

MANY VOICES

WORDS OF HOPE FOR PEOPLE RECOVERING FROM TRAUMA & DISSOCIATION

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Educating Society

At Least They Knew Who the Enemy Was

By Jody Meir

From the grueling trenches of the battleground, to the barbed wire confines of concentration camps, the mental anguish is sheer torture. As the war ends and troops flock home and P.O.W.'s are released, they come home to people who realize they have suffered. To people who know these men and women have faced tragedy, and know their stories must be told.

But there is another battle ground that leaves its victims scarred for life. A place where the battle ensues for years with no hope of release, a private home where abuse is rampant. A place where there is no warning before attack and no means of recognizing the enemy. A torture chamber where there is no place to withdraw from battle, and no way to even realize there is hope of a different life. In some cases, not even a memory of peace to hold onto.

This battleground is not in the trenches of war, it's inflicted upon a child. The torture chamber is found in the confines of his or her room, delivered by a parent or parents who should be protecting them. Often not only parents, but also some other trusted persons. For these children, there are no comrades in arms.

Theirs is not a battle of honor. They are not fighting to defend their country; their only task is to survive. They are alone. They are children. Unlike a soldier at war, a child has neither the ability to assimilate what's happening nor the resources to fight back.

The soldier, when sent home from war, can return with pride, knowing he did all he could for his country. But when the child, on the other hand, grows up and finally flees the torture chamber, threats and shame go with him or her. This child too survived, but not with honor. Usually with shame, confusion, and frequently, self-loathing.

Over the years, the child learns to split mentally and even blocks the

horrendous memories, only to have them flood back in the later years.

As with the veteran, smells, sounds and sights can and do trigger memories in the abused child. Post-traumatic stress disorder occurs in both these survivors.

It's tragic to realize a child's own parent or parents would inflict such despicable acts of physical and sexual abuse upon them. The child is emotionally and sometimes physically scarred for life. Tragically a diagnosis formerly exclusive to war vets, P.O.W.s and those exposed to extreme tragedy is now a very accurate diagnosis for the adult survivors of childhood abuse. They indeed are victims of hideous crimes, performed by men and women still walking the streets; parents who were never reported; perpetrators who victimized innocent children to satisfy their base needs; men and women who are vicious criminals and should be locked away.

Today, as more and more people are beginning to speak out and disclose their stories, the silence is broken. But there are still multitudes whose hidden agony haunts them daily—afraid to tell, ashamed of the past. A past they had no control over. A past that lasted longer than any war.

War vets leave the enemy behind and return to their own country. Abuse victims live in constant fear of retaliation because the enemy is in their own home. Even when the abused child moves away, the abusers are still alive and still a threat if the silence is broken.

Despite more awareness in society, many survivors are still misdiagnosed. They are classed as psychotic, hallucinating, out of touch with reality. A lot are over-medicated rather than heard. They are sometimes further victimized by so-called professionals. Memories that continue to surface are not validated. Some are told they're sick, mentally ill. Some are blamed, told it was their fault. Adult minds judge from an adult perspective what a

child with a child's mind should have done. Hindsight is always clearer. An obvious escape, seen from an adult perspective, never enters a child's mind. Unlike a soldier who has had training, the child had no one to teach him or her.

"No" was a forbidden word. Saying "no" brought more physical abuse. This fear goes on into adulthood with most survivors.

It takes time and patience to reprogram the mind. Post-traumatic stress disorder never leaves, but with proper treatment, it can be brought more under control.

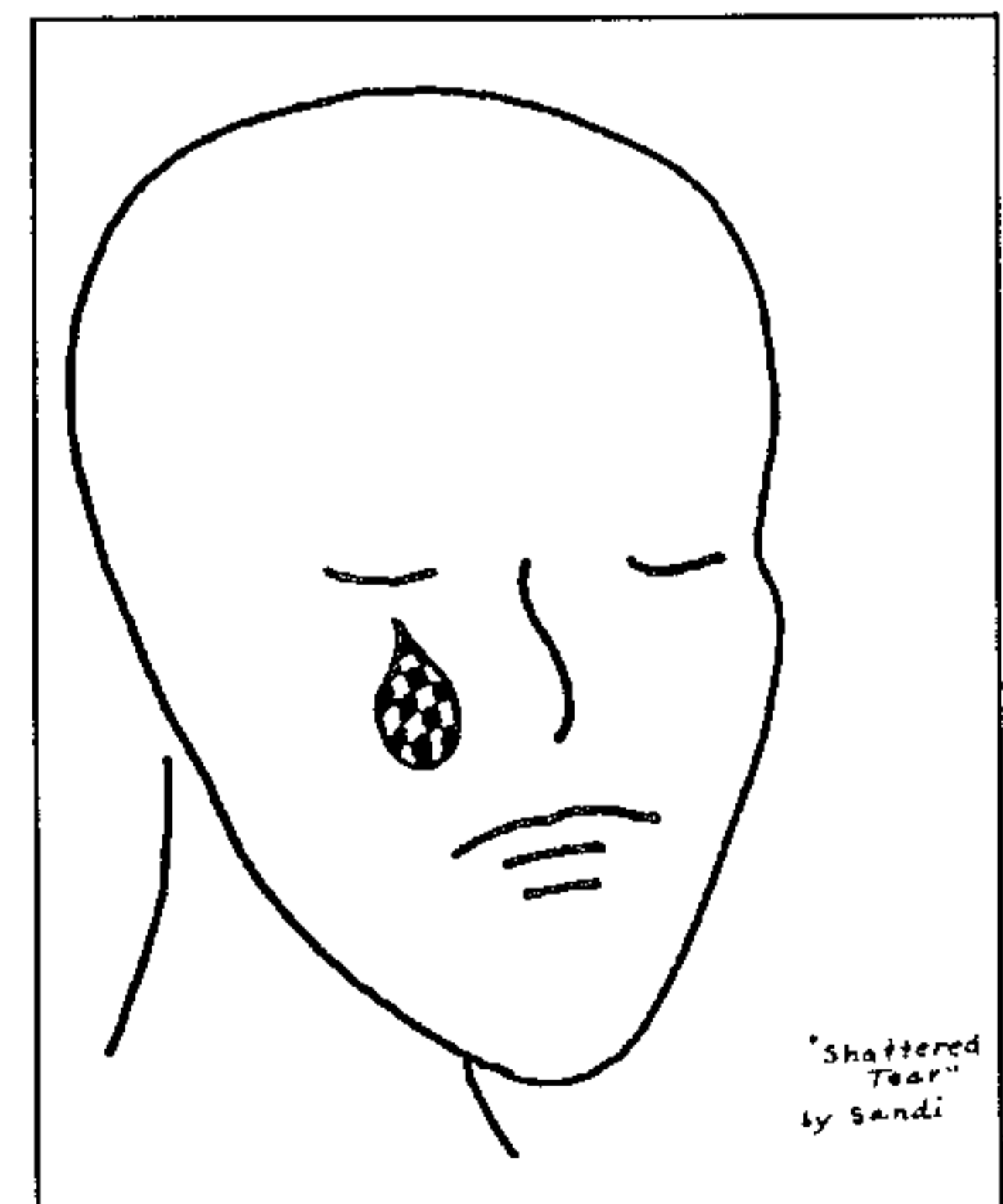
If you are a survivor, you're to be applauded, not condemned. You did what it took to survive.

How sad that society still tends to victimize the victims. They too need to be heard. They too have fought a war and won. They too deserve our love and support.

At least the war vet, the P.O.W.s, knew who the enemy was. They had happy memories to hold on to and hope to cling to. The abused child knew no other way than abuse.

May we as a society offer them support now and hope for the future. May we be willing to allow them to be heard; let them know it's okay to have their stories told.

MV



These Are the Children

Young faces
dark circles beneath
eyes that are old,
used, without innocence

These are the children
who lost their childhood
to adult children

These are the children
whose souls are old
who carry memories
in tiny fine crystals
deep within paths
through miles and centuries
of thought and experience

These are the children
that are the loners
who draw pictures
and write poetry
to relieve the anger
of crusty old wounds
oozing with pain
and tears backed up
behind dams
of tension and grief
unshed for fear
that yet another mass
of horrid new memories
will be added
to the overflowing chambers
within the mind
to mingle with old memories
slipping out
escaping rapidly
unexpectedly
yet with great struggle

Flashes of memories
of things best left forgotten
some say
for things like that
can't really happen
children can't live
through torture like that

unless
they are among the survivors

By Amanda B. (J.W.)

MV

MANY VOICES wishes to thank the following generous contributors for their help in supporting our work:

Angels:



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DISSOCIATION**

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Safe

SAFE: That my environment is free from roaches, rats, dead decaying animals, shit dried and moist, garbage, no hazards of electrical wires that spit in the night, that a door stays shut, that it doesn't open in the darkness with hands that paw through the body, taking, stripping the dignity from my soul. That rotating door with changing faces is forever closed.

I used to sleep in the corners of my room for I thought it would take paws and faces longer to get to me and I could run. Years ago an older nurse took me by the hand of compassion and knowledge at the hospital, and when we reached my bed that night, she talked to the bed and all its demon memories. That night for the first time my bed was safe and I have slept in a bed to the present.

Rooms I entered have meant scanning the room for a focal point to fix upon so self-hypnosis could be used to protect me from the snorting, flame-throwing dragon, an enemy of the past. A woman called Carolyn made all rooms safe by empowering me to see within the room the good and the bad, with the ability to discern its contents and make constructive decisions as to the safety of the room.

And in the end, it was Christ who carried me to the door of this state facility. By choice I came to this present center based on an evaluation of the past and the accreditation that was proudly displayed. I do not idealize

this place, but everywhere I walk, every piece of this building feels safe, all staff supportive, caring, nurturing.

My therapist has provided the consistency, the nurturing, the environment of love that has set me free to grow, develop and heal in the safety of her office.

