it was my job to make sure no one was lying and to "prove" that everything we said was true. Whenever a kid told me or my therapist about a memory, I felt I needed to pass judgement on its validity. Usually I said it couldn't be true for one reason or another. Two of the others, Andrea and Lessa are constantly confronting my "denial". After an episode in which they brought in an outside authority without first telling me, I again sat down and talked to them about it. They told me they thought that my resistance was hurting the little kids even though I no longer told them when I didn't believe them. In the end, Lessa (whos thirteen and difficult to reason with) called me a child abuser and stormed out of the meeting. We'd played this scenario several times in the past but that time it really stuck with me. It was never my intention to hurt the little ones and I felt bad about it. I decided that for

now I'd just believe" whatever anyone said happened. A fresh flood of memories followed that decision. Those memories were more horrible than any I'd seen before and I found that I could not simply make myself believe just because I wanted to. However, I'm usually co present when the kids tell an outsider like my therapist about their memories. I can always see and sometimes even feel how much pain they're in. So I decided (for now) not to worry about the memories being true or not. I never doubted that their pain was real, but I had never told them that or let myself react to their pain. When I released myself of the burden of trying to decide if what they said was real, I found myself crying because such little kids were so hurt. I went to them and told them how sorry I was that they hurt so bad and we cried together. Andrea and I now take turns holding them and rocking them to sleep each night. I still dont know whether or not what they say is literally true. The feelings are real though and what really matters is that we share the pain together.

By Susan, the adult

MV



Now

Memories shine throughout my head, like yellow sunbeams. I wish it would rain, so the big black clouds could cover them up and the rain could wash them away.

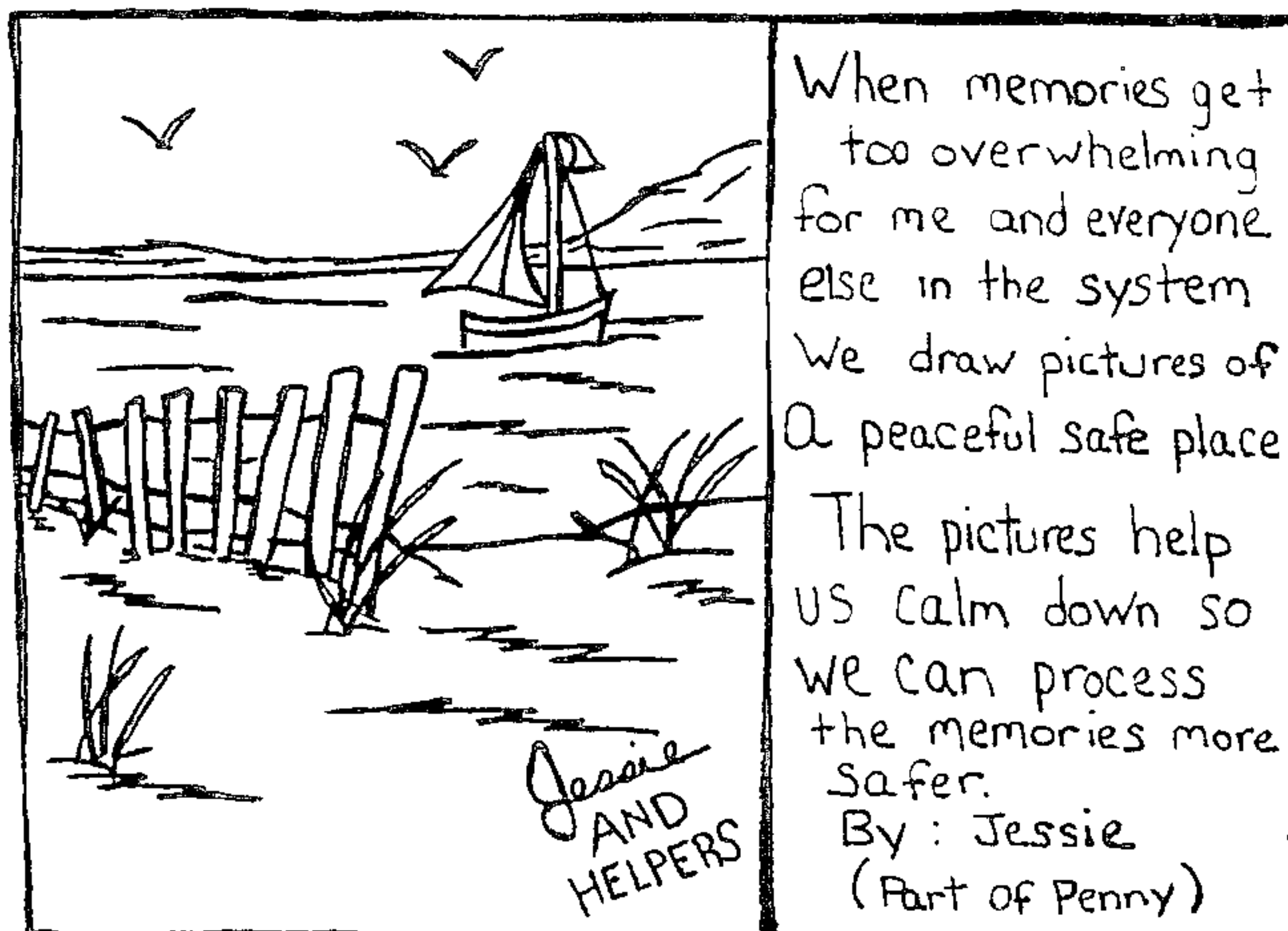
By Twinkle

A poem written to a therapist explaining a client's journey through memory retrieval.

