

# MANY VOICES

WORDS OF HOPE FOR PEOPLE RECOVERING FROM TRAUMA & DISSOCIATION

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*In This Issue:*

**Mixed Feelings  
Asking for Help  
Eating Disorders...and more**

***Our Road***

There you were, by the side of the road, Sam.

We all wondered where you had gone; lost among the highways of our own minds, you wandering alone waiting for someone to notice that you were alive, we wanting to be alive.

Like a lost child on the streets of nowhere, you thought we didn't know, but we did; and we cared.

Lost to us all, perhaps without knowing you were gone, just thinking your love was always with us no matter what;

Through the endless nights of confusion and drowning ourselves in the bliss of drink so that we wouldn't have to know. But we do know, and you are not lost.

The highway has come full circle now just like we never believed it could.

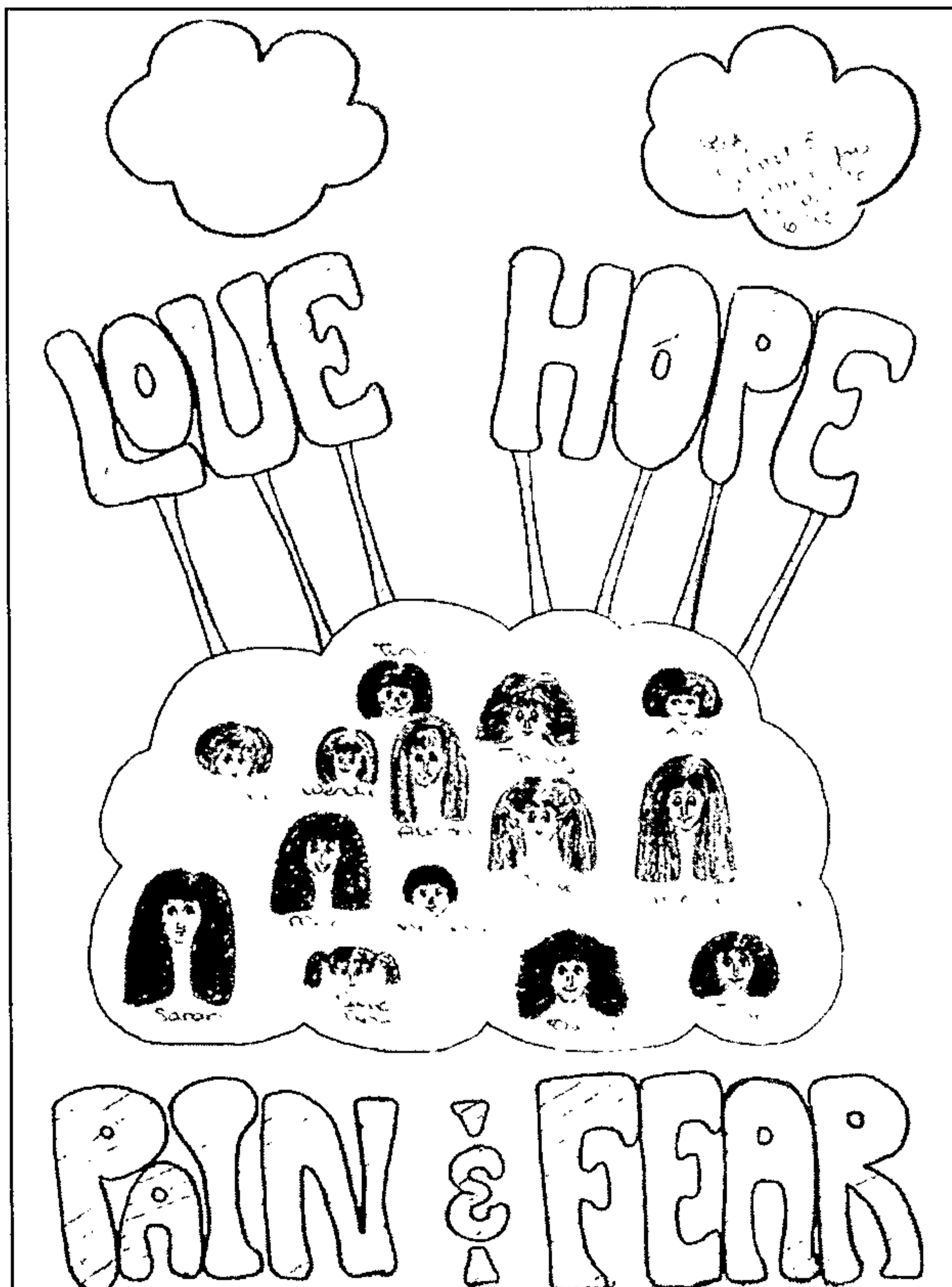
Dreams have to be fulfilled; if they are not we all drown again inside that abyss of non-one-ness that we create for ourselves. We are here and you have not gone. When you were lost we are sorry we did not light your way back; we had not the light at the time.

But we have truth now to light our way and no one can take that away.

Yes, Sam, the road has come full circle; and we have made it together.

*By Us*

**MV**



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# Thoughts on Healing from Trauma

By Jenn

I am a survivor of extensive physical, sexual, emotional and ritual abuse. Today I am nearly 41 years old. I have been in therapy on and off since 1983. Slowly, piece by piece, things have been changing. I have multiple personalities of which I am very thankful. Each part has been instrumental in my survival. When I was in the hospital once another survivor put it beautifully:

*I am like the conductor of an orchestra. I need each and every instrument to create a fine symphony. If anyone were missing, the music would be off key. I cherish and love every part of my orchestra.*

As it was said every part is important. If one flute is missing, it doesn't sound right. But when they play in perfect harmony there is nothing more beautiful. I liken this "perfect harmony" as parts merging together. I used to have a bunch of 3 year olds. Some came together as one, yet are still there, and others grew older. Some parts have healed from their traumas and are helpers. They are also "proof" to the others that healing is indeed possible. They are tender and kind, protective, and sometimes the best cheerleaders around! They encourage others not to give up, because they made it through. Sometimes it is really hard to get through to the hurting parts because they are in such anguish. The feelings are so strong that they overwhelm the system. This, among other reasons, is why a good therapist is necessary for healing and survival. Many people don't understand how one can need 10 years or more of therapy. My therapist recently told me that it is the courageous ones who walk through the door to therapy. I felt good about that. It reminded me of my strength.

Therapy is hard work. It is not just going and having a conversation for an hour. It is reviewing the events so you can understand they were not your fault. Sounds pretty simple

right? Of course it is not the kids fault, duh. If you are a survivor though, that is hard to believe. First your abuser told you that you wanted this, second your abuser said you were "special" in some way. Your abuser made you feel good about yourself, so feeling good means you were an active participant, which means you had some choice in the matter. That is a flat-out lie that abusers tell to children to prevent them from telling anyone what happened. My abuser said he would stop sexually if I wanted him to. Yeah right. I craved the affection outside of the abuse so much that I said "No, it's OK." As a 41 year old I thought, "How on earth could I have said that?!" But I wasn't 41 then. I was 12, he was 30. This is hard to remember sometimes. I ask you though - *When has a twelve year old ever had power over a 30 year old or any adult?* These are the things of therapy. Along the same lines, our God-given body responds to being touched. This is physiological in nature. It is not something you can control. If you are stimulated, your nerves and brain respond. These sensations add more confusion. Of course, in many households sexual issues are "dirty" and not discussed. For many years, and at the time I was first abused, I believed I was "trading" sex for affection. My therapist pointed out that I wasn't "trading" anything. I had no choice.

Now, stop for a moment and think about this. That was one thing, for one personality. It is not resolved in 1 session with a therapist. Imagine a person with 10 or more personalities. How long is it going to take to resolve all the abuse issues for all the personalities? This is not a math problem; it is a real issue. I could write pages and pages of things like this, probably enough to fill a phone book, but that is not my purpose here. Hopefully though, now you have an idea why therapy is lengthy. I haven't even mentioned ineffective therapists....that's another story.

The purpose for this article is two fold. First I want to encourage survivors that their feelings are normal and they are not at fault. Second, I want to share some healing that I have done in the hope that survivors can see trauma resolution is possible. Also, I'd like for supporters of survivors to get an understanding of how difficult healing is and the courage needed to undertake this path of recovery.

Yesterday, I had an incredibly difficult therapy session. I think it took almost two hours. I spent most of the first part telling my therapist about a deposition that I read the night before. I had sued my abuser in civil court. The deposition was from a girl that my abuser raped. I knew that he had abused other people, but I didn't have anyone to talk to about what he did to me. I don't know if it was that "I'm alone in this thing," or what. When I read this deposition, I cried. I cried for the other girl and I cried for me. I said a prayer asking God to help everyone he had abused to recover in healing. The deposition had an account of the rape. These were the words of another survivor abused by the same man. Finally, all doubt was cast from my mind about the things he did to me. There were commonalities. I knew for certain it was all real. I now had another account with a face on it. I don't exactly know why, but things became clearer to me. I didn't have a group of incidents any more. I now had a flowing time line of all his abuses of me.