With her there is no such thing as badness, forgiveness is everywhere within her and I have come to love her crazy calico office that speaks of her commitment and focus on each patient. And for Safe, our doctor is no alarmist. She has created a positive feeling of leadership, protection, respect, supporting the dignity within, taking the pain, sharing the journey. This doctor is adored.

To all those in the state who choose to eliminate the hospital for economic reasons, I say back to you...review my credentials and my accomplishments, for I am a severely abused woman who has contributed significantly to the welfare of man. What if this place had not been there when Christ carried me through the door? How could I have found my way back to contribute once more? To those political forces in this state, who slash at mental health hospitals and programs, and cut deep into the budgets sustaining mental health...when you slash again, look again. I'll be here to remind you.

By Constance R.

MV

Dissociative Disorders in Older Adults

As an "elder," I have a constant concern I would like to share with other readers. I would especially welcome feedback from fellow elders.

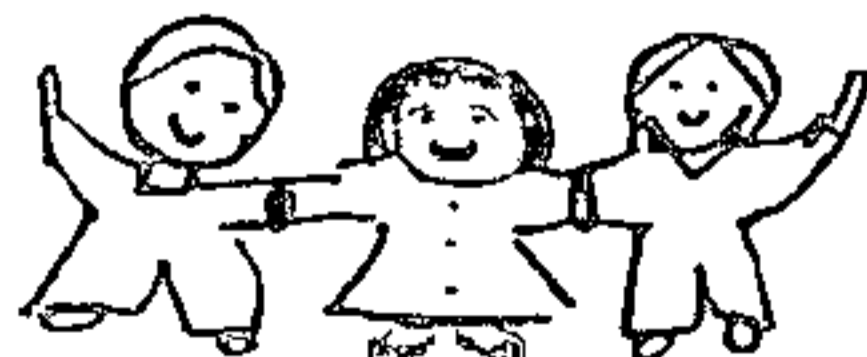
Having passed the age of Tinkerbell and Peter Panism, and admitting it at least to myself, I find my grey hairs award me neither respect nor honor. In fact, they often sabotage the respect and honor my younger years and accomplishments used to win for me! Should one of the inner younger ones gain ascendancy, with her forgetfulness or fearfulness or, heaven forbid, temper tantrums, there is a knowing look passed around. "Ah, senility. Approaching Alzheimer's. She is a senior, you know."

Dissociative disorders are "acceptable" in the younger. In the elder they are sometimes viewed as the natural organic result of aging, to be treated with long-term nursing homes for the aged, not with psychiatric treatment, love, and above all, *hope* for a future.

I think of other cultures where the elder is often honored for the wisdom she has gained and cultivated during her many years and experiences. In our society, she is often dishonored for those self-same years and experiences.

Please, younger readers, we elders have suffered as much in and from our pasts as you. We are seeking healing with the same need and fervor as you. Respect us as we respect you for the courage to pursue healing, an oft-times painful journey. We all share the same hope, for futures containing health, joy, and peace.

By Hannah & Clan



My name is Flo. I live in the body of Marilyn W. There are 58 of us now, in The City of Hope, where we rest or sleep when others are out. We are SRA survivors. I (Flo) am the "Marilyn" that most people see.

Our body is 50 years old. We are an RN, but our system inside finally flew

apart and as of May, 1996, we became unable to work anymore. We were married for 28 years to a very abusive man who was a Pastor. We left to prevent his killing us. Last May God very clearly told us that it was time to stop taking care of everyone else in the world and to take care of our self. About 1-1/2 years ago we realized that we were a non-amnesiac MPD. Now amnesiac parts are coming out. We have a super-great therapist and a pretty good support system.

We have a spunky, cheerful little girl inside named Shirley. She's five years old and thinks far too many others in our City of Hope are 'way too sad and serious. She thought of a way to try to help her and some of our other little ones "lighten up" while working on our therapy issues.

We sold some used CD's and were able to buy the game Chutes and Ladders. Things have been real intense inside (12 new people popped out in the last 1-1/2 weeks!) But we all plan to revise the gameboard so that the Ladders up are things that are positive help for our healing. The Chutes downward will be things that get us into the "old tapes" and/or pull us back to the bad stuff. We're going to color one of the cardboard figures that is used to travel along the board, so that it reminds us of our therapist. We thought of making one of those figures look like it represented the cult people...but right now that feels too scary.

We have a person inside named Faith. A lot of us inside have a deep faith in God. Faith bought us one of those round Cheerio plastic holders that has a little flap that can be opened. Toddlers love to open the door (flap) and reach in to get their Cheerios.

Many times in the Psalms, David prayed "Preserve me, O Lord!" We love the psalms. We got vinyl letters and put "Preserve me, O Lord" on top of our Cheerio holder. We put "Jesus" across the center, and glued gold glitter around Jesus' name. Then we went to a craft store and bought crystal hearts (7 for \$1) and wrote each inside

person's name in them. We put the hearts in the life preserver and cover up and rock, or just lay down and picture all of us inside. We're in the stormy ocean with lots of turmoil and scary stuff, but there's a big chain firmly attached to our life preserver, and that chain connects to the rock at the bottom of the ocean. The Rock is Jesus.

We pray a lot, for our healing and the healing of all the other SRA.s And even more, for all the little children who are still out there being hurt.

By Flo

MV

Joinings

And, smelling sweet teas
while the children were tired,
we waited for the rain to stop
and felt ourselves drawn toward
the blue fog called sleep.

We needed to rest.

Our journey has been long.

Our joinings are new and brittle.

They pull long thin reeds of our
strength

from the marshy sides

of the pool that is our wellspring.

The water table falls.

We eat dry bread spread

with sweetness

and hold hands a little tighter.

It is not yet time to let go.

But the children are tired

and the rain drones on

and the teas are but fragrant

grounds.

We put our cups

and our selves

away.

By Lisa K.

MV

Family Snapshots

By Laura

I am five, and The Lady is thirty-three. I long for her to take me in her lap and put her arms around me and comfort me. I whine and cling to her, but she pries me loose with her fingers, screaming, "Get out of my sight, you fucking bastard! Go shit in your hat. Get out of my sight!" And she hits me away from her with a mint-green wooden hanger, explaining between curses that it hurts her when she hits with her hand. I am disgusting, a worm that you poke with a stick.

I am eight, and The Lady and I are shopping, in and out of stores, up and down the boulevard. By chance, we meet a pupil who is in her elementary school class. He is excited to see his teacher outside of school. "Hi! Mrs. Mason!" He says it confidently, sure of her reception. I am jealous of the way she beams at him. She says something nice to his parents, and introduces me proudly. Her Daughter. They see that I belong to her, and I feel important.

I am eleven. My father is in a roaring rage. I watch him bunch my eight-year-old brother into a football, and kick him furiously down the length of the long foyer and through the bedroom. The Lady doesn't try to stop him, because she knows she can't. I'm glad it's not me this time.

I am fourteen. The Lady sits on the floor at my feet, with her pin cushion and yardstick, taking up the hem on my Junior High School graduation dress. We chat like friends as I turn slowly in a circle so she can measure carefully all around the pink flare to make sure it is even. I love her.

I am twenty-three. I call The Lady from the pay phone at the mental hospital, and ask her to bring a crochet hook and wool the next time she visits. She arrives two hours later, with four crochet hooks of different sizes, and skeins of wool in pink, blue, yellow, and green. She has left school in the middle of the day to bring it to me because I am special to her.

I am twenty-four, and have just been discharged from the hospital. After a

year and a half, I am still not OK, and can't work. The Lady will neither talk to me, nor give me money for food or rent, so I go on welfare. But she feels guilty, and writes checks to pay my therapist. I hate her.

I am twenty-five. I live with my brother, who is attending graduate school to become a therapist. We get along well for two months. Then one day we are riding in the car together, and I see something interesting outside the window. I say "Look at that dog! Look at that dog! Look at that dog!" He gets furious with me for being animated and telling him what to look at. He stops talking to me for three years. I don't understand what I have done wrong, but I know that it must be terrible.

I am fifty-five, and The Lady is eighty-three. My father is dead. My brother is happily married, and has three sons and a successful therapy practice. I live alone.

I am fifty-five *and* five *and* eight *and* eleven. All at the same time. I am disgusting *and* important. All at the same time. It is confusing.

The Lady's eyes beg me for support and companionship, but she doesn't ask. She doesn't want to impose. I give her what little I can, and feel bad because I know it is not nearly enough. She bravely fills in the holes by reading self-help books, and going to creative writing and gentle yoga classes at the senior center. The Seniors perform a play. She tells me about the rehearsals, and mails me a copy of the program with her name circled. She doesn't ask why I didn't come to see it.

I am fifty-five *and* fourteen *and* twenty-three *and* twenty-four. All at the same time. I love The Lady *and* I hate her. All at the same time. It is more confusing.

The Lady calls my machine on Valentine's Day, and is disconcerted when I answer. "Oh, Hi, Laura. This is Mom. You're home. I was just going to tell your machine that I love you. But you picked up."

"You *could* tell it to me in person," I suggest gently. She hesitates. Then, in the self-conscious, sing-song voice of a third grader reciting in the auditorium, she says, "I love you, Laura."