To Janice,

Exploring the past, searching for memories, is as stepping off,
falling — Aware of the mind's sharp, protruding truths that pierce
through the fantasies, the beliefs, the heart — ripping
and draining the precious supply of trust and love, and yet,
with your encouragement, I step, and fall —
And you are there — your delicate arms cushion the massive blow,
compensate for the crushing weight of reality, I pick myself
up, you steady me, and nudge me on.
The mind's caverns twist through a maze of traps and hidden
dangers. Voices in the shadows deceive, recall, and terrify with
their dusty tales of horror. Overwhelmed in the darkness, I cry
out, pleading for help, praying for strength —
And you are there — singing gentle songs of soothing comfort,
acknowledging the truth with wisdom and courage, and teaching
my soul to heal.
As the dark search continues, the steps become increasingly
unsteady, the way is more treacherous, the terrors
unspeakable — Oh, how tempted I become to be lost within
the many minds — to retire along a sleepy childhood path
and divorce the responsibilities of the singular world: how
easy it would be —
But, you are there — with your knowledge and beauty, with your
laughter and warmth — you are there — recognizing the
potential of each moment, eager to experience the challenge
of life: sharing your wisdom, sharing yourself.
And so, enlightened, I continue my journey, so strengthened with
you by my side, that if you should chance to fall in the
darkness, you'll reach out — and I'll be there.

With love and appreciation,
Shauna



When memories get
too overwhelming
for me and everyone
else in the system
We draw pictures of
A peaceful safe place
The pictures help
US calm down so
we can process
the memories more
safer.
By: Jessie
(Part of Penny)

Jessie
AND
HELPERS

Resources

Little Earthquakes by Tori Amos is an album of music Deborah finds helpful and hopeful. It deals specifically with sexual abuse and finding a voice. Deborah says "It's tough listening the first time around, but it has become like healing liturgy to me."

Treating Abuse Today, a newsjournal for workers in sexual abuse recovery, seeks art work from survivors. Camera ready submissions and SASE should be sent to Karen Karleski, associate editor, *Treating Abuse Today*, 2272 Eastlake Ave E., Suite 300, Seattle, WA 98102.

gum on your paws is a new resource center for information concerning incest and ritual abuse issues. (The name refers to survivors... sweet and hard-working people with just one problem: sticky, messy abuse stuff they can't get rid of... gum on our paws.) For information, send a self-addressed business size envelope with 2 29-cent stamps to 5505 Valmont Rd. #97, Boulder CO 80301.

Multiple Care Unit is a new humor newsletter about MPD for those currently, considering, or not in therapy. Subscriptions (6 issues) are \$14 for survivors, \$18 for professionals. Share your humor with publishers Tracy Z. and Zamorh at PO Box 82, NDG, Montreal, Quebec H4A 3P4, Canada.

Sexual Abuse Survivors Anonymous (SASA) is a self-help group based on the 12-Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. Closed meetings for survivors only are available at this time in Michigan and Illinois. For more information call the hotline, 313/882-9646 or write to SASA, PO Box 241046, Detroit, MI 48224.

The Sidran Foundation, publishers of that wonderful book, *MPD: From the Inside Out*, is compiling a catalog of resources about MPD and Dissociation. For more information about the Sidran Foundation Bookshelf, write them at 2328 W Joppa Rd., Suite 15, Lutherville, MD 21093.

Grabbing a Memory

By someone who used to live with A.V., when A.V. still existed

We're gliding through the atmosphere and pieces are floating by. Some of them belong to us and some don't. We try them on in different combinations to see whether they hang together. We rearrange them many times, and then step back to see the effect. We don't know whether they are real—whether they came with us originally—but now that we have been trying them on for so long, they are coming to be part of us and to grow into our skin.

Mix and match.

We hear things that someone is saying to Sarah, and we think she is making it up—not making it up in the sense of deliberately fabricating, but making it up in the sense of telling a story that we half believe, but know isn't true.

Yet it feels like near truth—like someone else's truth—as if we were reading a novel. It is not from us or of us. It feels attached to us, yet is not part of us.

We try on some things that are not too serious. They are slightly sexual, slightly beating, slightly scary. But not too. Sometimes they are slightly pleasurable, too. They don't fit well, or at least we don't think so. They flit by and don't stick. We watch them go by—very fast—several a minute.

Then all of a sudden one starts to stick and get deeper. Watch out. All systems on alert. This is not so nonchalant any more.