In my therapy sessions, my therapist usually talks to Sarah, one of my alters who is having a particularly difficult time. I know that I wasn't at fault, am not bad or dirty, and that surviving it all was a good thing. Sarah, however, who is 15 years old, has had no such beliefs. We've been working with Sarah telling about her abuse a little at a time for about 3 weeks now. She has been in intense pain and has felt very suicidal. Yesterday, she told about the worst



memory of abuse that had happened. It was agonizing. She said she wished she were dead. Our therapist said pretty matter of factly, "Sarah, you are not dead. Wishing you were dead won't do anything. You survived and you survived for a reason. So stop wishing you were dead." She was firm but gentle. Sarah believed her.

We had a box with a paper in it that we had just found. We showed it to our therapist. It was a small round box painted red and black and black and red inside. There was 1 piece of paper in it. I didn't know what it said so I had my therapist look at it. She said that Sarah needed to see this. It said "All my ritual abuse memories are attached to this paper." That was before Sarah began telling.

When Sarah had finished her agonizing account of abuse and calmed down with some slow breathing, she mentally attached her feelings to that paper. It worked. She went to our inner "safe place" to our healing room. She felt calm and quiet. It was a really strange feeling, because usually there is such turmoil and pain spilling over from Sarah. We figured we'd be pretty tired the next day so we planned a light restful day.

We slept peacefully. We woke peacefully. Sarah woke peacefully. The anguish was gone. She had no feelings of any kind for the most part. This calm was different than anything she'd ever experienced. We were outside playing fetch with our puppy and it was sunny and cool with a gentle breeze. We sat just feeling the breeze almost flow through us. Sarah and I felt so calm almost in a meditative state. So we closed our eyes for a few moments and just felt the peace we had never known. Is this Nirvana?

It seems that Sarah has resolved a major piece of her trauma. I am so happy for her and me. The intense suicidal feelings are gone. I don't know what will happen next, but I now know that true healing from trauma is a good possibility. I hope that you can hold Sarah's experience close to you when you feel like you can't take another step, and realize there is a peaceful place waiting for you.

**MANY THANKS TO OUR FRIENDS!**

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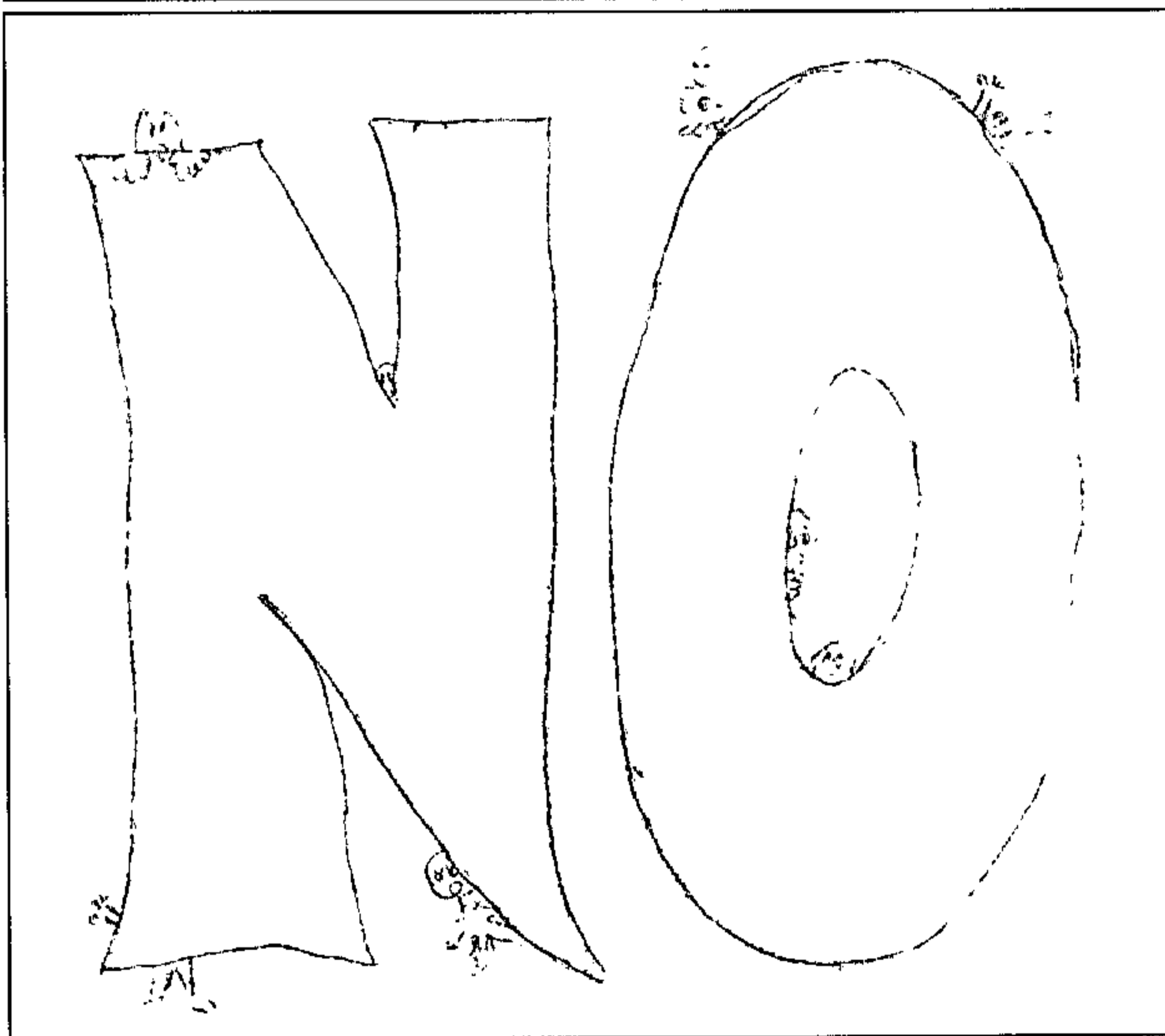
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If you know of clinics or conferences that need flyers, please call us!  
We appreciate your support! —Lynn W., Editor



**Mixed Feelings**

*This Drawing is very metaphoric. It is about my feelings of guilt about saying 'NO'. To explain, I'm terrified to say NO because I don't want to hurt people's feelings, and I feel I don't deserve to say NO. These little guys hiding in the word NO are like all the emotional feelings I have when I am put in a situation where I might have to say NO, or need to...but can't.*

By Kristi

## Living in Harmony

By Jo P. (Hanna and Hannah)

For the past twenty years or more, I have been in therapy. For many of those years, I knew that things just weren't right. Then, about 9 years ago, I entered an inpatient treatment program that changed my life for the better.

I have to say that I was ready for this change. I had already done a lot of hard work in therapy, and I was strong enough in my own mind to know what would work for me and what wouldn't help. A similar experience might not work as well for someone new to therapy, who was too vulnerable to know what is best for themselves. But I can honestly say for all of myself, I am grateful for the program and staff at WIIT, where I obtained the tools and skills that have allowed me to create a stable and contented life.

Today I have little need to call upon others inside. We are a peaceful community now, with only minor conflicts and frustrations, which I learned to be mindful of. One of the affirmations I learned in treatment was to go inside and listen, each day. It seems that even now, when the need is there, I am able to recall "Jo, go inside." I can do that in the car, walking down the street, or with my journal and list of affirmations. Those blessed affirmations! I still use them, rely on them to keep me centered and to affirm my place on the planet and in the universe.

Before treatment, I was always so conflicted with religious background, service to others, etc. that I never knew 'I' had place. Even in my other treatment and many years of therapy, I didn't 'get' it. I needed to do it, say it, confirm it myself, to myself. I learned inpatient that it was MY job. *My Job*. "I" was MY responsibility. I had the power to change those old messages.

In my struggle to make peace with that, I found the answer to the big question "What is my purpose in life?" For me, my life is about my coming to understand the human experience,

albeit, in the extremes. But that is 'all' I have to do. I am doing my life's work each day as I honor *myself*, my very existence. I belong here. I was saying to "us" just yesterday in the car, "Jo loves us" and "We love Jo." We are all content, inside and out. We are not one, will never be one. We live in harmony today. Each has his or her own place.

In this process, some of us died. Although therapists say none of us die, that is and was not true for me. I grieved so deeply for many of the little ones who did not survive, and with them, lost their memories. I wanted the whole picture so badly, so desperately, and had such a hard time when they didn't come. Now I know why. Most friends these days have no idea about me—the whole me. And sometimes that makes me sad that they don't really 'know me'. But it is enough.

I am retired in the sense that I have reached the age of using social security. But I continue to work in the addiction field, in the specialty of eating disorders. I teach, preach and show by example the significance of affirmations...of affirming one's self, one's value. The term 'self esteem' seems so shallow and nebulous. I use other words I like better, like 'self responsibility, self care, self acceptance, self affirming' etc. I talk about ownership versus stewardship of the body. We affirm in all groups "I am a woman of honor and dignity."