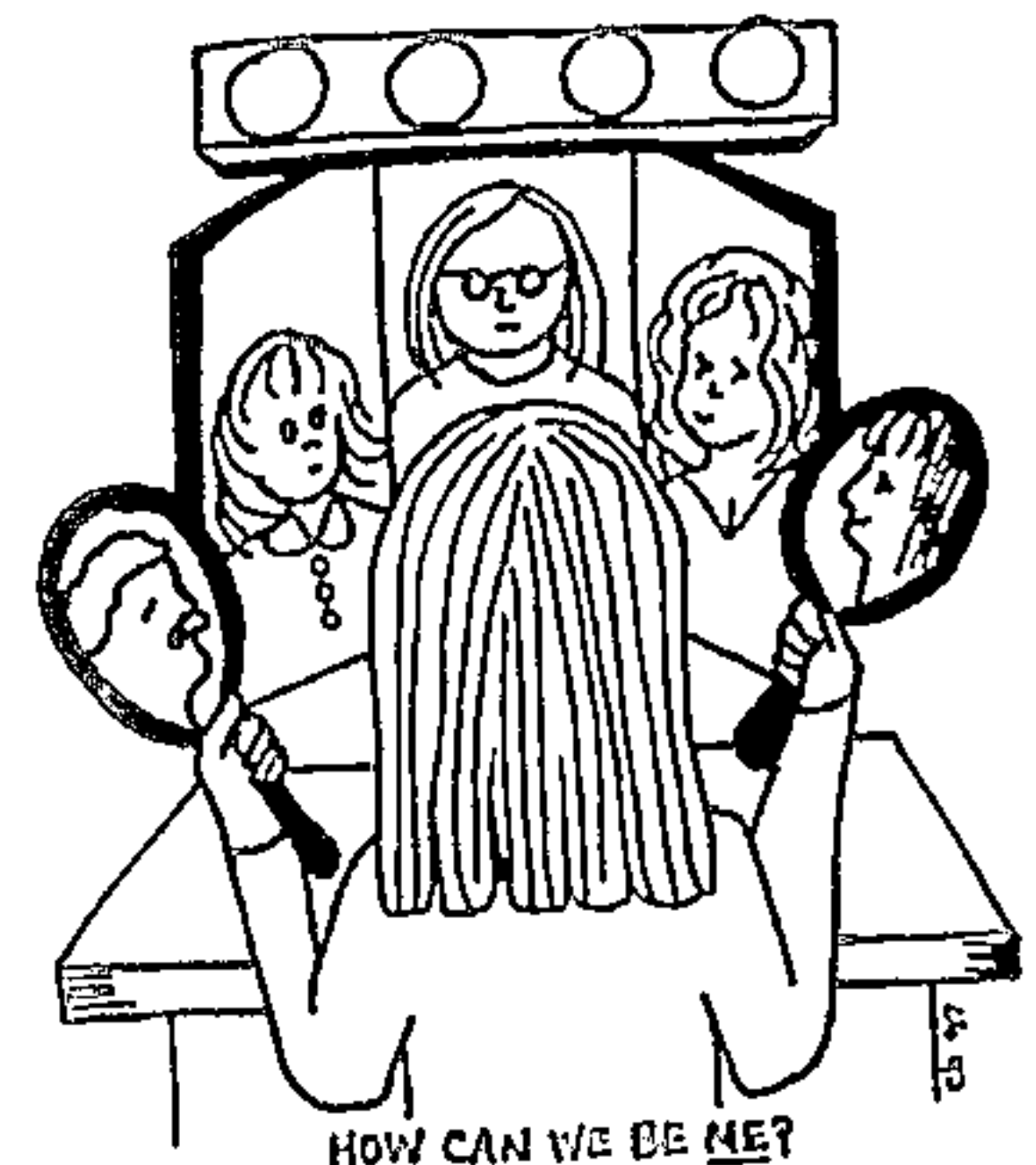
Without calling ahead, The Lady takes an hour-and-a-half train ride to see her grandsons. She arrives with an artificially cheerful "Hello! Hello! Hello!" and a bag of muffins, her signature, something they have come to expect. My brother tolerates her visits, as long as he has little interaction with her beyond a perfunctory kiss on the cheek. My brother's wife is the switch-box through which they communicate.

My brother tolerates me, too, as long as I take care not to be spontaneous. I don't want to lose him, so I am low-key, and don't get excited about anything—he still associates me with The Lady. He is cordial, smiles hello, and sometimes even looks glad to see me. But we never have a direct conversation; his wife is the switch-box for us, too.

I am 55-and-5-and-8-and 11. I am The Aunt who bakes chocolate chip cookies with her nephews. I am 55-and-14-and-23-and-24. I am The Daughter who takes a day off from work to accompany The Lady to the hospital for her cataract operation.

I am fifty-five-and-confused-and-holding-onto-the-only-family-I-have.

MV



Dissociative Men

I would first like to express my most sincere gratitude for this publication and its contributors, as nothing else in this world makes me feel so not alone in this tattered existence

I am a 29-year-old male multiple. Our eyes are old. I feel like I am a freak and a monster in the eyes of the masses. We evoke mostly fear and loathing in people who don't know us.

I don't understand—I paint. When the painting unfolds in front of me—I watch.

I we are never free from a sense of uncleanness or a need to wash. I am not an abuser (none of us are sexually attracted to children. I was afraid of the possibility and had to find out—thank God!) but from a very young age to our early teens were abused in a variety of ways by numerous males. The sinister, perverse nature of what I know makes me physically ill. Like the briefest sketch description of a novel, I fear what I don't know (and hope I won't have to—but know eventually I will.)

I trust no one. Hypervigilance is tiring in ways unimaginable to those who don't experience it. If I am a monster (which I don't believe) then I was crafted with random precision.

We are no longer weak and vulnerable, and the temptation to prey on predators was very strong at one time. The knowledge that then we would be equal to and one of their kind, spared at least one life. Those who have been close enough to us to see what it truly means to be many (with the partial exception of my ex-wife) seem to regard us with an almost superstitious fear.

The gender differential, socially, is that female multiples are likened to Sybil whereas the male multiples are associated with Norman Bates. There is also a certain amount of bias in regards to acceptable or appropriate feelings per gender, and males are *expected* to not show great feeling unless, of course, it's anger, competitive aggression, amorous pursuit, or even happiness. But fear, or discomfort, or

helplessness/vulnerability and hurt—these they would shrink to the relatively acceptable and familiar ground of rage, and consequently frightening and/or hurting people and creating isolation. This is a personal 20/20 hindsight observation. Guilt, shame and the unreasonable conviction that we're somehow "bad" or evil and deserving of whatever is negative. These feelings are caused by some internally who continue our own abuse, even though the abuser is absent. When I first saw (horrified) what was happening, I couldn't understand why I was disfiguring my own spirit. Even though I couldn't recall immediate details or events, it was obvious what was happening.

Guilt, fear, shame and pain. "Men" would sooner wrestle badger than face these emotions and their implications. I experienced the common homophobia of a survivor, and through a thoughtful necessity developed a tolerance for (almost) anyone who does not affect or harm children.

Gender shame is another thing altogether. Our abusers included females, so we had no illusions as to the nature of some humans as per gender. The difference between the vast majority of men and dogs is that, generally speaking, dogs have more honor. The children who have no fathers are many. The first-hand knowledge that the predators mimic the actions of the kind and decent seems to foul everything.

The "filth" feeling never exists when I'm with our son. He's almost 3 and he knows us on a purely feeling level and reacts subtly to changes (which are natural to him.) In ending a sick and abusive relationship, I don't see my son often. Power and control issues are not limited to men. Now, when he's with me, I try to see that he has my attention, and mostly that he *feels* that I love him. We were afraid to love someone as much as this child because the potential for an equal amount of pain exists there.

Within our system are two females. No only am I not ashamed of them, I

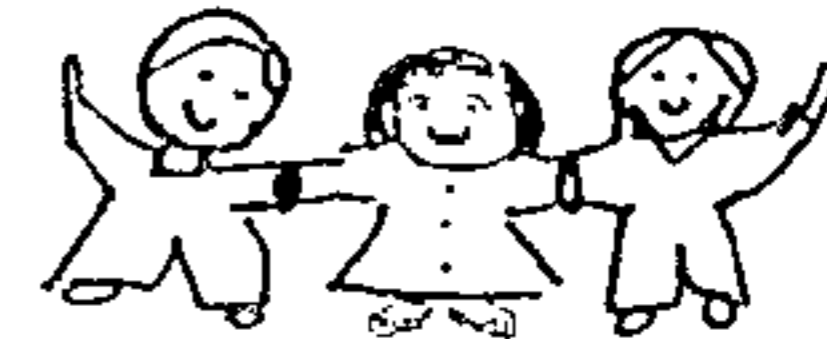
am thankful for them (not necessarily everything they do, but because they are an integral part of my whole. I feel this, but this point was not reached easily.

The (internal) children are frightened of me (to my surprise.) After being the Indian in the Cupboard with me in unwitting compliance, safety and privacy have become major issues. Communication internally is scattered, for lack of a better word. Communication externally is nearly as bad at times. I feel too much. We're driven to share these feelings in picture, word, and music. That is all we seem able to give back.

I will dare to risk feeling—and will live. As Neil Young sang in *The Loner*, "If you see us in the subway we'll be down at the end of the car."

We're becoming less frightening (I hope.)

By D.T.



I have been reading *MANY VOICES* for about three years. I am a 43-year-old, Caucasian male, diagnosed with DID (among other things) in 1994. My therapist introduced it to me after I was discharged from the hospital. I have found your magazine informative and encouraging.

Someone recently wrote in regarding being easily startled to the extent of upsetting their family with their fear. I have had to deal with paranoia myself and would like to give a few pointers I use that others may find helpful. These are not quick fixes or over-night resolutions, but long-term methods that I personally adapted to fit my needs:

First, in dealing with my fear in an overall way, what I did was to develop a method of enhancing my sensory perceptions. That is, I practiced listening, seeing, smelling and feeling (vibrations, air temperature, wind direction, etc.) To practice listening, I would turn my radio volume down and

concentrate on hearing what was being said, or the music. As I grew better at distinguishing sounds and voices I would lower the volume more. In addition, I would practice listening for barking dogs, people walking, or others in conversation.

To develop my sight recognition, when I first went into a room I would take a quick look around, close my eyes, and try to recall all that I had seen—color, item, size, etc. This is a trick that law officers must develop to a high degree. It is also one of the easiest to practice.

To develop my sense of smell I quit wearing colognes and after-shaves and deodorants that were scented. Anything one wears that has odor will make developing one's sense of smell more difficult. After discarding those I worked at learning how to breathe and how to detect odors. This is one of the hardest to do, as, generally speaking, humans living in our society do not consciously try to smell things (we try to cover up or alter all odors). I became good enough at sense detecting that I could tell the direction someone went without seeing them.