But it still doesn't hurt. We are still watching it from the outside. We are still watching someone fabricate. Only this is a more serious fabrication.

We are stiff, shaking, and it looks as if we have mild epilepsy. But we don't feel attached to any of the spasms that grip our body. We still feel as if we are making it all up. We watch it, but it has nothing to do with us.

Sarah asks what it feels like. At first we don't know. Then we are amazed to hear words come out of the mouth that is in what we consider to be our body. The

words from the mouth say that it feels as if something is about to happen—that you get like this right before it happens.

Right before what happens. Sarah asks. We don't know. But this is the first time in all the years of shaking and spasms that we realize that we get like this before "it" happens.

Try that one on. It seems to fit. Take it off the shelf and keep it for yours. Maybe you will find something later to mix and match it with.

Sarah says to purposely make the shaking worse—to exaggerate it—and then maybe we will know what is about to happen. We try to make it worse.

Something changes. We are not here any more. Dorothy, peaceful and serene, is here. She is calm and quiet. She is not shaking. Sarah asks her what happened. How did she get so calm. She says she gets calm like this once it starts. You only get shaky and trembly and like epilepsy before it starts—when you know it is going to start, but it didn't start yet. Once it starts, you get very calm and serene. You just glide through it.

Sarah asks again—what is it that starts? Dorothy says she doesn't know. Sarah says for Dorothy to go away and let someone else come who knows what starts—who knows what is happening. Dorothy doesn't want to go. She wants to stay. She thinks Sarah is trying to get rid of her. She asks Sarah where she should go. She can't just disappear into thin air. This is very tricky. She knows what Sarah is about. Sarah wants to find out. Dorothy doesn't want to know. Sarah says she doesn't have to know. She just has to go away while someone else comes who does know. Dorothy doesn't like this. She wants to stay peaceful and serene. She knows there is a veil over her eyes. She wants to keep it there. She can see through it a little, but she can't see the roughness.

Then another tricky thing happens. It is the substitution. It is about changing memories in a second. It is about knowing that something terrible is going to happen. And probably it is from her father. Probably it is a beating that is very, very bad. It is too terrible to know, or to say, so it changes. Try another one off the shelf. It fits a little too. Exchange it for the other one. Is this one about Sam? We saw him in the house. But it is the wrong house. Did we just exchange him for the father and put him in the same place as the father had been? What happened to the father? He is not there anymore. Just Sam, standing sideways. Why is he standing sideways? We don't know. We don't know very much.

None of these memories stick to us. We think we made them up. Maybe we just caught them from other multiples at the meeting we go to. Maybe we are too suggestible.

We don't make things up on purpose. We don't even know sometimes what someone is going to say until we hear her say it. Then we are surprised at what we hear. If we can know what she is going to say a split second before she says it, we have time to censor her. We can choke her. We can force her away. We can bang her head. We can tie her tongue. We can switch her. We can change her memories for other memories. Or we can let her have them but not believe them.

We don't know what memories are. We feel in our heart that they are not real memories—that they are fabricated, or caught from listening to other people. Yet we get relief from saying them, and from knowing that Sarah heard us say them. Probably a lot of them are not true, but maybe it doesn't matter. Maybe it is all right, because even though we are ashamed of the fabrication, we always feel better afterward.

Working With Memories . . .

Sometimes when our memories are really hard, we call our therapist (the safe lady), and she helps us and we take deep breaths together to relax.

She tells us to think of a happy thought, so we won't feel so scared. We think of a field of daisies with happy smiling faces, and the safe lady is there, and she holds our hand.

It helps us feel better.

By Lynn for Muffin & the Kids



I would like to share with you how memory work is done in Diana's system.

First of all, when it's time for a part to do some memory, that part gets to choose how they go back in time. Some have chosen a train, balloons, boats. Then they choose which parts are going to help them in the details (if they need untied, or taken out of a car, etc.). This is also an open invitation to the whole system if parts just want to watch or participate. This empowers the system, it allows all of them to feel they can do anything, to feel good about themselves, and to know what choices are . . . to feel what they are without any judgements.

Whatever each part decides is OK. PJ was a part still stuck in a car from an accident. After the child parts helped her break the window to get out, she sang inside for a month, skipping and very happy as a 7½ year old should be.

Everytime memory work is done now it seems to get better, because the others write in the diary how they want to help. The memories are real. No child could make up horrors like these with so much detail.

It's important that the part knows he or she is not alone; the rest of the system is there. Also it's important to take the memory one step further, by getting them out of a grave or untying hands or being able to tell mom what

they're feeling—this time with support, without wishing themselves away.

We used to have a therapist who believed that the birth personality could be merged without the other part resolving anything. His idea was that she created them and she should go through the pain. Well, for this system it didn't work. She kept coming undone because she became flooded with memories, and everything on the outside world was a trigger for her.