*Many Voices* was with me in those early chaotic years when I needed so desperately to know I was not the only one...and the 'missing piece' of all my therapy and treatments came from WIIT. It was my job to decide to get well, and they gave me the skills to be able to make that choice a reality.

So, in reflecting today, I share this with each of you. I am loved. I am 'enough'.

Thank you all.

MV

## Snowflakes of Hope

Hope is a fleeting and fragile thing

Like a snowflake just tipping  
A gossamer wing  
That ever so slowly slips off  
with the wind

A sparkling spectrum that  
Calls me and grins –  
Teasing and turning  
Evading my touch  
Wanting and wishing  
But pleading too much.

My fingers are frozen,  
outstretched

In the light

Groping and grasping  
In motionless flight,  
Racing and reaching for  
Things that could be –  
Conquering wretched reality.  
God free me tonight  
From this moment,  
This chill,

And help me embrace  
What my heart can not feel.

Take my hate

Take my shame

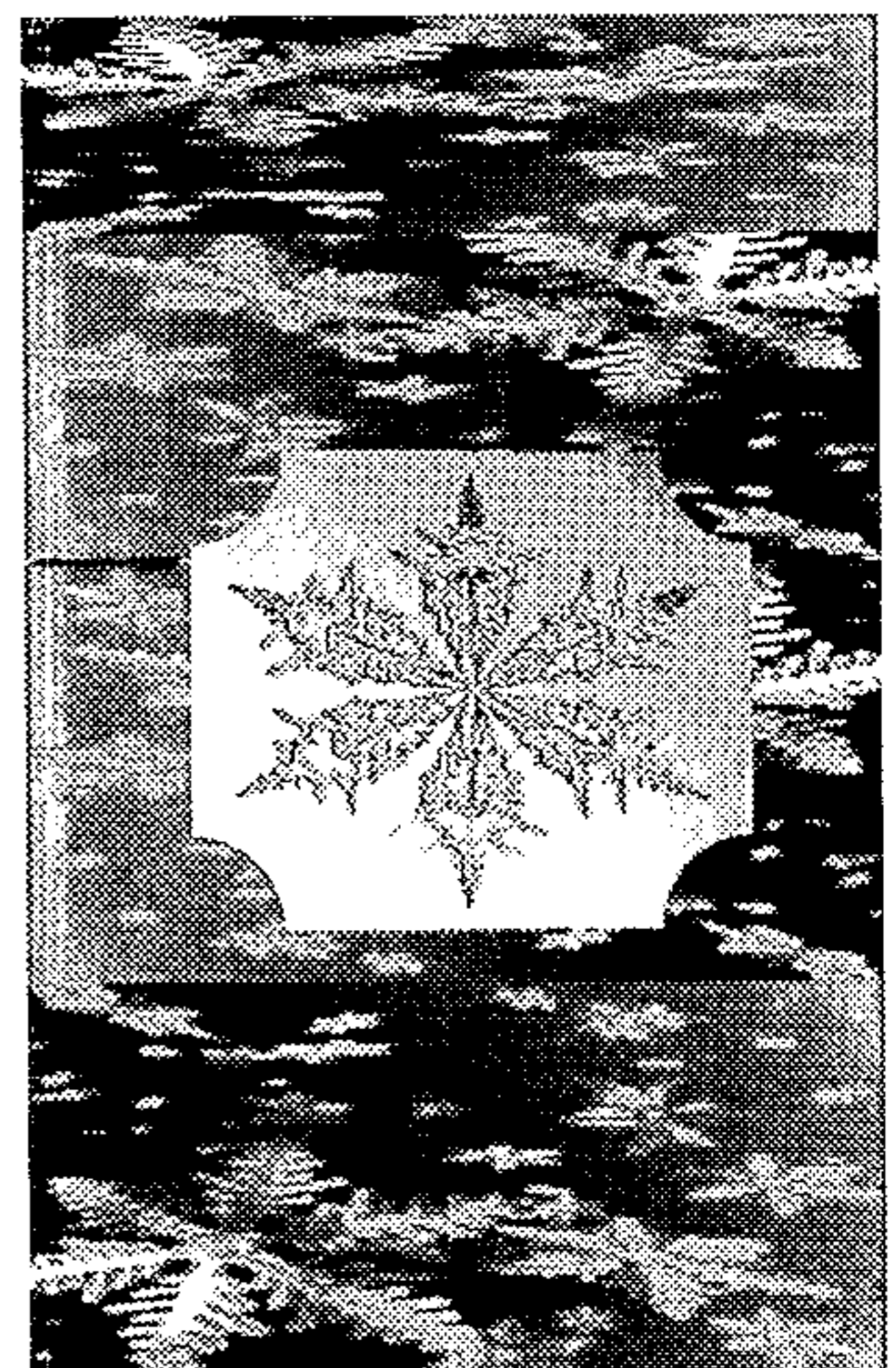
Take my hurt and my will

And bury them deep

Where they're passive and still.

By Diane L.

MV





## Children Do Remember, Dad

By Mona V.

“Children don't remember.” That statement had been laid down in my memory like a cold tile floor on top of the earliest years of my life. And the furniture of my acceptable recall had been arranged carefully on top of it. It was an authoritative statement, at least that was how I had experienced it. My father simply expressing how things were. But what I thought was like a floor was in fact more like the concrete lid of a grave. Designed to keep the dead in check. To cover up the putrefaction process, the inevitable decay and liquification, the activity of worms and microbes. The stink of it all, covered over by a concrete slab with tender words inscribed above such as “Loving daughter.”

“Children don't remember” was not a statement of authoritative fact; it was an order and I have done the unthinkable; I have remembered.

Why is it that memory is so fickle? Did my own mind lay that cement cover over my childhood? Was it placed there out of fear or out of an innate instinct for survival? And how will I ever know which ghosts belong to my past and which are simply phantoms created in the active imagination of a child who was too young to find words for her fears and so created scenes to represent them?

One thought has come to me of late. If my father was the one to lay down the law that children do not remember, then I learned to doubt my ability to record the events of my life at a very early age. I could not be remembering because I had been told it was impossible. So anything I thought I remembered must be imaginary. There was no other conclusion available. As an adult it was as if I lay on the grave with the cement slab on my chest robbing me of air whenever I wrote or drew or talked about my childhood. I didn't need my father anymore: I accused myself of lies; I denied my own senses; I punished myself.

But I eventually could no longer deny the voices in my head and the

voices on the pages of my journal. They are as real as the voice creating this reflection. They are me, too. They don't need their own names because I do not lose touch of time; they are always simply just *me*. But they are me at 6 and 11 and 16 and 18 and now even at 4 and 3. They have held my memories and feelings for me and now I have to take them on and try not to judge like a literary or art critic. I need to let them write and draw and feel. I don't have to evaluate their truthfulness or accuracy of memory. I do not have to seek out verifications or affirmations from other family members. I have to simply give myself permission to feel and to share with myself and with my therapist. I need to give myself permission to recall my childhood because children *do* remember.

Children remember colors and smells and voices raised. Children remember scary adults and safe adults. Children remember nightmares and stomach pains and lights turned off in the hall at night, and footsteps. And children have feelings. They feel icky. They feel afraid. They feel joy. They feel unsafe. They recognize real kindness but they will accept false kindness because they do not yet own the authority to say no. Children don't lack discernment, they lack power.

As an adult in healing I have the chance to empower my inner children and to offer myself the affirmations I did not receive but needed so very much as a child. I have the opportunity to exercise my authority to say no, even to say no to myself when I feel the desire the hurt or punish. I can provide affirmation simply by allowing my inner children to express themselves without judgment or criticism.

Because I know now that children do remember even when their parents are determined that they should not.

MV

## Unspoken Needs

As I gaze in the world around my being

I sigh and wonder where is the place for me?

Is it behind the rock or out in the sunshine?

My heart beats wildly

so excited at all I see around me so breathless at all the gifts that adorn my sight.

I stop and let my soul expand at the scope of such that eclipses my vision.

How exciting to a part of such wonders and jubilation!

I hold my breath at the vitality of the earth's secrets

that closes around my being.

I raise my hands in joyous exuberance and scream out and I yell 'this is me!'

The me that was meant to be a part of this world and its wonders.