Developing the sense of feel/touch is almost as hard as that of smell. Unfortunately, ours is not a society that permits touching, especially of people. Wood is the easiest and most comforting as it assumes room temperature the quickest. Metal is the worst for it feels the extreme in any temperature. It will burn your hand in the summer or freeze it in the winter. But, one can learn to feel vibrations: start by placing your hand over a radio/stereo speaker (radio must be on); or by walking barefoot in the house and feel the vibration of someone else walking or running or jumping. Like the other senses, the closer one is, the stronger the sense, and the farther away, the weaker the sense. Practice with the heat from lamp or the sun shining on your arm or back, the wind blowing on your face or neck, or the way a bath feels when you are soaking.

Becoming aware of each of our senses is the first step. Taking note of specific senses and identifying them is how one does that.

A second step is that of coordinating body and mind and emotions. I personally think that the best way to do this is through the study of Tai Chi Chuan. Tai Chi Chuan will help one to direct their senses in the most effective manner. Tai Chi Chuan is the Chinese art of moving meditation. Not only will it aid in relaxation, but it will also provide a knowledge of self-defense if one is so inclined.

The third step is continuous practice. One must become totally aware of their environment at all times if you do not want to be startled or caught unawares.

Step four is communication. Communication is a two-way street. Input and Output.

Step five is more practice. This is more than I expected to write, but if it is of help to any, then it is worth it.

By Dene-Lyne



My name is Chris. I am presently serving time in a state prison.

I suffer from many childhood horrors, due to physical, mental and sexual abuse at the hands of my father. I am very much interested in hearing from and corresponding with and sharing personal experiences with others like me.

I had a very hard time dealing with and facing my horrors. I've had to hide my shame and humiliation for over thirty years now. And being in prison where the help is limited, it's been even harder to confront my past, and to maintain a steady growth in healing.

I'm convinced that if it hadn't been for a caring new psychologist here at the facility, who now works with me, to see through my walls, and to recognize my cries for help, I don't think I would have made it this far to possible recovery. And I would probably still be sliding further into the darkness...

I sometimes look into a mirror mounted on my cell wall and see the reflection of myself, and don't even recognize myself. I start to think back and remember the horrors of my abuse and before I even know it or can help it, I revert back into the past and

my childhood, reliving the past over and over and over again.

I used to have to attach small notes to myself in very bright colors, to attract my attention, and to help me come back out of the trances I go into when I'm reliving my memories. The bright colored notes to myself in certain parts of my cell would sometimes help...but now I can't do this anymore, because I'm ordered by the guards not to put anything on the walls.

My father used to dress me up in little girl's clothes and make me perform a variety of sexual acts with him and others. If I didn't do what he told me to do, exactly like he told me to do it, the punishment was even worse.

After my mother left my father, and moved away, I started to practice those sexual acts with my sexual partners...including violent and unusual sex acts. To be honest, I think I even grew to like some of these sex acts, and started to choose my partners based upon their willingness to perform the sex acts with me. When the willingness of sex partners ran out, I started to act out more violently...which led to why I'm in prison now.

It is hard for me to maintain a grip on any reality here. Just to get away from my memories I've considered suicide many times. I even destroyed all papers and documents having to do with these things, and wrote letters to certain people saying goodbye in my own little way, without letting on what I had planned to do.

Then at the very last minute I chose life over death. I immediately wrote a letter to my psychologist, requesting her help to try to reach out to others with similar problems to my own. And so I write to you and hope some of you will respond.

(Editor's note: I will forward letters to Chris...but please talk it over with your therapist before you decide to communicate with any prisoner, including those who write in MANY VOICES. We want everyone to be safe.—LW)

Therapist's Page

By Shirley Glubka, MA LCPC

Shirley Glubka is a therapist in private practice in Stockton Springs, Maine. She is preparing a book for therapists about writing.

Writing for Balance

In the mid-1980's I began to work intensively with clients who had multiple personality disorder/dissociative identity disorder (MPD/DID). My training and previous work had done little to prepare me for what I was hearing and seeing. I valued balance as much as I valued anything in life and I tried to keep it. When I couldn't keep it, I imagined it there, a steady way of being that I would never give up. I also valued passion, the stuff that gives life depth. The work with trauma survivors pulled my deepest passion into usable shape. This was a wonderful, absorbing, stimulating process—and always on the verge of being too much. I thought about my work virtually all of the time. I needed to talk about my work with colleagues in detail and repeatedly. And I wrote.

I was like a cow in a strange new field, eating. I took what came to me from my clients and I chewed it into cud, and then I chewed the cud. Digesting, digesting. A very physical process, this felt. It all became part of my bones and my blood. And it became my poetry, my prose. This was therapeutic for me but also problematic. I was using stories that were not my stories. They belonged to my clients. My clients had a right to confidentiality. I felt forced toward fiction.

I got part way there. What I found along the way were some things that seemed a bit like terrible archetypes to me: quintessential details, typical scenarios from the world of child abuse. I picked these up and held them in my hands. They would do. I did not need to tell the story of any particular client. I could use the details that came repeatedly from client after client; or from my reading; or from my dreams. The essence of the early writing would be this: how such details changed and shaped themselves as

they made their way through me onto the page—and how I placed myself in this new world my clients showed to me. My sense of wonder, perhaps oddly, would inform the early writing.

Later, the writing would take a turn toward my own peculiarities, my limitations, my crankiness as a therapist and as a person. I wasn't always happy with my clients or with myself. Difficult moments in the therapy relationship would appear in the writing. Again, I found what seemed almost archetypal and used it freely, creating details, shifting things to shape them differently. Eventually I had a collection of writings. This collection took the raw material of my life, particularly my life as a therapist, and transformed it. The "characters"—both the clients and the therapist—were rooted in the real, but changed.

Like any other creative writing, this writing is peculiar and not always balanced. The early stages—and even later stages—of being a trauma therapist do not foster balance; they threaten it. If you were to read this collection, you might get the impression that *all* of my clients were severely traumatized in the most dramatic ways—that every therapy hour was filled with tales of horror—that my clients were routinely turning into three-year-olds or seven-year-olds in the middle of a sentence.

In fact, my life as a therapist *was* being changed. *I* was being dramatically changed. But the dailiness of my professional life went on. The wonder of a small peek into the soul (my clients' souls, but also my own); the decision whether to listen as a client stumbles along or whether to speak a challenging word—these basics of my life as a therapist continued.

A glimpse into a session with a client who has MPD/DID will, on an ordinary day, look ordinary. We will be two adults sitting in a room having a conversation. We might be talking about how to respond to the client's teenage son who has begun to lie and steal; or how the client is finally going to start—and continue—to exercise. This collection of writings gives an altogether different impression. Trauma, until it is metabolized, distorts. This is true for the trauma survivor; it is also true for her therapist. With time, and a great deal of work, a new and more balanced shape is constructed—by the client and by her therapist.

I could not produce these particular writings now. I am not newly impassioned, radically challenged, or just plain scared in the way I was some years ago. Even the most terrible trauma, even the most dramatic aftereffects of trauma, have become "common" for me. I love the word "common." Since my early involvement in the Women's Liberation Movement, this word has been associated with a quote from Judy Grahn: "*The common woman is as common as the best of bread / and will rise.*"

I have been metaphorically mixed and kneaded and punched and heated over and over by years of trauma work. The horror that my clients endured no longer takes center stage for me. The switch from one personality to another no longer carries a special jolt of electricity. I work with more equanimity now, and the ordinary humanity of my clients is what amazes me. At least that is what feels true today. Tomorrow could surprise me.

Here are a few bits of my poetry, samples of how I have used writing to steady myself through the years:

I Must Because She Can't

I dream my own brain in a box
with labels: Do Not Drop.
The thing is tough, but not uncrackable;
resistant,
there,
invisible,
and utterly substantial. And I
am microscopic. I can go into.
I can fly out of.

Awake, I would take kinesthetic hold,
get my hands around the thing and cup it,
catch its nature. This is a loving longing,
lonely. I would know my only mind.

I must because she can't, yet,
hers being split into many
(This is not a metaphor)
parceled by pain
(this is not a metaphor)
each mind wrapped in brown paper and twine
saved from years previous
(this is metaphor, but barely)
the paper wrinkled, creased, worn and
paradoxically, simultaneously
fresh, crisp as the day the thing needed packaging,
covering, hiding,
saving,
(o precious pain);
each piece of self, preserved, sweet, named, and secret
and none of this is
metaphor.

Dialogue

I said to her:
Breaking through is like
breaking open an egg—
better have a bowl ready.

She said to me, somewhat later:
I would have preferred hard-boiled.
What are we /doing with /scrambled?

I Can See Her

Think of the grandmother rocking away
and Cora the grandchild
who sits on the floor
watching the soft blur of colors
all spun in the whirl of the top
she has just learned to use.

This is the daytime that follows the night.
This is the grandmother of the daylight.
This is the time of forgetting,
of pumping the top
to get it to spin and
loving the blur that it makes.

Now think of Cora years later
unlearning the blur:
colors differentiate;
here is red and red is blood, of course;
and red is blood through years of nights
until and finally this red will liberate itself
for apples and pimentos,
for red bikes and sunsets—
or suddenly appear as an accent in a favorite work of art.

On good days she will see the world this way,
each thing itself.
Not all days will be good
and many things she sees will hold old terrors
in their back pockets. She will not be surprised.
She has walked the streets
and knows about the range of pockets
and all they can contain.
She has walked the streets in icy wind
and sheer sunlight
and, lovingly, in rain.
In rain she carries all her pain
like packages inside her mind
but both her hands are free
and I can see her running, arms outstretched,
into the windy rain beside the sea.

O I can see her running, running, running
into the windy rain beside the sea.

Native American

I am Native American. I want to read/learn more about high-functioning DID and PTSD. I guess I have both.