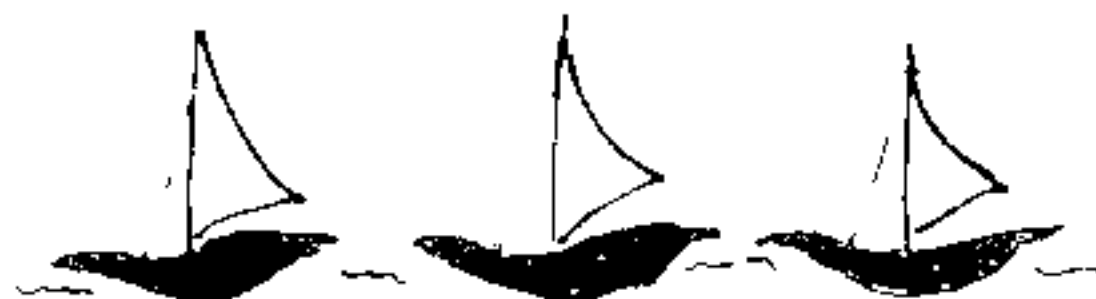
The therapist we have now understands that and has every part resolve their own traumas. We've been with her 2 years now and natural integration is happening.

There are two Dianas. One is a child and one is adult. They both are feeling the same pain. When one has a headache the other has one too. When one does memory work, both of them are there coping with it.

Some parts have chosen to do their work alone without parts helping, and that's OK also.

When a part is done with one memory, other parts give her a gift, a token of appreciation to let them know how special each one is. The gift could be a small stuffed animal, a lollipop, a flower . . . because someday Diana wants to be a whole person.

By Karen, a helper within Diana



"Memories that fall between the pages of my mind" . . .

Yes, just like a novel, memories linger and as they are brought to mind it becomes difficult to separate fact from fiction.

Tortuous times and events, fear, anxiety, and hesitation invade the inner soul and impede forward progress.

Safety becomes a major factor, for all of the above come replete with major side effects.

In my own situation, my therapist provides a safety measure and teaches control. Otherwise, the escalation of fear and depression becomes a driving force and becomes difficult to deal with.

Memories often occur at a rapid rate having no separate distinctions as to which alter produced and/or recovered the memory. Separation according to age and personality is often difficult to do.

Some alters turn to drowning their emotions in liquor. Others turn to increasing their workload in a futile attempt to decrease their mental alertness by overtiring the body.

The children often turn to the caring adults for they often cry and withdraw in pain. They (the adults) are not always available for they are generally attempting to gain some semblance of quiet control. Others still turn to remedies specifically formulated to bring about physical pain.

Yet memories are necessary, or so I'm told. Handled correctly, memories allow one to know about themselves, acknowledge the past, and allow for future growth. They act as stairsteps for the future.

Some alters feel otherwise, but for me, memory does matter. The chance to know myself for myself, to know the whys, whens and whats is necessary. I want to and need to progress. It is now, at midlife, that I must rely on a past that I cannot remember and sometimes wish to forget, to be able to grow gracefully and fruitfully.

By Naomi et al

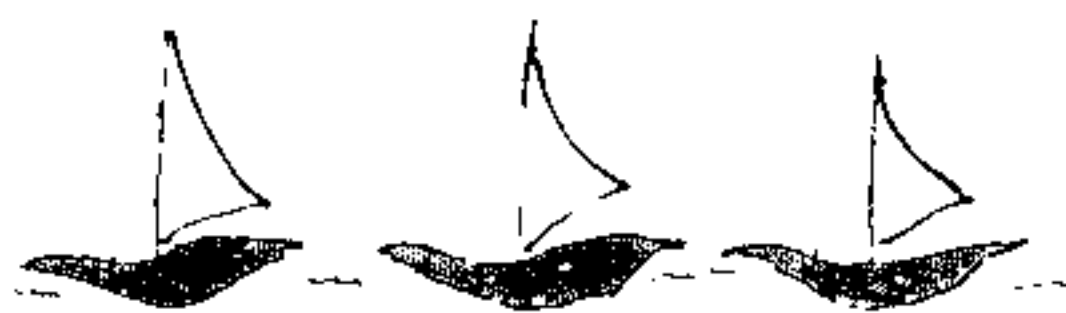


For us, retrieving memories isn't a difficult process. Our therapist can say a few key words and a memory is there. There are so many memories available, we don't need help finding them. He has a special section in his office ("The Corner") that we do memory

... Safety First!

work in. It has cushions, stuffed animals, and padding on the floor. We can sit or lay or be and do anything we need except hurt ourselves or him. He talks and works with whatever alter has a segment of that memory, encouraging them to yell, cry, scream or whatever is needed. It is difficult for some of the function alters that live the life to handle, because we are sure other people can hear the noise, but that doesn't matter to him. Sometimes he works it out so there are no other therapists doing sessions in the other offices when he knows we are going to work on a memory. Sometimes we can tell if the memory is worked through because the fragments will fuse into the parts they split off from.