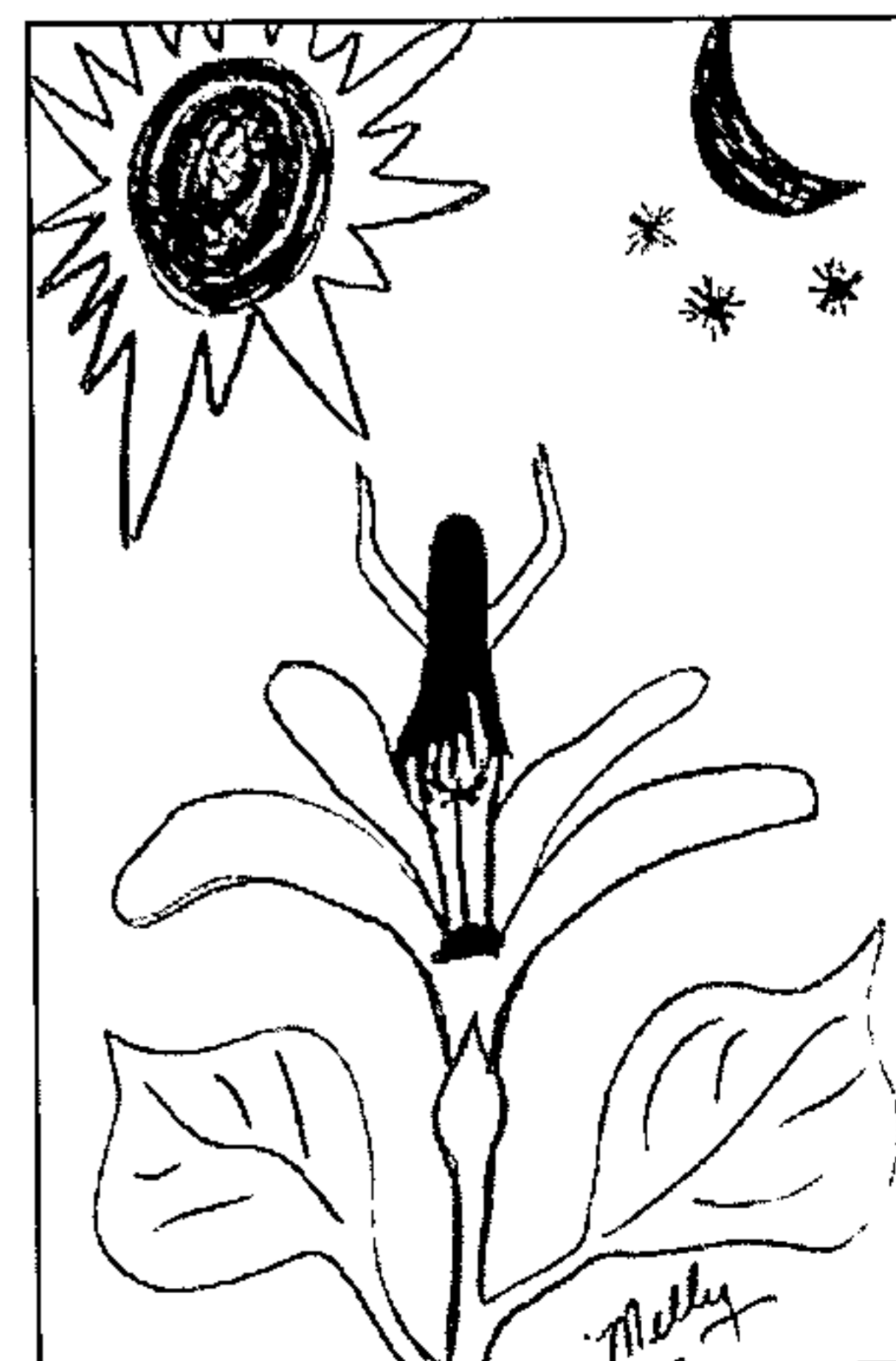
I have been given permission to finally see the me

that I had kept hidden before

but am encircled in wonder now.

By Kathy A.

MV



# Not Afraid

By Shirley Davis

A few years ago I was able to walk. Not very fast and not very far, but I could get around. I sit here in my wheelchair and I ponder how I ever ended up here, but then I remember all the horrible emotional pain I have been through and I understand. A human body can only take on so much stress and grief before it begins to break down. I argue with myself, would I do it again if I understood the price I would pay? I am not in denial of my past or my present anymore. I live in the reality of the present more than most people do their entire lifetimes, and it is a rich life full of deep understanding of the human condition. I believe the answer is yes.

Twenty years ago I was trapped. Oh yeah. I could jog a mile and I could work a double shift no problem, but I was trapped in my own terror. I lived in a fog and I could connect to no one. I had been brutally abused from infancy to the age of fifteen by a person I loved very much. I did my best not to remember what had happened but in the process I couldn't remember the good things either. I couldn't hug, kiss, touch and receiving these human conveyances of love was frightening to me. I didn't understand how the damage done to me in my past was influencing my behavior in the present. Now all these years of therapy later I can look back and see it clearly. (You know what they say about hindsight.)

Eighteen years ago, February 1989, I walked into the office of my first

therapist. The only reason I went there was because I had promised myself on my twentieth birthday that if the horrible depression I had suffered with all my life was not better, if I did not at least feel hope of a better existence, I would kill myself on my thirtieth birthday, September 4, 1990. I did not tell my therapist this; I just began my journey trying to see a way out of the dark prison I had been trapped in for my whole life.

Mainly I had built the trap myself hiding from people, emotions and memories that my self-preservational parts feared would kill me. We worked together, my PhD and I, for a little over seven months. I was so grateful to find a person who would REALLY listen to me. I had never experienced that feeling before, the feeling that my opinions count. The feeling that what I have to say is just as important as anyone else's. It was very freeing.

She helped me to reach inside myself and remember some of the trauma and put it where it belonged, in the distant past.

Slowly I began to let go of those traumas. I started not wearing the sign that said ABUSE or INCEST on my forehead as often. I made an appointment on my birthday making that session the deciding factor in whether or not I would live or die. The last five minutes of our time together I told her about the pact I had made ten years earlier. You can imagine her surprise, since I had been smiling and laughing through the whole session.

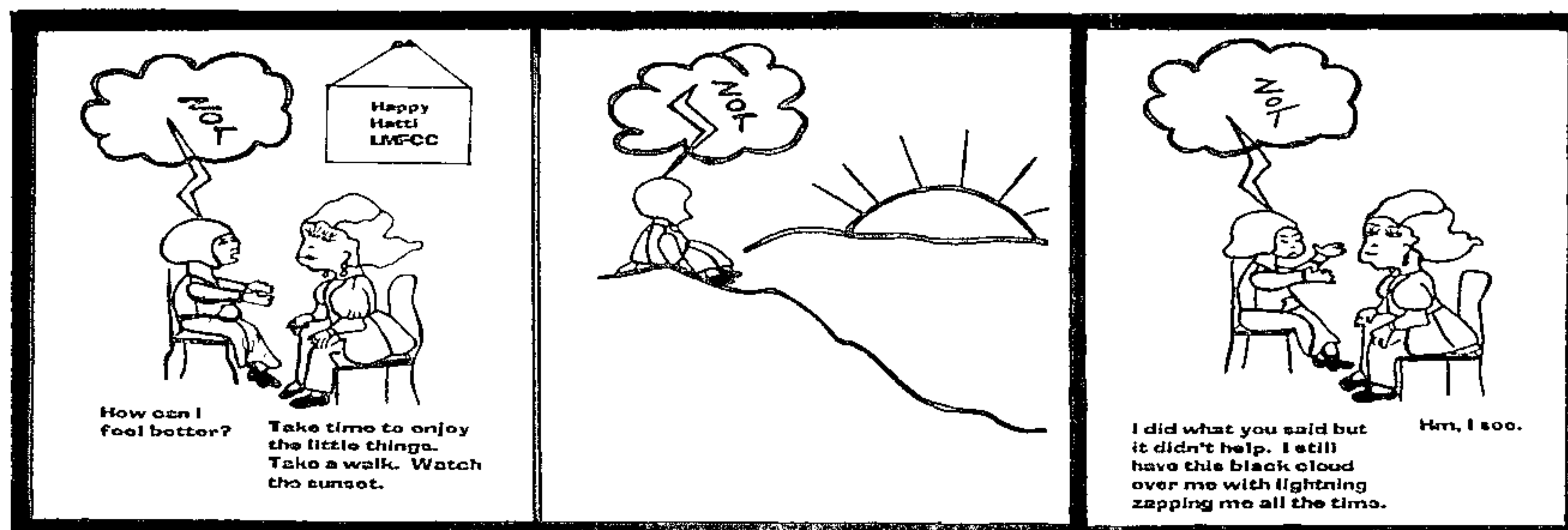
She asked me what was my decision and to her relief I told her I would live because I felt I might have a fighting chance.

She told me I am a smiling depressant. It took that PhD a long time and a lot of repeating herself to help me understand that these things happened 40 years ago...why should I let something that happened when I was 6 make me suicidal now? The perpetrators are dead or in deep denial and will never own up to what they did. Do I want to move on, or be perpetually 6 years old?

Don't get me wrong, some memories you have to relive with your therapist; that's just the way it goes. However, you don't have to reside there.

This tip may not help a majority of folks, but I found a wonderful way to meet my emotional needs—simply by helping others. I worked in a nursing home as a nursing assistant. Volunteering would also do the job. The older folks were safe, loving, and for the most part, kind. Even the eventual combative resident you couldn't help but love—understanding that they don't understand what is happening to them.