My daughter had DID at age 4 years (she's 19 now). There was no one to help her in the rural state where I lived, but the professional (a PhD) who diagnosed her gave me a book list. I read all I could find in 1983-84. I had to work with her myself. No one there did. I was also fighting a court battle to protect her from her father who abused her. At the same time, my own parents disowned me for going to court to protect my child from incest. My mother said "Children lie." She had to protect my father from me, before I accused him too. I didn't understand why she'd say such things at that time. (I had no memories except a few of her physical abuse to me.)

So then I ended up leaving all...running, facing Federal kidnapping charges to protect daughters. Won. Got protection in another state (this one).

One daughter is married, has her own daughter. The other is graduating this month. Two other daughters are married, too.

Last year I did my own processing. I had no idea I had this, but also now remember some things, and know my mother did, too. Only she became an abuser and my father enabled her to stay sick (alcoholic and drug addicted.) He had his own "stuff" to hide.

After all these years, I uncovered memories of very early, ongoing severe physical and sexual abuse.

I went to the reservation last year, then did purification ceremonies and then a prayer/fast on the mountain.

The Indian way of my people is that, on a mountain, you go barefoot, with no food or water, no glasses or barrettes. By day it is 95 to 100 degrees F., and cold enough to see your breath at night. You should remain standing as much as possible, and not sleep the whole time. You just pray with the pipe, for two to four days and nights. (Usually two days for women.) I went for four days, took other people's prayer requests with me, and prayed, gave thanks for my healing, and left the memories there.

This was a rattlesnake area, with howling coyotes and thunderstorms, but you must put total faith and trust in God. If fear tries to come or it feels too hard to continue, or if you are thirsty, you must pray hard, keep praying through it, no matter what. Then go down the mountain and go through another sweat/purification ceremony before it's over.

You cannot see or speak to anyone before it is over. Then you can have a drink of water.

Before this, I went to counseling. That's how the problem was identified. I remembered and processed flashbacks for a year before the fast. But there is and was no financial help for me to continue in counseling.

I guess I accept my self (recognize the D.I.D.) and realized what they told me, and did it as I've lived—differently.

I still cannot admit my problem to others, even old/close friends. I'm still a little scared of it and others, knowing that others would have yet another thing to use against me, or they might try to call out my others, control me, make fun of me.

I know it makes no sense, to myself or anyone who reads this, that years ago I

helped my child integrate, and yet it's so hard to accept this in me. At the same time, I see that it's not the same for me as it was with her...or what I read in your publication. Some people have names for different identities...so did my daughter. A long-time friend who doesn't know about me/D.I.D. said to me recently, "Are you feeling small, like a child?" (I was stressed out at the time.)

Later I again talked to her, and asked her what she meant. She said I sounded like a small child who'd been locked in a closet or something. (Which I once had been.)

Then I asked her if my voice was different. She said No, it was the same adult voice.

The therapist once said there were children, and also a protector, observer, wise old woman. I was also told that I didn't exist, was lost to myself, the Self was dead. Is that possible? I want to know about this.

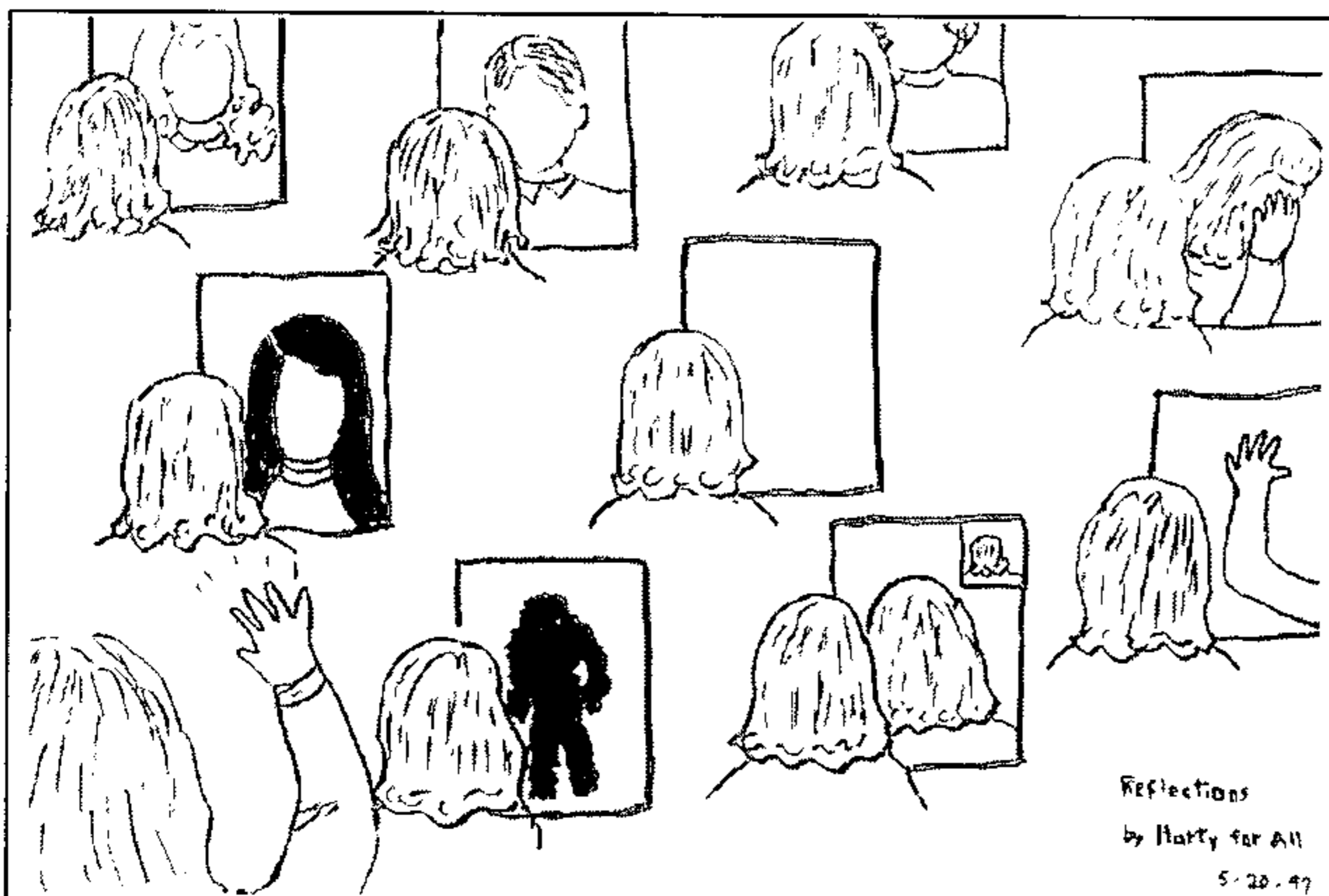
I know I am healed in some ways, and I can help others. I have helped other women and a couple teens who had the same thing (in the past.) Mainly, I can identify it in them, and support and direct them to seek counseling. But I don't want to be the one to tell them I identify this, or to do any sort of therapy, after having to be the one to help my own child.

Over the years I have tried to help children when I can, and have had some satisfying success. But it's only because of God that any of this, including my survival, is possible.

Someday, maybe I will have the courage to more openly admit I have this, even if I have it in a different way than others do.

By W.

MV



All my Selves (For Bob B.)

I am two. I am three. I am four.
I am ten. I am eleven. I am thirteen.
I am sixteen. I am nineteen.
I am fifty (nearly).

And I stand, hand raised,
In salute at your door.

By Margaret W.

MV

Invisible African-Americans In Mental Health System— Misdiagnosed & Ignored?

This article is a result of a phone interview with Hikmah Gardiner, Director of the Do Drop-In Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. — Lynn W.

“Ignorance is OK, as long as you know you’re ignorant and do something about it. I have no quarrel with that. My quarrel is with folks not knowing, knowing they don’t know, and not giving a tinker’s damn.”

This is Hikmah Gardiner speaking her mind about white counselors who don’t know how to talk to black clients. It’s a factor that may influence the sparse numbers and near-invisibility of dissociative African-Americans. Certainly blacks are traumatized, neglected, abused. But very few are diagnosed with a dissociative disorder. Why is this? Why are there so few African-American counselors being trained in the dissociative disorder, trauma-recovery fields?

In an attempt to begin finding answers, *MANY VOICES* interviewed Ms. Gardiner, an African-American mental health consumer and director of Do Drop-In, a peer support mental health center in Philadelphia, funded by the Mental Health Association of Southeast Pennsylvania.

“Consumers’ are those of us labeled ‘psychiatrically impaired,’” she says. “We have 72 of these kinds of places (drop-in centers) in Pennsylvania, and consumers run them all. It’s not an alternative to traditional treatment, it’s an adjunct. You can’t call your psychiatrist up at 2 A.M. We’re like buddies and friends to our consumer community.”

“You don’t see so many African-American professionals?” she adds. “Neither do I, and I do public speaking all over the country. Nor do I see too many African-American consumers, and yet I assure you, we are out there. In Pennsylvania, we are more than half of the consumer population. As a rule we are thrown (diagnostically) into the schizophrenic area. I would assume that the dissociatives among us are just thrown in with the schizophrenics.”

Ms Gardiner and her fellow consumers helped see that the largest mental institution in Pennsylvania (“a godawful place!”) was closed awhile back, and the diversionary money that would have gone to the hospital is now sent back to the community. There it supports the centers that assist the mentally ill, as well as providing many kinds of outreach. “We do pamphlets, radio, TV, talk shows, a lot of local public speaking at churches, Lion’s Clubs, Elks Clubs, all those kind of things,” she says.

Obviously, every ethnic group has its own culture, with its own way of communicating. Referring again to white

counselors, she says “Not only do they not know how, they haven’t taken the time to learn. That’s what pisses me off.”

She hopes there will be more attempts to connect the black community with competent mental health services, but the process is painfully slow. A few cross-cultural awareness seminars have been taking place, and more are planned. The African-American professionals who do exist are starting to write up their suggestions for change.