By Terry and Friends



My name is Jane and I am eight years old. I think I've got a pretty good memory of lots of things that have happened to me, but I get lots of help when I can't remember everything. One of the inside people is named Seven. We call her our data bank because she knows about everybody and everything. Seven helps us remember things that she thinks are important for us to know. Sometimes Miss Myra (our therapist) asks about something and we can't always remember. So Seven will tell us. Seven only talks to Karen (an inside person) and Karen will talk to the rest of us. But Seven only gives memories when she thinks we are strong enough to live with them. Karen says Seven doesn't want to overload anybody because we are too important to the system. Sometimes the memories really hurt me and make me very scared, but Seven knows this and is careful about how much I remember at one time. That's the way she protects me.

When I remember something bad, often I can see or hear only

part of it. The other children might remember other parts of it, and Seven helps to put all of the parts together. Then I can tell Miss Myra about it. I used to wish that I had either all of a memory or none of a memory, but now I know that is not the way it is, and that Seven and Karen are helping me to work with the memory that I have, even if it's not a whole memory.

Remembering makes me very sad and afraid of things like the dark. Seven knows how much I can hold and she knows when I need to sleep to get away from the memories. Sometimes I still wish I didn't remember a lot of things, because they hurt so much and they make me want to die, but everyone tells me how important it is for me to have these memories. They also tell me that because I remember these things and talk about them, it will help us all get better. And that's all I want... to get better and maybe have room for some nice memories too.

By Jane



Most of my memories come in the form of dreams and nightmares. This way even when they are very scary or more than I can believe, this form of remembering allows me to think that it may not be true because it is 'only a dream or a nightmare'. When Judy, my therapist, and I start to work on it, I go into a trance and then to my safe room. There I put the dream/nightmare in the projector and show it on the screen so that I and sometimes one or more of my alters can talk about it with some detachment. This also helps us get parts of the memory that were not in the dream/nightmare. When we are through for a time with working on it, we lock it away in the chest or in the closet. That way we don't have to deal with it once we have left our therapists office, which gives us energy to do something

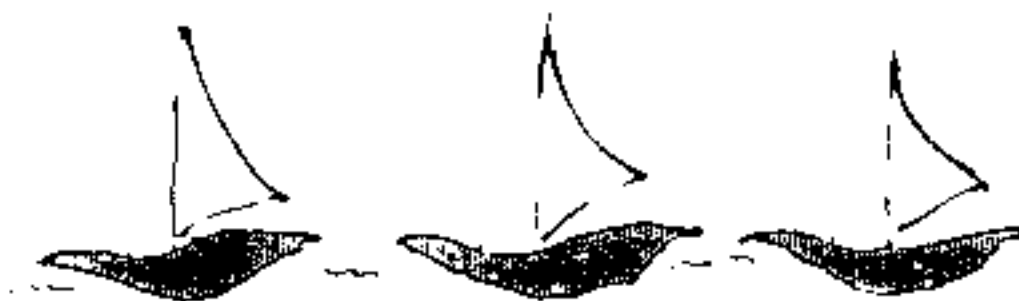
fun for ourselves! The hardest part of all is feeling the pain, anger and grief that come with knowing that a dream/nightmare is a real memory. This healing happens with the continued caring support of our therapist, who has committed to being on this journey with us for the long haul and has helped us to make and remake the same commitment.

By Stephanie and the Consensus



Our therapist always has us put our stuff we talked about that day in a box so we (the adults) can go to work after our session. We lock it up and it stays in her office till next time. It's a steel box with the corners sealed extra to help prevent any leaks. We put it under her table in the corner, so it is out of sight to other people.

By Me for All



We process our memories by journaling them to our therapist. This takes some of the strain off and helps keep the memory or issue before forgetfulness takes it away again.

It helps to distract yourself. Not to dissociate, but play a favorite tape, journal, write a letter, watch TV. Just anything that can keep your mind from obsessing over the memory that is there.

It helps to have a back up system. In our area we have an 800 crisis hot line. It helps a lot. They can help to plan things to do until we could talk with our therapist. You could even do that without an 800 hot line. Sit, make a list of things to do—long hot bath, clean the fridge, watch a TV show. Anything to keep your balance until your therapist can talk to you.

It gets easier to do after the first few times and it beats pounding your head on the wall or hurting the body.

By Casten in Stacy

Myth and Memory

by EAH

Memories surface in the process of growth, and often are disclosed to us gradually, perhaps to test our tolerance. What may first appear is a "representation" of the memory. It may even be a composite representation of specific kinds of experience, because the mind has among its capabilities that of condensing repeated events and related concepts into composite "memories", disguising the events while at the same time retaining their "meaning" so that our emotional survival can continue. This "overdetermination" exists in the name of psychological economy. The memory in question may not be historically accurate at times, but rather may have been retained as a personal myth: an economic, illustrative parable of instructional and metaphysical value.