When I first started working there I was stiff. That's the only term that fits. Stiff. When I left eight years later I knew how to hug, how to give love and receive it. I could hold a hand, I could hold someone's head to my chest and stroke their hair when they were sad, and laugh with them when





they were happy. I had attended over a hundred deaths and saw it as a beautiful part of life when it comes naturally at the end of a long full life. I sat in the room of a man who was hours from dying from Alzheimer's and told his wife and children funny stories, stunts their loved one had pulled when he was in an earlier stage of the disease. I hope it showed that I had loved him as a very good friend. He was never able to speak to me but he talked with his eyes and I know the friendship went both ways.

I thank my Higher Power that I was allowed to learn how to receive and give unconditional love through these beautiful experiences.

As I said in the beginning, my body has fallen apart. It isn't all because of the stress I have been under the past 14-1/2 years, but it didn't help. There are many diseases that run rampant in my family tree on both sides: Osteoporosis, Stroke, Weight problems, Stomach problems and Hernias. My grandmother on my mother's side was in a wheelchair because of her spine fusing. Now mine is too.

Three years ago I began experiencing a series of physical problems that were either caused by, a part of, or made worse by the point I had reached in my therapy. Actually my therapy was going nowhere. I had stopped making advances because I was unhappily married to a man who struggled with Bipolarism. He had been able to keep his problem under control the first half of our marriage but at the end of it he fell into a very deep hole and could not get out. I tried to help him but I was too sick myself to do anything but make my self

sick.

He was constantly telling me how he was going to kill himself and at first I tried to rescue him which of course made him worse. I would sit in the living room while he lay in our bed, sobbing. He didn't have a theme to cry over, but the depression was speaking lies into his head. Eventually he became violent and I had to leave. Don't ever think that breaking up a relationship is easy because it is not. You grieve. It is because it is the death of a lifelong dream. When you got together you dreamed of the house you were going to buy, kids, retirement, etc. You don't just stop loving someone when you get a divorce or break up. It is very painful and I thank my Higher Power for getting me through the past two years.

We all know lie-speak:

*You're no good! Why were you ever born! Nobody really loves you! You are ugly! You're just a hardship on your family! They would be better off without you! Look at the things that have happened to you in your childhood! God doesn't love you or he would have saved you from those people and the things they did and didn't do!*

It's not true. "HA!" you might be thinking. "You have no idea who I am or what my (abusers) did to me!" It doesn't matter. NOW I'm sure I've got your attention.

("Doesn't Matter?")

You see, this is the year 2006 and those things are in the past. Most of my abuse occurred in the 1960s and early 1970s. I've had to learn to keep my feet firmly planted in this year and let the past be the past.

No it's not easy, and I have bad days, but with the help of my Higher Power I AM getting better. I don't have to remain in pain over something that happened thirty or thirty-five years ago. What about today's joy? If I live only in the past, I'll miss today's happiness!

I have wonderful, beautiful friends. I can see. I can hear. I am not going hungry when I go to bed at night. I sleep in a soft bed instead of the cold, hard ground. My medical needs are met. I am free to speak out on what I think and believe.

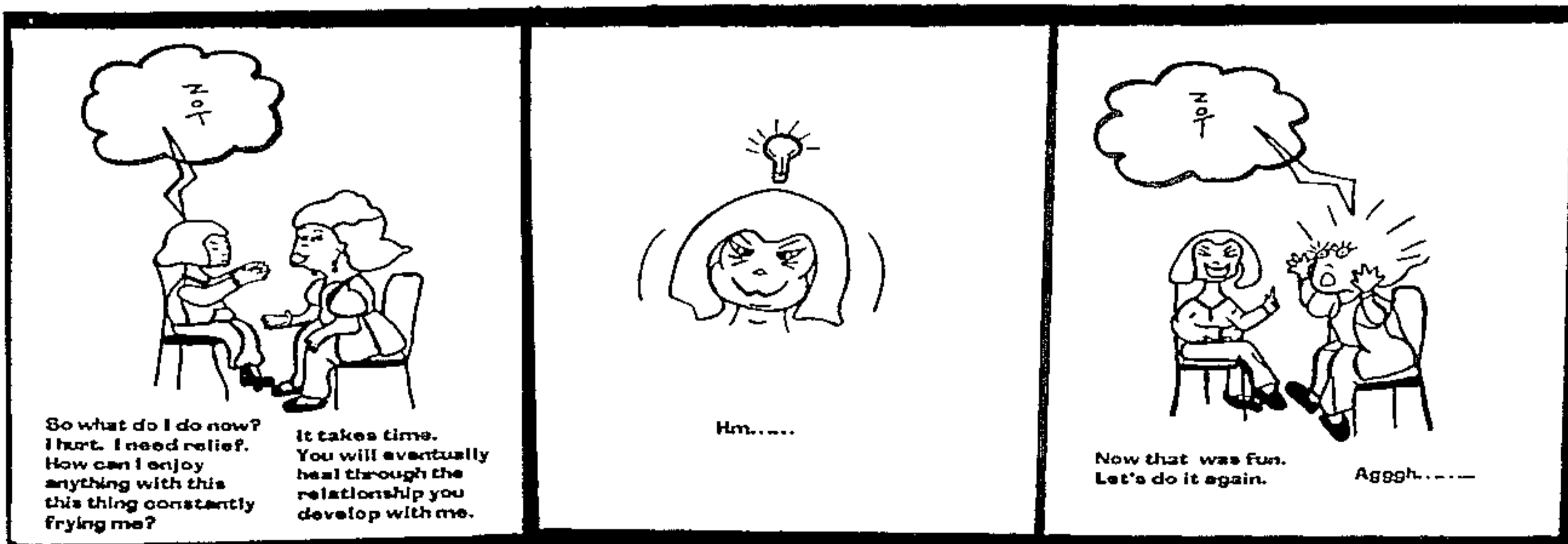
Every time I think on these things or even the fact that I have a toilet instead of a bush, I should say praise. An attitude of gratitude is invaluable! In fact, it takes far less energy to be happy and accept your life than it does to complain to everyone who will listen, and feel sorry for yourself.

Believe me, I have every right in the world to sit on a pity pot, and I do sometimes. Thanks be to Jesus who kicks me in the butt now and then and says, "Come on now! Get out of that bed and brush your hair. I will NEVER leave you. Only forty more years on here and then you will be with me forever!"

Why should I live in the past where those things were horrid? Yes, I acknowledge that those times were bad and sometimes I grieve for the parts of myself still living those nightmares. But recently I have been helping those parts to understand that life has dangers of its own to guard against, but the treatment I received as a kid will never happen again.

I am now an adult, and I am not afraid.

MV



## Memory Questions

I get very frustrated because I don't have a lot of memories of my past, especially abusive ones. I can remember a few incidents of sexual abuse etc. when I was thirteen, but none younger. As a matter of fact, most of my memories are of a good and happy life

This is extra frustrating for me because I know I am a multiple and everything I've ever read has said that a person has to experience horrendous abuse in order to split off and become multiple. This confuses me even more and leaves me thinking...am I the only person in the world like this?

I do, however, believe that not only does abuse play a big part in DID, but so does unbearable pain. I had several illnesses as a child in which I was in constant, writhing pain. I also had several seizures as a child, and who knows what damage that can do to the brain? No one knows.

I know that I take the memories and feelings that I do have, or don't have, and I work with that. If there are memories, I want to know them in a way...and in a way, I don't. But after nine years, I'm getting frustrated and I want to know whatever there is to know

I guess we just have to hang in there and accept things as they come

I have been told that something—or someone, such as an alter—will allow you to remember what there is to remember, all in good time. Sometimes, in forcing to make yourself remember, you can actually push memories farther away.

When I can't explore specific memories, sometimes I explore different feelings as deeply as I can. Sometimes this helps me examine why I feel the way I feel.

By Mary & Co.

MV

## Signs That You May Need To Change Therapists

By Dorothy S.

*Editor's Note:*

*Finding a therapist is hard. Dumping a therapist is harder. While it's probably a mistake to dump a therapist for a first (MINOR) problem, some situations—such as sexual come-ons from the therapist—are an immediate danger and you should get out quickly. Here Dorothy describes the way a particular therapist treated her...on a regular basis. She has since changed therapists, and is much, much happier. And she's making progress in recovery now, as well!*

### Significant "Ifs"

In just two months time, I have had an eyeful of what not to have for a therapist. For the record: I am no longer this therapist's client...

If she/he is always late.

If she/he always runs over the hour or allotted time.

If she/he doesn't know when to stop or leave.

If she/he cannot keep information confidential.

If she/he shares other clients' case stories.

If she/he drops names of other clients.

If she/he forgets your appointments

If she/he calls you from an hour away, when your appointment is in fifteen minutes...and cancels.

If she/he "threatens" to use the release to contact your doctors to try to get you to do something or comply.

If she/he "tells" you what to do.

If he or she constantly apologizes, for not being on time, or forgetting your appointments, but continues to do it.

If he/she tells you it's ok to ruffle peoples' feathers, when you don't get what you want from a doctor.

If he/she tells you she wants to go to all your doctor's appointments with you, when you drive and are perfectly able to do it on your own.

If he/she decides she likes coming to your house better than you going to the office.

If he/she has a plan for you to recover, instantly or in two years.