Interestingly enough, Ms Gardiner has found that one of the country’s generally more backward states, Alabama, is beginning to show signs of leadership in bringing mental health education to its African-American population. “I’ve been down there any number of times, and more and more I’m seeing in the audience people who look like me...both professional and consumers. This is a good thing. Not only that, they have consumers working in the offices of mental health, doing more than janitorial kinds of work. There is nothing wrong with being a janitor. But if you have the ability and desire to be more, then be so. That is occurring now.”

According to Ms Gardiner, mental health treatment for the poor in urban America is a very iffy proposition. “You see the psychiatrist for fifteen minutes. You see your therapist for maybe half-an-hour, and then ‘Good luck and sin no more’” she says. “If you have the where-with-all, you can go every week. But if you’re dependent on the dole, very seldom do you get one-on-one therapy. It’s a group.” The decision is apparently made under the guise of efficiency, even though for certain conditions, including treatment of dissociative disorders, one-on-one therapy is clearly more helpful. “They think, ‘Why do one (client) when you can do twelve at the same time?’ It’s that kind of attitude,” she adds.

Is there any hope for progress in the treatment of traumatized African-Americans?

“I’m almost 70. I began seeing a psychiatrist when I was eight or nine years old. So I’ve been in this a long, long time. I have seen some major changes. However, the changes I have seen have been initiated by and large by the consumer,” she says.

She cites embedded racism as a critical factor in many aspects of mental health care delivery. “You ask me why there are so few African-American professionals? Look at it from their point of view. If I know that you don’t want me, I’m not coming. I’m just not coming. For so long we’ve been

turned aside, overlooked. Now that it’s a bit easier to come in the water, I’m still suspicious. That’s very real. I don’t know how to overturn years and years of hatred. Some of our men feel like whale dung, at the bottom of the ocean...because they are despised.”

And how to reach the professionals? “We just have to keep talking about it. That’s all. That’s a damn good start. Folk need to go to black colleges and have workshops and seminars, and let folk know ‘you can come on down, this is a new day and you have to get some new ways.’”

“Start on the college level. And black folks go to church...we still do. African ministers—tell them what you’re about. Ask for five or ten minutes to invite the professionals to at least investigate the mental health field. Advertise in black newspapers. Community newspapers. Black radio and TV stations. If there are scholarship funds available, let people know.”

It’s pretty clear from Ms Gardiner’s statements that African-Americans aren’t going to come knocking on the door of our clinics and conferences, saying ‘please let us in.’

Those of us who were neglected and abused as children are unusually able to identify with others who have been ignored and mistreated and shamed. Improving mental health access is one place we can make a difference. We “consumers” may be able to help the recovery prospects for abused people of color, as well as ourselves, simply by opening our eyes, and issuing invitations to talk more often and more seriously with those our society has previously ignored.

MANY VOICES wants to participate in this process. We encourage those who have engaged in multi-cultural outreach, in the US or abroad, to send us your ideas and experiences to share. Let us know what resources are available, and what techniques may help all recovering people to better understand each other. We will continue this report on access to mental health treatment in future issues of *MV*.

PARTNER'S PAGE

By Angela Durden

The following is an excerpt from a book in progress:

Angela: At twenty I met the man who would soon become my husband. Bart kept asking me what was wrong. I didn't understand the question. What did he mean? Nothing was wrong.

Bart: I would ask "Then why do you sometimes act like you hate my guts and can't stand the sight of me?"

Angela: I would always say "What? I don't do that!"

Bart: But, she did.

Angela: This is true. He told me he had been married before and asked if that bothered me. Why, no. My mother has been married twice. I understand about these things, I told him. Wow, he said, he couldn't believe how understanding I was about it. Then I told him I was not the type to have sex before marriage and that was that.

Bart: Having been married before to an alcoholic I knew what I wanted and what I didn't. I thought she was a fine, moral woman. I was right.

Angela: Just before our marriage I politely, but firmly, informed him that, if we should ever have children and he hurt them in any way, or if he beat me, then he would be outta here so fast he wouldn't know what had hit him.

Bart: I was very hurt and shocked. "Do you think I could ever do something like that? Do I seem to be that kind of man?"

Angela: I knew I was just telling him the rules. He understood them. Then came the honeymoon. I was looking forward to becoming a woman. I was looking forward to it, that is, until it was actually time to do it. Then, I became raging mad. I put on my pretty little bed clothes. I got in the bed and lay there and said, "Okay, fine, just do it and hurry up." But, he wanted to kiss and touch and all that other crap. Well, I wasn't having any of that.

Bart: I was very confused.

Angela: Then I went to the bathroom. The rage welled up in me again. All this mess! All this mess and for what? For WHAT?! Just so he-e-e-e-e can have a good time. The jerk. Then I went back in and wanted to do it again. This time I wasn't angry. The honeymoon was difficult, to say the least. Which I am saying, you know, the least. We bought a two bedroom mobile home. After moving in I was going through our stuff to sort it out and put it in its proper place when I ran across some papers of my husband's. Nothing important.

Bart: Yeah, right. Just air force honorable discharge papers. Dog tags. Oh, yeah, and some pictures of my ex-wife and a few other things.

Angela: A couple of months later Bart was looking for those very things.

Bart: I couldn't find them. So, logically, I asked where they were. Immediately, she flies into this rage.

Angela: Oh, yes, I had seen them. "Well, where are they?" asked he. "Where are they? I will tell you where they are. They are ripped to shreds and in the trash, that's where they are." "Well, go get them," says he. "Can't. Threw them away two months ago."

Bart: Mad doesn't even begin to express how I felt. It wasn't that the picture of my ex meant anything. It was that she threw away MY STUFF for no reason. She did save one picture of my ex, though.

Angela: The ugliest one I could find. In a few minutes, though, it was time to appease the god again. I began to cry. It was long, deep, and full of humiliating apology. It went on for an hour or so. Then gradually the wails of grief became shrieks of hilarity. Hilarity is too mild. It was dementia, lasting about an hour.

Bart: The laughing would deteriorate into crying again, then laughing would follow. It went on for hours. I was lost. Did not have a clue. But, mostly, I thought I was to blame. I kept asking myself what I had done?

Angela: Of course, I never remembered much about those times. But other times I remember in great detail, because I was watching it happen. If you had looked real close you would have seen me sitting in the uppermost corner of the room, near the ceiling, observing, commenting, and conversing with me down on the floor crying and laughing. However, I wasn't really worried about me. I was worried about my dear husband.

You see, he never seemed to make much sense. I mean, out of the clear blue sky he would ask, "What do you want? Do you want a divorce? What? What do you want?" Or, "Why do you always say such nasty things to me? What have I ever done to you? I love you." He was always talking about things that had nothing to do with what was going on at the time. Here we were, having a nice time, when all of a sudden he is asking about divorce. Why couldn't he stay focused? My dear husband. I was so worried.

Bart: She was worried? I didn't know what the hell was going on.

Angela: But, besides being deeply offended that he could imagine for one

minute that I wanted a divorce, I then became very much jolted by the realization that this was his way of telling me he no longer wanted to be married to me. So I would begin to appease him again and make him stay. I would beg "Don't leave me. Oh, please don't leave me."

Bart: Then other times she would say, "Yeah, well, fine, just go ahead and leave, you blankety-blank-blank. I did fine before I met you. Now, go. Pack your f—— bags and don't come back."

Angela: I became pregnant. Well, I thought, if he hadn't left by now, he would when he found out about this. So, he called home, anxiously awaiting the prognosis on the fitting of a diaphragm, and found out he would be a dad in about seven months.

Bart: A numb feeling came over me. I had never been a dad before.

Angela: That was the longest four hours I have ever waited in my life. I cried all afternoon. How could I ever make this up to him? I also raged at the wimpiness of men who would always make the babies but wouldn't stay around to look after them. Fine. When he comes home he will inform me he will be leaving. I know men. Scum of the earth. Why I ever married him I will never know.

Bart: When I came home I was smiling. She began to cry and apologize. I wanted to know what all the tears were about. She was so sorry that she had done this terrible thing to me and if I wanted to leave she would understand. I assured her that I loved her and would never leave my wife, the mother of my child.

Angela: I got very embarrassed. Oh, dear. Now everyone would know what we had been doing. I mean, before, they may have *thought* they knew we were doing it, but now there was *proof*. How could I go out in public knowing that they know for sure. I can't. I won't.

I didn't. Instead, I kept my blinds closed and the lights off when my husband wasn't home. Then these voices would say, "What is the matter with you? Are you stupid? Do you think anyone cares whether or not you are pregnant or how you got that way? Is the bogey man gonna git ya? Ha! Ha! Ha!" Cry for an hour. Laugh hysterically. Cry. Laugh. Cry. Laugh. "Oh, shut up, would you." "I think I need to make some fudge." "Yeah, let's make fudge." "I get to lick the pan and the spoons." "Okay, whatever, just come on."

Then Bart would call at lunch.

Bart: She would tell me she was making some treat for dessert, like home-made

fudge. I couldn't wait to get home and have some. She made great desserts. I'd get home, give her a kiss and ask for the fudge. *"What do you mean there isn't any more? Where did it go? You what? Why did you eat it all? How much did you make? A DOUBLE BATCH! And there is none for me? I can't believe this. I was looking forward to some fudge."* This happened all the time. All the time.

Angela: I would either get very mad and deliver some long speech about the despicableness of a man who would pitch a fit because his wife got to eat some fudge or would try to appease him by saying I was so sorry I ate it all and didn't save any for you. Or I would say in a very confused manner, *"Of course, I don't remember eating it. It just wasn't there anymore."*

Bart: I never knew who would be there when I came home. Was it an angry and enraged wife who would try to beat me up? Or would it be the calm, competent, sedately dressed homemaker whose only wish in life was my happiness? Would it be the anxious wife who would cry when I was two minutes late because she just knew I was dead and how was she to raise this child on her own? Would it be the wife who would accuse me of perpetrating preposterous deeds of disloyalty to our marriage in the two minutes that I was late coming home? Would it be the happy wife who just couldn't wait to tell me all about her day and how she had cooked and cleaned and washed the dishes and clothes and danced in the living room with the baby and wasn't life just grand? Would it be the fearful wife who would jump, jerk, and turn with every unexpected noise, insisting the whole time that something evil was out to get us? Would it be the wife who would rearrange every stick of furniture in the whole house so that I never knew where to find my chair? I had to look before I would sit down.