Events undergo a transformation to be stored as myths, and the nature of the transformation is partly determined by the age and intelligence of the person experiencing the event(s). The mind's ability to transform an event into meaningful and tolerable experience is a priceless, if not divine, gift. Extremely traumatic events threaten to shatter us, but they nevertheless have great value. Our minds treat these experiences as information about the enemy, about whatever threatens us. This is information that cannot be ignored, but at the same time, retaining an objective memory of the event may be too painful or too threatening, so frequently it is first "forgotten". Our experiential slate is wiped clean. To protect us from the intolerable pain while at the same time retaining its "instructional value" (ie. "People's words cannot be trusted"), our mind will often transform the memory into one that, though often horrible, is in some way more tolerable to us than the original event. Even a revelation like "I am evil" can have psychological "value". The mind does not seem to feel that all of its revelations need be polite; they

nevertheless have "survival value" in the logic of the tormented mind.

Traumatic events cannot, however, be erased. In some sense we must remember everything that has happened involving us to explain why things are the way they are. The human need for explanation is in part served by mythology: "this is how it all began." The creativity and magical thinking of a child helps to transform experience into useful myth. In a sense the mythical memory verifies itself, because, after all, it exists to explain the nature of our personal reality, and since this obviously exists, we have in a phenomenological sense, all the "proof" we need. Things are the way they are; our world exists and "proves" the myth.

I don't want to imply that all memories are mythological representations of actual events. Somewhere along the line, the memories, *as we experienced them* at the time, can surface. It is not the events themselves that we learn from—it is our actual psychological *experience* of the event by which we learn. We filter events through our personal interpretation of them—otherwise events would have no meaning for us. We as humans must have this meaning, for without one we will create one. The gripping nature of some of our memories makes it *necessary* that they are explained.

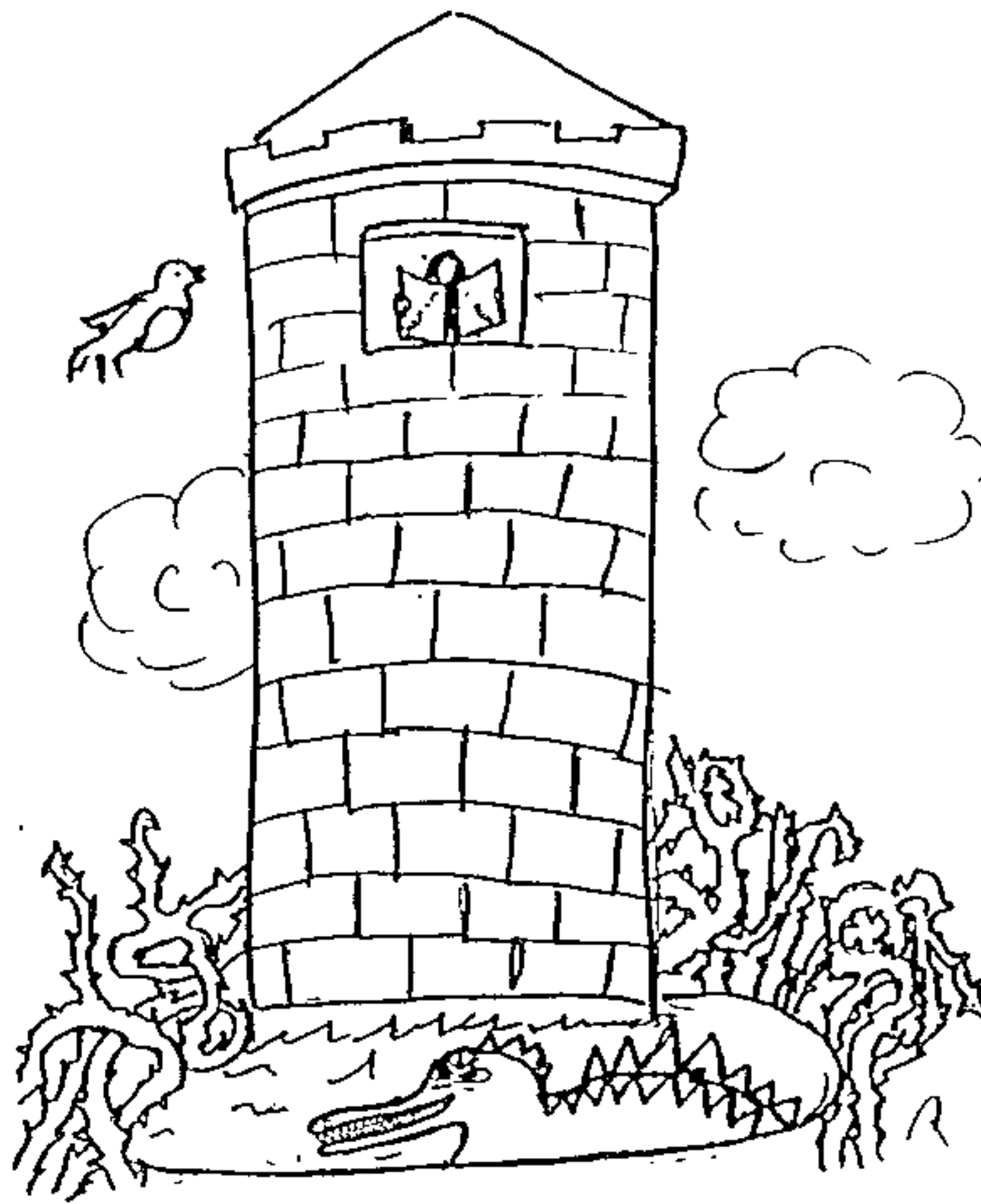
As humans we need not only explanation, but guidance. Memories, whether historically accurate or retained as myth, help to serve this purpose. They offer a precedent, some sort of framework on which we can form our behavior.