If he/she wants to always hug you or shake your hand when you leave.

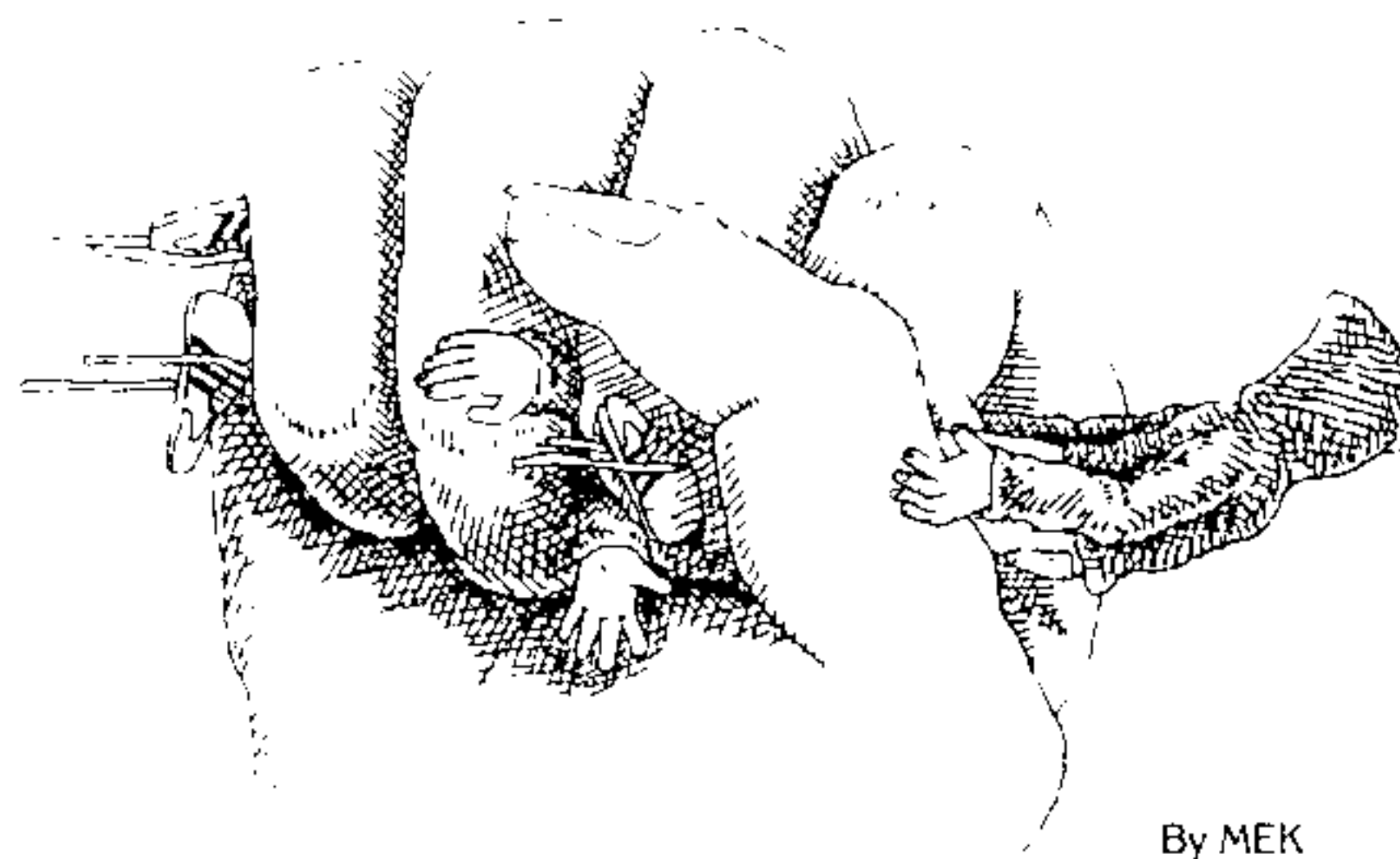
If she/he wants to help you with your budget, food purchases, exercise—without you, the client, asking for help.

If she/he answers the cell phone during your appointment every time it rings, and spends more time on it than with you.

If you feel scared of her/him that you might be committed against your will.

If you do not feel right about the situation, GET OUT!

MV



By MEK



# Mermaid

I, a mermaid in the sea of despair,  
 was lost and alone with no one to  
 care.  
 Battered and bruised, inside and out.  
 Enduring atrocity without a sound.  
 Going away in my mind deep inside,  
 I created an inner world where I could  
 hide.  
 Far from the pain and the shame and  
 the blame.  
 I became a new person, took on a  
 new name.  
 Layers on layers I built to survive  
 an intricate network to keep me alive.  
 A rotating person, a revolving door.  
 A mommy, a baby, a killer, a whore.  
 I took on their sex and their rage and  
 their hate,  
 turned it inside, made a sweet girl  
 called Kate.  
 I took on their lust for power, for  
 greed,  
 turned it inside, made a girl called  
 Sweet Pea.  
 While outside my life was a "living  
 hell,"  
 inside I kept secrets with no one to  
 tell.  
 I wrote down each victim, each  
 murderous act.  
 Kept every name, recorded all facts.  
 In honor of each one who lived and  
 who died,  
 I created a sea of tears never cried.

\*\*\*

But wall upon wall, behind lock and  
 key,  
 kept away safe was the innocent me!  
 Far from the dark evil deeds of the  
 night,  
 wrapped up in wonder, bathed in the  
 light.  
 In silence I waited to be brought to  
 the now.  
 Though I didn't know when and I  
 didn't know how.  
 But ever so slowly the stories came  
 out.  
 Some came in a whisper, some came  
 in a shout.  
 Some came out with sorrow, pain and  
 such grief.

Some came on the 'morrow and with  
 such relief!  
 And little by little the walls went away,  
 as each one came forward with  
 something to say.  
 Everyone came with their stories to  
 tell.  
 Everyone praised for a job done so  
 well.  
 Each one was different but their goal  
 was the same.  
 Just keep her alive! Keep her mind  
 sane!

\*\*\*

I've been in the fight now for fifteen  
 long years.  
 I've struggled for life, cried an ocean  
 of tears.  
 I've beat at the bars of my prison  
 cage.  
 Squeezed out through the opening, let  
 out the rage.  
 I've screamed out their guilt and  
 thrown off their shame,  
 Released all their hate, rejected their  
 blame!  
 I've refused to believe all the lies told  
 to me.  
 "That I'd never be well. That I'd never  
 be free."

And as truth was spoken I began to let  
 go  
 of the things that had happened so  
 long ago.  
 And love found it's way down deep in  
 my soul,  
 mending the cracks, making me  
 whole!  
 Giving beauty for ashes and joy for  
 the tears,  
 a tower of safety for a lifetime of fear.  
 And a wisdom that goes way beyond  
 all my years!

\*\*\*

So, one thing I've learned from my  
 life's tragedy,  
 that I love being here, and I love being  
 me.  
 And there's so much more joy than  
 there ever was pain,  
 and there's so much more love than  
 there ever was hate!  
 And there's nothing that's shattered  
 that cannot be healed,  
 when love comes to save and the  
 truth is revealed!

By DMB

MV



## A New Landscape Enquiry:

# Quest for Human Contact and Kindred Spirits

By Jane

I would like to say a big thank you to Vivian, founder of the NY support group 'New Landscape' for the articles which she has written, the last of which was published in the April edition of MV this year. It has provided me with much food for thought that hopefully will lead to some action, beginning with this written response.

As I move to greater wholeness on the journey of healing, I too am beginning to feel a new sense of isolation and an acknowledgement of my aloneness. This is an integral and necessary part of the process of separation and individuation.

In my dissociated state I did not relate to the external environment. I was 'enclosed' in my own world. So consumed was I by my internal distress that I was indifferent to what was happening in the outside world. This total separation enabled me to move around, without the threat of responding to any 'triggers' which might occur.

Not so now! One result of my getting better has been the increasing ability to become highly aroused by external events. I feel so much more alive, responding and reacting to everything that is going on around me. So, at the present I have to limit myself to the amount of time I spend 'in the world'. Like Vivian, my partial recovery has become a bit of a mixed blessing; feeling 'real' on the one hand, but recognising the terrifying aloneness and sense of alienation on the other.

It is very good news that some integration has occurred, but now I must continue the hard work of desensitising myself to external 'triggers,' whilst continuing to separate out my memories and identifying the past events from the present. I am safe now and I am not alone. But it just doesn't feel like it. There is still much confusion.

I think that my present feelings

have been exacerbated by the huge social and economic changes that are taking place in the UK at this time. We are experiencing a massive wave of immigration from the Eastern European countries, which have recently joined the EU. The culture and identity of our big cities is rapidly changing, especially here in London, and the sudden, huge increase in the population is having an effect on the infrastructure. So as well as managing the changes that are occurring within me, I also have to get to grips with the many changes that are taking place in the society around me.