Angela: Yes. Who would greet hard-working hubby when he got home? From the time I learned to count, around 4, I have obsessed about numbers and counted compulsively.

Bart: When she would count it was almost impossible to get her attention. Finally, after yelling really loud she would look at me, mad, of course, and say *"What are you yelling about? I am right here. Geez."*

Angela: But, when I get panicky I count and rock. The rocking began as soon as I found out I was pregnant with my first child. The minute I was informed of the pregnancy, no matter where I was sitting or standing, at home or in public, I was rocking. I could not stop. I tried. There was nothing I could do. I am not pregnant any longer, but, the rocking continues; although it is getting much better.

Bart: On the night "Big Helper" came out she informed Uncle Bart, as the little ones call me, that she was the one that started rocking the babies. She wanted to keep them happy and calm. Anytime she is responsible for doing something around the house, she comes out and tells me. I always praise her for doing such a good job.

Angela: Going shopping is difficult and there have been plenty of times where I can not leave the house except to take the dog out to do his business. The fear of not knowing who I would see kept a lot of the little ones home. They didn't like to go out. If I forced the issue something always seems to happen.

However, if the kids were sick and called from school, whoosh, everyone except the "Big Lady" would go away so she could handle it. But, if it wasn't life or death, forget it. So, the days pass with one starting the laundry, another dancing to music, someone skipping down the hall, someone else singing *"I'm a little curly-top, yes, indeed, yes, indeed, yes, indeed. I'm a little curly-top, yes, indeed, Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha"*; someone else going up to the office to work on the computer, someone else laying on the floor staring at the ceiling; and etcetera and so forth!

Bart: It can be very busy when everybody wants to be out at the same time. Everybody wants to experience life. When I come home I might find a very exhausted wife laying on the sofa. Then the "Five Year Old" will jump up and down glad that "Uncle Bart" is home. The "Matron" finishes supper. "Six" eats it, guarding her plate and shoveling it in. "Four" chews with her mouth wide open, smacking her lips. "Five" flirts with "That Boy," as she calls our son, by kicking him under the table and laughing at the faces he makes and the jokes he tells. It is very busy and confusing. Most of the time it is very funny; and it will tug at my heart other times.

Angela: Tell about the stuffed animals.

Bart: Oh, yeah. It all started when "Eight" saw the teddy bear in the therapist's office. She was really feeling bad about her teddy bear (long story). So, I went and bought her one. For a long time, as each new little one would come out, it would be very traumatic so I bought each one a stuffed animal so that they would have something of their very own to cheer them up.

I play kid games with the toys, too. For instance, I take a stuffed animal and move it towards her while saying "Ima" -pause- "gonna" -pause- "git ya". At the "git ya" I tickle her with the stuffed animal. Just like you would do with any kids that age. "Three" and "Four" will laugh and laugh and try to get away and say stop it.

Angela: Of course, in the privacy of our bedroom. But, when they come out in public it can be embarrassing for everyone.

Home Depot is not a good place for me to go because of the hanging lights and the door bell displays.

Bart: Boy, don't I know it. Our son bought a kid's meal at a fast food restaurant. It came with a toy prism. When you look through the prism at a light it makes a lot of designs and colors. So, here is my 38 year old wife, standing in front of the light display, holding this plastic prism to her eye and saying "Bart, Bart, wook. Ahhh. Ohhh. Wook. Wook. It so pwetty."

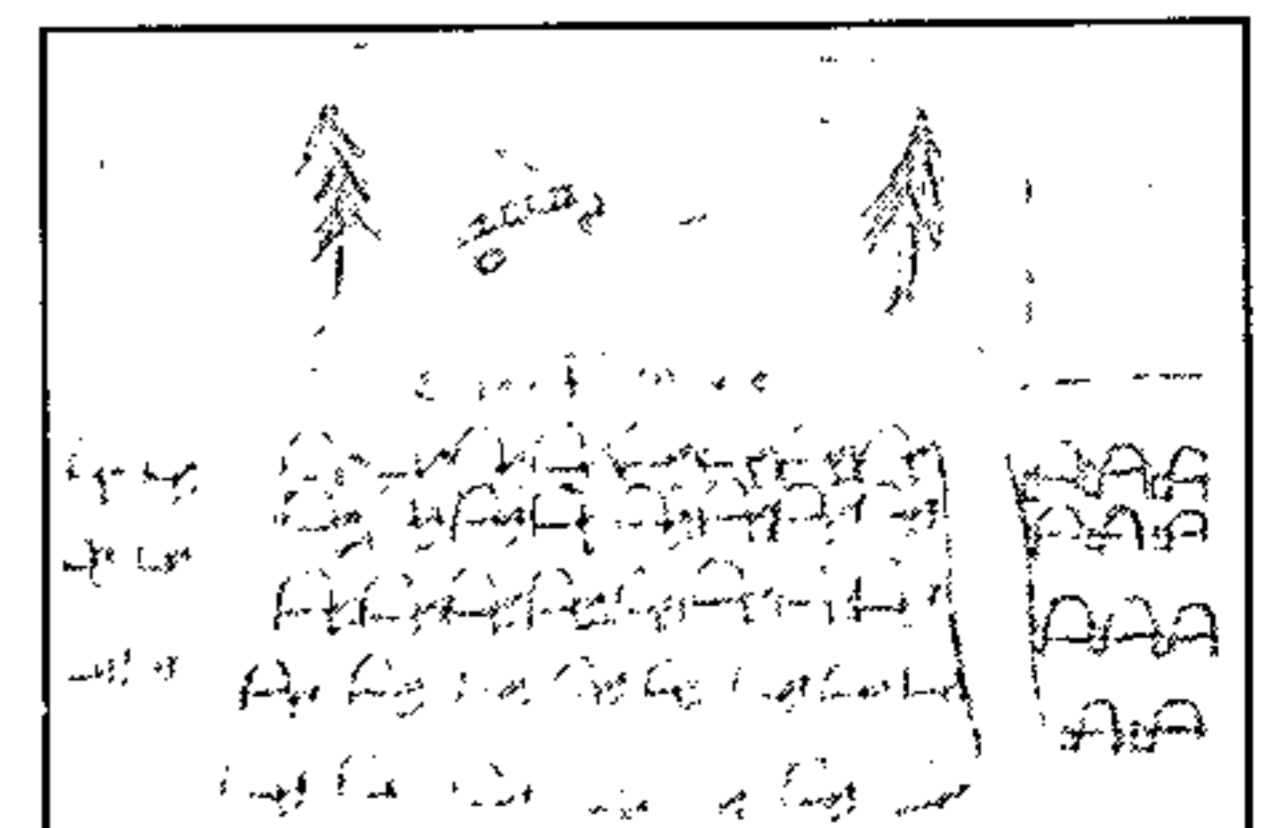
I take her arm and say that is enough now, come on. She is still holding it up to her eye walking backwards oohing and aahing. Until, that is, we get to the door bell section. "Bart, Bart, can I ring the doorbells? Pwease." Ding, dong. Chime. Ring, ring. Boing. Buzz, buzz. Ding, dong. Buzz, buzz. Boing, boing, boing. The whole time she is laughing and having an absolute blast. I have to laugh too.

Or she will see a fan and stand in front of it and say "Aaahhhh!" to hear the quavering sound. I just have to laugh. It is all of the little ones getting to enjoy their natural curiosity; the thing that was suppressed when they were growing up. So, she deserves it. It may be a bit disconcerting for others to watch.

Angela: But, there is nothing immoral, illegal, or fattening about having that fun, so Bart and I let the little ones do it and have fun. Shopping for groceries at Kroger sometimes takes a long time. Various items catch the eye of different ones. Looking at and choosing between all the food is a marvelous treat. Still, mixed in with all the funny stuff are thoughts of suicide which used to be a constant companion. Even that is getting much better.

Bart: You know, there have been all these books written about discovering your inner child and all the benefits of doing it. Well, she has discovered her inner children (and a few others). Is it difficult? Yes. Has it been good? Oh, yes. Will we make it through? I certainly believe we will.

MV



By Linda W.

Letters

Dear Folks ..A few guidelines for the letters page: I do not have addresses for everyone who contributes to MV, (some are anonymous) but I do maintain addresses for the persons published in "Letters." If you send a letter responding to another article, I may not be able to forward it. Also, I will forward letters one direction only (ie, to the person who wrote in MV.) If you want to continue corresponding, you'll have to do this on your own, because I don't keep track of who replied to whom. Some people prefer *not* to engage in correspondence with those they don't know well, and that choice must be respected. One possible alternative for those who don't feel "safe" responding to a reply is to involve your therapist in the process and get permission for mail to be sent thru the office. I just don't have the staff to handle this thru MV. Hope you understand...and keep writing!— LW

I am so confused by all the pieces. My "parts" are sometimes hidden underground, sometimes fuzzy fragments whose ages and sex I know but who don't emerge the way other multiples' parts do. I guess I don't have amnesia except when I become a very young sobbing child and don't know there's anyone else around. My self-destructive parts don't seem to be aware of any non-self-destructive parts. There are times when I dissociate so extremely that paperwork, bills, get totally messed-up, and I have no clue what (who!) happened. I'm trying to talk to and negotiate with parts, but I don't really know who's there. Can anyone else help me figure out what's really going on, and where my multiplicity fits in? I know there are no simple answers, but I'm clue-less so much of the time. Any suggestions, comments, or hints?

Eve

I'm doing some research and would like to find information about how a person who has DID responds to various medical tests. For example, can one alter have a 104-degree temperature, and yet another alter registers a normal temperature? Can one personality have diabetes and another one not? Have there been any medical studies done on the differences among alters? I would prefer professional articles on the subject, but am interested in anecdotes as well. Any help you can give me is appreciated. Thanks.