Does it matter if our memories are historically accurate? Interpretations of phenomena are flexible; as we gain more information about events, our perception of them, and likely, our interpretation of them, may change. In learning more, we will be psychologically unable to maintain an interpretation that doesn't make sense. Most

reasonably intelligent people learn from experience in spite of themselves. Since most of us cannot help but learn, the information we gather is very likely eventually to affect some of our memories. If we are flexible enough we will acknowledge the change. Eventually, when we can tolerate it, we will develop a fairly historical, useful representation of the event(s). It is almost inevitable in personal growth, which concerns most of us to some degree.

If we are fortunate, the version we end up with can prove to be less traumatic than it had originally seemed perhaps during an abreaction. The value of our ability to eventually remember experiences more or less accurately is that the different angle on them shows us more about them, and this information can deliver us, sometimes, from their grip on our souls. On some level, when it is necessary for our memories to be represented in myth form, we are aware of it. This usually unconscious awareness is part of what constitutes our dis-ease, or mental dis-order. With most forms of dissociative disorder there is implied in the diagnosis an intelligent awareness that precludes the development of psychosis. The very act of dissociation points to some level of the awareness of the original event as it was experienced. From this awareness the original event can be recovered when the psyche determines that we are ready for disclosure.

Even if the recovered memory is terribly traumatic at times, almost unbearable, it allows us to finally name the beast that has plagued us. Of course, in naming the beast, we gain some measure of mastery over it—enough to, eventually, overthrow its tyrannical reign over us. Eventually, accurate memories will emerge and will free us; but that is not to say that "mythical" representations of memories are worthless. Rather, they are priceless because they will eventually lead us to freedom.



We have a tall tower. No one can come in so we are safe. There is a big Dragon and big sticker bushes to protect us. Our Bird brings messages and food and stuff we need. We look at memory pictures, but we can close the book or look at happy pictures whenever we want to. By Teci TC, Willie, Niles, Jazz Max, Strawbaby. Paige made the picture. We told her what to make and Hershey made the Dragon.

Books

Out of Darkness: Exploring Satanism and Ritual Abuse 1992.

Edited by David K. Sakheim and Susan E. Devine. Published by Lexington Books, an imprint of Macmillan Inc. New York NY. \$24.95 hardback

This is a book I've been waiting for. Sakheim and Devine deserve plaudits for their courageous attempt to draw both sides of the inflamed ritual abuse debate into the covers of a single book. As reports of ritual abuse skyrocketed in recent years, there's been a tendency among professionals to "take a stand" either for or against the existence/prevalence of organized, intergenerational cults, as well as other forms of ritual abuse. *OUT OF DARKNESS* attempts to define the edges of the controversy, and explain why reasonable people differ in their opinions.

As the editors point out in their introduction, it may be too soon to harden positions at the extreme ends of this debate. It is (or should be) possible to acknowledge the existence of hideous atrocities, ritualized and otherwise, and to

support one's suffering clients, while avoiding a blanket-type hysteria that sees cults lurking in every neighborhood, or as an actual, real-life feature of every client report.

A therapist who is too rigidly "for" or "against" the prevalence of ritual abuse may unintentionally convey this bias to his/her clients, resulting in distortion of "memory" and complicating the healing process. People and their histories must be seen clearly as individual cases before being dropped into a category of ritual or non-ritual experience. Mixtures of fact and distortion are part of human experience, even without trauma. So why insist that complex survivor reports be all-true or all-false? Why not work with whatever is presented, however it is presented, and let the client sort out the meaning and validity for her/himself?

Naturally, *OUT OF DARKNESS* isn't perfect in its balance. Many well-known experts give their opinions here, such as Drs. Young and Greaves, but others who usually express their views vigorously are conspicuous by their

absence. I wish more professionals would take this or similar "written-panel-discussion" opportunities... because the issues surrounding ritual abuse activities and reports are vital for all survivors, as well as professionals. We need to understand memory formation, distortion, and retrieval, as well as the many layers of meaning a memory can present.

Another drawback, for me, is the cover of this book which seems to sensationalize the satanic element of some ritual abuse. And even the publisher's publicity material takes liberties with the purpose of the book (in my estimation) by making statements such as "acknowledges the surprising pervasiveness of ritual activity" and otherwise implying that *OUT OF DARKNESS* is an expose of proven satanic ritual abuse incidents, rather than a discussion of reported incidents and expert views, honestly intending to stabilize and clarify an area of infinite complexity and great consequence to the health of survivors, the mental health profession, and the society in which we live.—LW

Thank you!