This present struggle is very symbolic of the similar struggles that I experienced in childhood. My parents became indigenous, economic migrants, constantly on the move to different areas of the city. We lived in fourteen different houses in the same number of years. The economic gains brought with them new aspirations. Many vain attempts were made to leave, what was then, our working class community and culture behind us. I was required to change schools many times, and hence my social and friendships groups were constantly being fractured. This had an adverse effect on my fragile sense of identity.

This very real confusion and isolation which I experienced throughout my childhood, was indeed another factor, alongside that of the abuse taking place within the home, that only served to imprison and alienate me all the more. There was literally nowhere to turn, inside or outside the family, because I didn't know anyone, anywhere. Through this experience I have learned to never underestimate the true value of 'kinship.'

In my working life I was a primary school teacher. I observed over the years that the most confident and stable children seemed to be those that not only had 'good enough'

parents, but were also 'rooted' within their communities. They exhibited the potential and capacity for growth and developmental change that emotional maturity necessitates. I believe that if the external environment keeps changing during these early years, the child who is under pressure to accommodate this factor has fewer resources at hand to cope with the developmental changes which are also occurring within them. Recent research and evidence suggest that this might in fact be so!

It would seem then that I am actually reliving in the present, many of the alienating experiences of my childhood. It is becoming increasingly difficult to come to know anyone in a transient and ever-changing community. My 'child' feels as alone now as she did then!

So how might I take positive action and change my present experience of isolation? Well, like Vivian, I would like to try to establish some kind of support group here in London. My difficulty is not having any means of communicating with either survivors or 'almost betters'. Very few subscribers to MV actually live in the UK.

I had thought of sending flyers to professional organizations. But with the increasing amount of bureaucracy and red tape that has been introduced in recent years, it is unlikely that they would feel safe enough to refer clients to anybody who is not registered or accredited.

But I'm not giving up yet. I am asking if any MV readers have any ideas. I know that there are some creative thinkers out there and it would be good to hear from you! Send your ideas to Lynn, who will forward them on to me. It would be good to share across the continents.



# Anorexia

By Anita Inc.

I am 26 years old, and have been anorexic since, probably, infancy—though of course it worsened with age and understanding, or the lack thereof.

I am extremely obsessive/compulsive, and have been diagnosed with at least 50 alters at this point. I often want to 'give up', even now. But I would also like to share my hope—my anorexia is gradually improving.

I am still anorexic, but I no longer allow it to run my life. I finally have some true control. I haven't done any of my former drastic tactics of weight loss in about six months! That's a true miracle, for those who know me well.

By all means I should have died many times over, and I will admit I did my all to succeed at this. But I learned that by accepting the harsh reality of the diagnosis, I began to see positive change. You cannot change until you know the problem you need to fix.

If you suffer from anorexia, please don't give up. There is so much more to life than counting calories, exercising, or whatever means you use to obsess about your weight. No matter how thin you get, you don't disappear, become invisible, or magically become healthy. It is sick

thinking. And the thinner you get, the less logical your thinking.

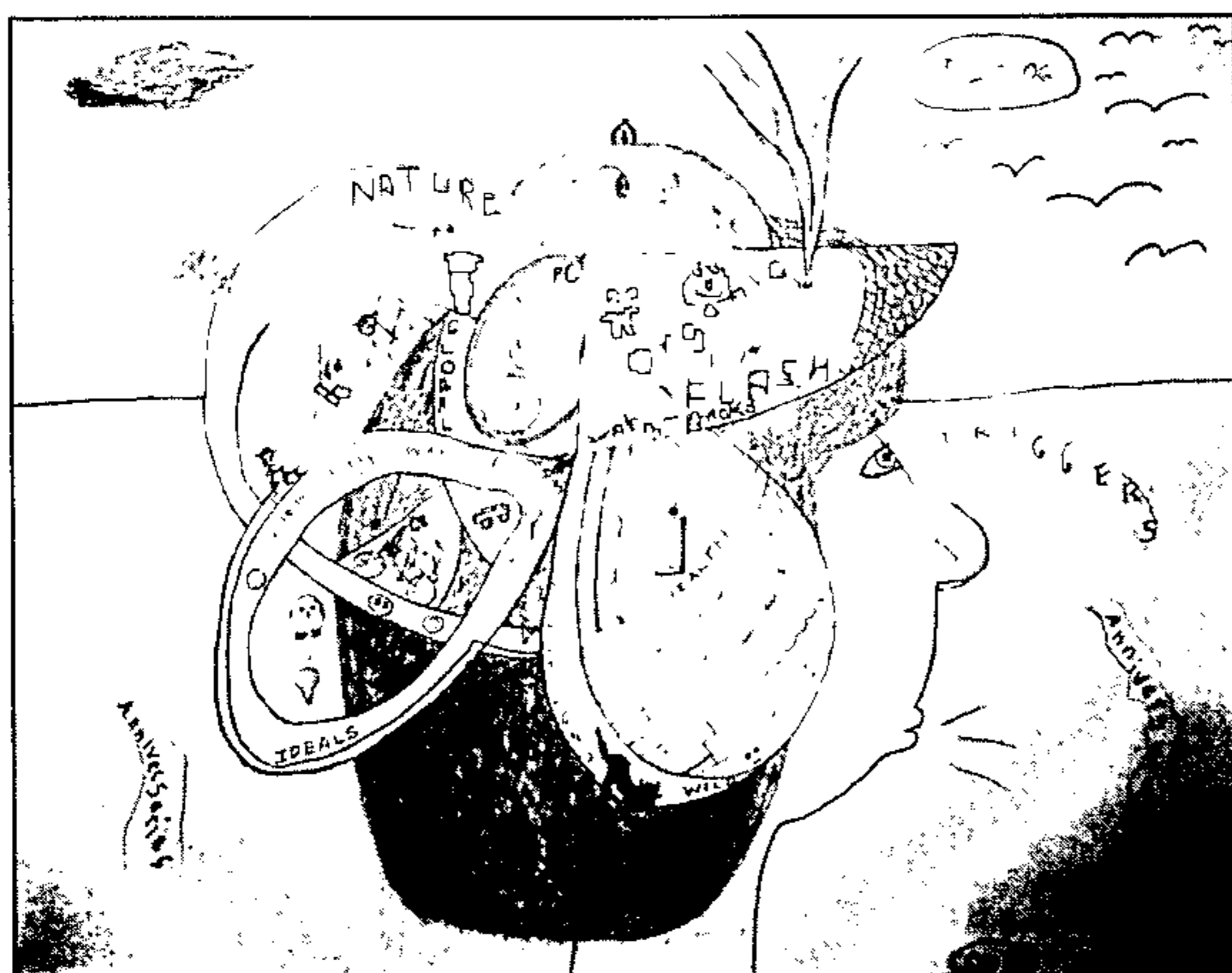
There is no one key to overcoming this problem; it all works together. And it can be a lonely and frightening place. If you are alone in your recovery efforts, I understand...because so am I. All the years it takes to become an anorexic can't be resolved quickly.

The most important thing, I believe, is to be completely honest with yourself. Work and be willing to risk it all. That was my turning point. I highly recommend the book "When Women Stop Hating Their Bodies" by Jane Hirschmann. It's an older book, but still available on Amazon. I've read dozens of books, but this one truly left me with the feeling, 'I am woman... hear me roar!'

If you are not ready to let go of the anorexia, be honest about it. That's okay. Wherever you are is where you need to be. But don't lie to yourself. It only worsens that lack of control and esteem you try to achieve through starvation.

Hang in there and take care of you!

MV



# Old Tenants

Fear, Panic & Terror live within  
They've taken up permanent residence it seems.

I am now a landlady to doom—  
the embodiment of these feelings.  
how does one live in such close quarters  
with tenants such as these?

i never asked them to visit (never mind  
move in)

or put an ad in the paper  
advertising vacancies

They're just here—unwelcome guests  
who pay no rent and only cause turmoil  
Sort of like some teenagers on a long  
leash.

Actually, I'd rather have teenagers (outside  
teens) here

than these folks

who keep me up late into the night,

fray every nerve I possess,  
make me sick in the stomach,

and, if that weren't enough,

try to stop me from getting out of the  
house.

I suspect they have always been here—  
silent and suppressed

I liked them better that way

only I never got any better

Just stayed smiling in my denial

all the way to the pill bottle

with which to kill myself, in my gut

and in my life

and I don't know how to get rid of them.

They cause other alters, especially young  
ones,

untold grief and despair.

Every disease we hear about will soon  
be moving in as well—

certain to devour our health & wellbeing—  
such as it is.

What do you do with unwanted guests?  
(if you can call them guests)

Send an eviction notice?

Call the police?

I think for starters I will get out my old  
meditation tapes,

sit down, and breathe.

That's a beginning. After that I don't know,

but it's got to get better. It has to

Maybe I'll bug God for more healing,

ask her or him to move in as well

Maybe it'll be so crowded

Fear, Panic & Terror will have to leave

Imagine that—no more room at the inn

Wouldn't that be great?