Tom

During this past year I believe my therapist has tried to help distance me from my alters in order for the core-me to take control in situations that previously caused problems. That has happened, but in the process I am unable to reach and find the good traits of the alters. I can't find the joy of the five-year-old, or the alter who used to sew professionally. I can't sew at all now.

I never expected this to happen! My therapist says it's only temporary. How does he know? He explains that if you go East long enough you end up where you started, but without the negative things. Has anyone ever felt like this? Any ideas that might help? Thanks.

Angel Hope

We are dealing with the unusual problem of having a 7-year-old child host and we live in a Peter Pan world with thinking and

reasoning at a 7-year-old level. One can imagine the problems this poses for a 53-year-old body. This child tends to keep the door closed (says she doesn't know about any door) so that we on the inside must remain inside. We manage to get out only when she is caught off guard. There is a major trust problem here. She (the child) believes that if she doesn't do whatever needs to be done, no one else will, and she refuses to believe that we exist. After 11 months of therapy, we on the inside are at our wits' end. Prior to the system's breakdown (about 5 years ago) we were able to come and go as needed and so to function well. This child was created at a very young age to handle life on the outside by perfectly reading and pleasing the parents, to be a perfect chameleon. We could not afford to have her grow up then. Over time she forgot about us and now it's the pits. Our therapist is concerned about the "stand off." Any ideas on how to handle this and make progress?

Pat's Flock

Awhile back I wrote an article asking how to pay for therapy, and no one responded. (Maybe I sounded too angry.) Anyway I've been having an interesting time with the integration process. Everyone inside is stirring like a tornado. I wish I had more support to talk with people about integration. I don't have access to the Internet. I don't know what's going on in therapy right now. I don't know if I'm letting my therapist help me enough. Things are slowly happening, but God it's taking so long! I want to be done with this! Write if you have suggestions, and thanks!

Terry L.

I am very concerned about the changes taking place in hospitals that treat DD/MPD. In our fight to become a trauma survivor, we've had much help along the way. There was always a hand reaching out, someplace. Someone who understood. We've fought so hard to live, but most of all, to have a voice. I've been fortunate to be treated at an inpatient unit that doesn't ask for proof of why you are the way you are. A place that doesn't make you feel shame, guilt, or question your reality. Now there have been significant personnel changes and I am worried. Will this unit stay open? We see Trauma Units disappearing across the country. We all need to unite our voices and fight

bureaucracy. Not just for ourselves, but for those to come who will follow in our footsteps on this long journey of healing. We haven't always had a voice to ask for help, but together we have many. Let's make ourselves heard! Write to anyone you can think of to stress the importance that Trauma Units stay open and functional! Uniting so we are not forgotten.

By Carrie Jean

MV

Lord, That I May See

Let's go fishing
 Let's go to the lake
 Let us go together
 And find the beauty
 That hides away
 Let us go
 Today.
 The fish are waiting
 The mountains are calling
 Nature is there
 Somewhere
 Patiently growing
 I am her
 My pen is flowing
 My mind
 Wishing to awaken
 My eyes
 Wishing to see
 The extraordinary beauty.
 Let us go
 And celebrate
 Life
 Let my eyes open wide
 Let me have purity and beauty
 Let me have peace
 Within myself
 Let us go now
 Before it is destroyed
 Before I change my mind.

By Gina

MV

Books

Lessons We Have Learned: A Survival Guide

Compiled and published by P.A.R.C.-V.R.A.M.C. 5251 Hwy. 153, #223, Hixon, TN 37343-4910. 133 pgs. \$18 per copy \$3 S&H US, \$5 S&H in Canada.

Written and compiled by nine survivors, this book is about survival tips for Ritual Abuse and Mind Control Victims. The book covers such things as *How can I Recover from RA and/or MC abuse?* as well as what to tell children, security and safety tips and much more. An entire section is devoted to resources and contacts, such as books, newsletters, organizations, internet addresses etc. This book is a must-read for all RA and MC victims who wish to stay alive and begin to find healing from immensely difficult and sometimes dangerous issues.

By Carol R.

The Magic Daughter

By Jane Phillips. ©1995. Published by Penguin Press. \$11.95.

We just finished reading this book and found it to be a bit different from the

usual first-person accounts of multiplicity. It is not a dramatic story, filled with past abuses and present-day horror. Instead it focuses on the thoughts and thinking involved in trying to find some measure of stability and compromise that allows her to function from day to day. My thoughts echoed hers and at times, as my thoughts outpaced my reading speed, I found her thoughts echoing mine.

By Roberta L.

When I Go to Bed At Night

By Susan Bassett © 1994. Enchanted Susan Productions, PO Box 951, Redmond, WA 98073-0951. \$14.95. 42 pages, hardback.

We wanted to let other readers of MV know about a wonderful book that we found. It could be for kids or adults. It's got good illustrations and a great message. It deals with a story of abuse and survival written in an easy-to-read poetry format. It is a very powerful book with a message for survivors of all ages.

By Kory, Colleen and the rest

MV



BOOKS
SETTING US FREE

Hope for Spring

A new beginning, spring, a monarch butterfly...

the first

Fluttering around my head

Fluttering from flower to flower

We watched it, so beautiful, so real, not real...

Where has it been all winter?
Hiding? Sleeping?

Waiting...till spring, the new beginning...

giving us hope.

By Lillie in Jone



COMING SOON!

THANK YOU for sharing your wonderful work with *MANY VOICES!*

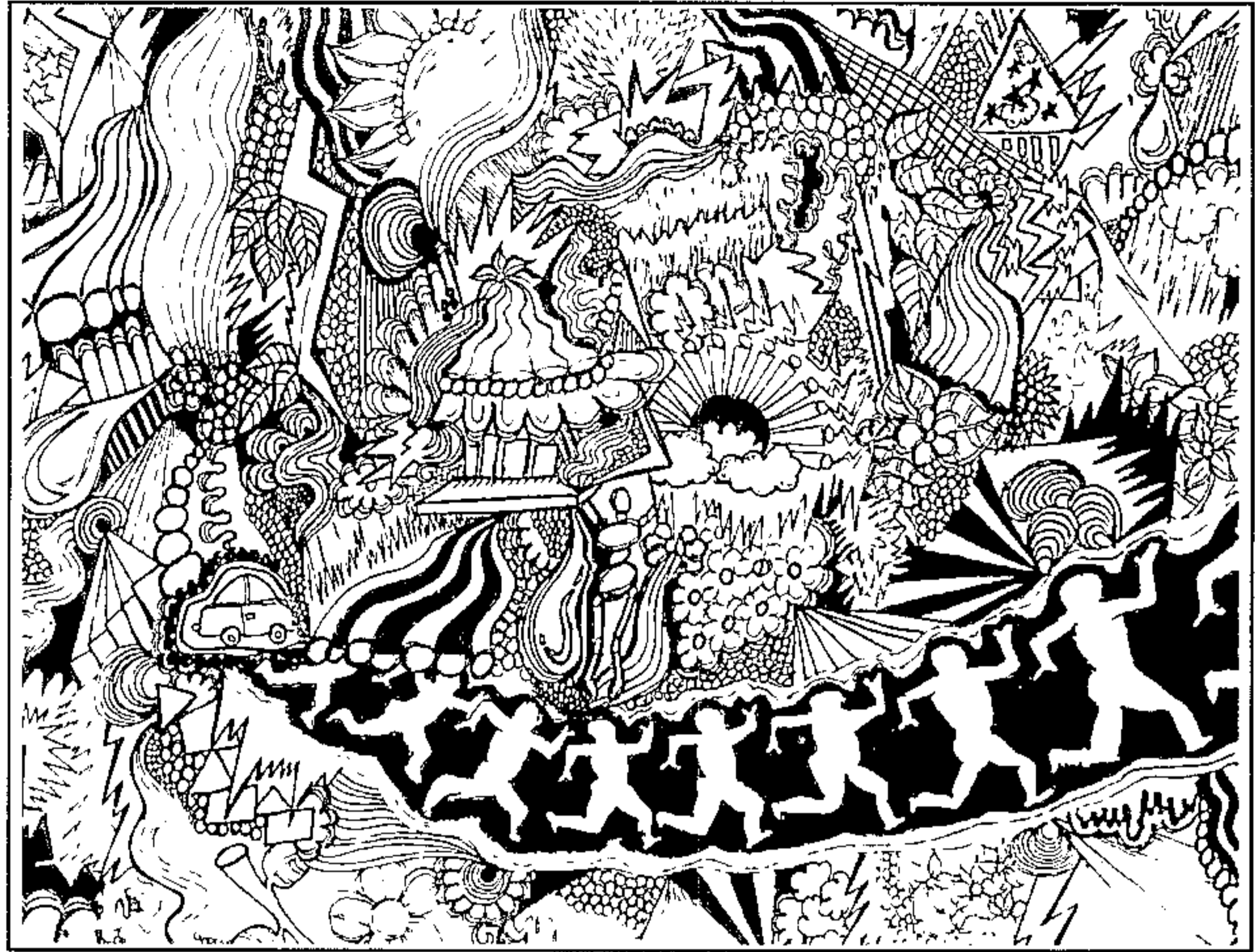
In addition to our scheduled themes, we are particularly interested in expanding coverage of international and multi-cultural news, children who dissociate, elders, men, and other groups who are searching for information and have trouble finding it.

Please, if you have something to contribute in any of these areas, send it in. Our Partner's Page and Therapist's Page are also open for suggestions and/or contributions.

We are always looking for artwork, too. And our next supplement (October) will feature Books. Send in your survivor ads!

If you have questions about submissions, call me at (513) 531-5415. Best wishes for healing!

—Lynn W., Editor



October 1997

Trusting Yourself, Trusting Others. Building courage. Inside ways to keep all of you safe. ART: Your safety net. DEADLINE: August 1, 1997.

December 1997

Practical Tips on Living "normally" covering money management, housecleaning, to-do schedules, etc. ART: Past, Present, Future self. DEADLINE: Oct. 1, 1997.

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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