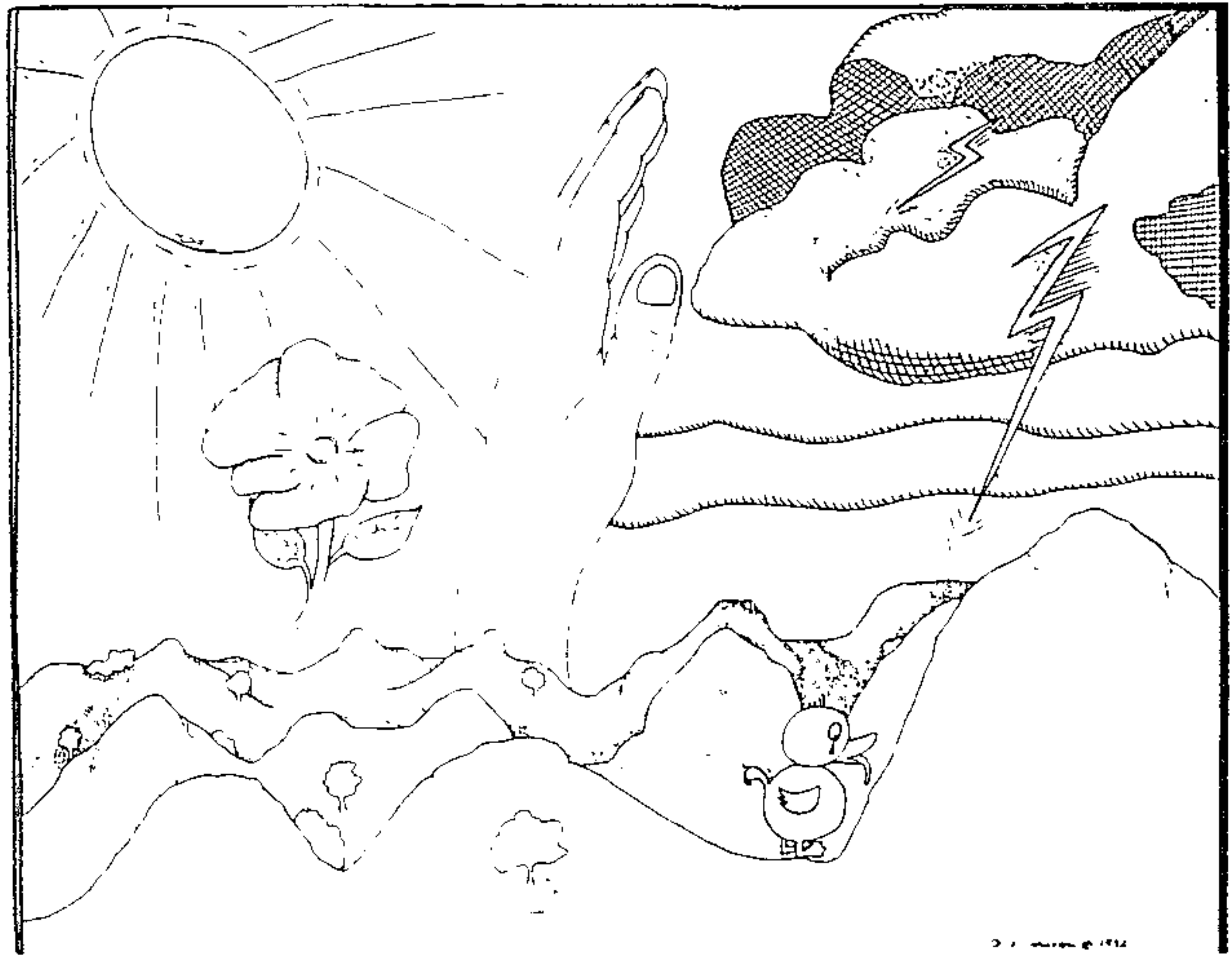
Thanks to everyone for their help with this and all other issues. We read and appreciate everything you send, and wish we could print it all! Please keep thinking, writing, and drawing about future themes for MANY VOICES. Your sharing makes a difference!—LW

October 1992

Employment and dissociative disorders. Keeping a job or getting one while in therapy. Strategies to improve selves-control. ART: New Fall Styles in defensive barriers for the workplace. DEADLINE for submissions: August 1, 1992.

December 1992

How to build a safe support system, with peers or "normals" or both. Info list of support groups/resources. ART: Draw your connections with society, as they are or will become, with healing. DEADLINE for submissions: October 1, 1992.



Every incest memory feels like a new mountain we must climb for our recovery. Some mountains tell us horrifying scary things. Others make us feel ashamed, angry, or sad. We have climbed many mountains now. Once climbed, a mountain doesn't need to be climbed again. Behind the threatening front of unclimbed mountains, the sun has room to shine. Flowers can start blooming. When we allow it, the loving hand of the Universe gives us the strength to face another mountain as it gently nudges the clouds away.

By Evelyn Huston (pen name)

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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