By Veronica

MV

# Treating The Body Well

By Amass

For many years I have lived with a variety of physical illnesses. At age 6 my doctors diagnosed The Body with Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis, or JRA. Throughout the years The Body has received numerous diagnoses. The current list reads as follows: connective tissue disease, IBS, fibromyalgia, asthma, Raynaud's syndrome, Sjogren's syndrome, oral ulcers, leukopenia, ovarian cysts, FCBD, elevated SED rate, debatable MVP, DES exposure, hemorrhoids, herpes, erratic sleep disorder.

For many years, while I worked and put myself through college, I underwent treatment from a variety of doctors. Three years ago The Body had 5+ doctors who rarely talked with one another. I felt a great deal of severe chronic pain with no relief from medication. At that time I started seeing a psychotherapist.

Two years ago my therapist helped me go on disability for PTSD and a major depressive episode. We also added all the physical problems to the form, but the disability people didn't want to recognize these problems.

I started working on treating The Body better.

Since that time I am taking only one prescription medication (Serzone, an anti-depressant that also helps my fibromyalgia pain), weekly B-12 shots, mineral supplements, and acetaminophen as needed. I also "stride," a form of walking indoors that does not hurt my joints, for a half-hour daily. Because of the nature of chronic pain, I need to be able to sleep when my Body allows/needs it; not according to normalized society rules.

All these changes have taken place thanks to my therapist who helped me start searching for The Body's own personal solutions. When I first saw her 3 years ago, I was feeling hopeless, suicidal and had basically given up on life. After learning to trust my therapist, I stated that I needed one whole Body female

doctor (since The Body is female). She referred me to a female doctor. Both my doctors believe in the Body, Mind, Spirit connection - see *"Anatomy of the Spirit"* by Caroline Myss. They work with me to find appropriate solutions for my system. They understand and work with my limitations and fears. Both believe the pain is real and now, even when the stimulus is a trigger from yesterday. It is hard to deny spontaneous bruising and/or bleeding, even when they can't find the source. We work as a team and I make the final decisions about everything. Periodically the three of us meet in my therapist's office to discuss goals and approaches. It has taken me more than 30 years to find an approach and a support team that is beginning to work for The Body.

Receiving a DID diagnosis this past year has helped immensely. This diagnosis explains a lot of The Body's physical craziness, too. For instance, it helps explain why taking medication sometimes helps while other times the same medication does nothing at all. Eye exams have been difficult because some of us need glasses to read while others don't wear them at all. The Body has experienced hot flashes without any physiological stimulus for years. It turns out we switch during those times. The violent headaches are actually symptoms of an inner war I am trying to ignore. Another example is having pain that doctors can't find with current-day technology.

I started reading MV and have been slowly ordering back issues as I can afford them. Through this newsletter I discovered that The Body (definitely its own separate part) holds memories. This has helped us greatly. I am beginning to question how much of my pain is actually memories of childhood abuse. I am learning to listen and translate The Body's needs so we can work as a team.

Two important words for me are "acceptance" and "individuation." For us that means accepting all of us and not just the parts that my family,

society and whoever else want us to be. It also means allowing each of us to be who we are and learning to understand each of our needs, memories, likes and dislikes; that includes The Body. The more I learn about my history, the easier it has become to deal with my physical problems. It has been hard to accept the limitations and pain of The Body when we "look" normal. On the other hand, some days our "handicapped" placard from DMV has made the difference of having food or no food in the house. (Shopping is incredibly painful for The Body.)

I am not sure if we will ever be One. I am not sure that would be beneficial to us. There are some advantages to dissociation and DID. Sometimes I am not sure I have control over who does or does not integrate. As I learn more about my other selves and our history, some parts have awakened while others have quietly joined with others.

I am learning to ask for help, and surprisingly at times it is there. For me, an excellent free source of information has been the Arthritis Foundation. Now that The Body is an adult and I have freedom to choose what is right or wrong for us, I am utilizing those choices by not allowing any doctor to be my "God." I know my system better than anyone. My doctors are part of my support team. I pay them for their expertise, but I know they too are human and don't have all The Body's answers; only we do.

I do not know if we will be able to heal The Body 100%. The few changes we have made in the past year have greatly improved our quality of life and therefore our decision to live it. My hope for others is that they may have the inner strength to continue to search and find solutions that work for each of them.

MV



## Behind Closed Doors We Wait

People look at me and I look good and so they say  
I am fine,  
And I cry, "Why can't you see me?"

People look at me and I look whole and they say  
I am together,  
And I cry, "Why can't you hear me?"

People look at me and there are smiles on my face and they say  
I am happy,  
And I cry, "Why can't you know me?"

People look at me and see the outside and they say  
that is all I am,  
And I cry, "Why can't you find me?"

Is it because I just show you the outside of my  
dwelling place,  
or is it because you do not bother to stop and come in?

For do you know that all you are seeing is the Exterior  
of my house?  
All painted and adorned for your approval.  
Always ready to be looked at but not entered.

If you were to peek into our house you would know  
the chaos of our rooms,  
the disarray of our children.

There are no smiles on their faces or joy in their footsteps  
There is no together.  
Just rooms and places of silent tears and tortured spirits.

I know I must unlock my doors, draw back the drapes,  
and let you walk within me.  
But I Am Afraid.

I hurt still from those who have walked before,  
when I was new and waiting.

How can I trust, with my doors wide and my windows  
open, you will not walk within and hurt me too?

Alas, I do not know but I will try.  
If you will take the time to gently enter my house  
and visit with us

I will find the courage to put the mat out  
to welcome you.

For I so want you to see us, to hear us, to know us,  
to FIND US.

By Kathy A.

MV

## The Soldiers with Medals

The soldiers with medals  
in our existence  
in our life  
from our birth  
until our death  
we wonder and search  
sometimes we find  
a glimmer of life  
an embodiment of silent courage  
a touch of gentleness  
...that is so rare.

In the world of wars and hate  
we sometimes forget those of  
silent courage  
who, in the shadows of others,  
raise children of beauty and hope  
...hope for the world of  
tomorrow

We sometimes forget that their  
lives  
are intertwined with sacrifice and  
strength.

We sometimes forget that they  
are the ones who fight  
the real wars.

The wars against a world that  
teaches children  
to hate  
The wars against a world that  
ingrains violence.

By CJW.SLH

MV

### The Empowerment of MPD

*If it takes a village  
to raise a child  
then I have become  
my own village  
to raise myself*

By Leah  
of E. Pluribus Unum

## “Blooms of Hope”

By LD

I heard once that each woman is a beautiful flower with her own uniqueness. This metaphor has remained with me over the years. At times during my journey I have felt like a crushed flower ... or a daisy that's had all its petals removed.

I remember one day during a crisis period. I told my husband angrily that I felt like a flower someone had shredded. He went out to our yard, picked a hibiscus flower and told me, "You are not a crushed flower. You are a beautiful flower." As the self-hate melted, the tears flowed.

Recently, I've been grieving. I lost my grandmother two months ago. Since then there has been a growing unrest in my soul ... an increasing knowledge that life is not as it should be ... there must be something better.

Sometimes tears have a way of tapping into the reservoir of pain within our souls. The past few days I've found myself overwhelmed by grief. Earlier this week, working with my therapist, I got a glimpse of what God's intention was when He created me.

Sometimes it's easier for me to view sexuality as "bad". I simply reject those parts of myself. They stay out of my way and I stay out of their way. And consequently, it's not "me" who is intimate with my husband. I share with him feelings, thoughts and laughter, but I am absent during intimate moments.

I've been trying to accept the various parts of my soul ...

the strong parts who want to be heard.

the weak parts who want to be protected,

the compliant parts ... for all I know there was a time they literally saved my life

the intellectual parts who hide emotions in convolutions of thought  
the frightened parts with "irrational" fears

the happy child parts who do not know evil

the sad child parts whose eyes were opened to evil too soon

Perhaps it's time to work on accepting the parts of me who long for physical intimacy. Perhaps it's time to re-label "bad" parts as "good."

This morning, I've been crying. My thoughts turned again to the image of the flower. Someone gave me a beautiful orchid when my grandmother passed away. I was amazed by the delicate blooms. Somehow their beauty was like salve to my soul. As time has passed, each bloom has fallen off and now it is a bare branch ... nothing pretty to look at. My mother's words the last time she visited echoed in my head this morning, "When it's finished blooming, plant it and it will bloom again." Perhaps today I will plant it, if it's not too late.

*"I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten ... You will have plenty to eat, until you are full, and you will praise the name of the Lord your God, who has worked wonders for you; never again will my people be shamed." Joel 2:25-26*

MV

## What Makes Us Happy & Feel Good

We collect junkie stuff we could not have as a kid, or later as an adult: stuffed animals, some toys, neat fun t-shirts, dice. Yea, I collect dice but I don't play! So we had to learn to organize the junk.

We began to collect storage bins and boxes. We also get ourselves neat art supplies. Our living room doubles as the display area for the stuff we've tried to stuff into our home. When people visit the first time they give a big, old "WOW! All those stuffed animals!" I had to begin to hang them on the wall. Seldom do we get new ones. We go to thrift shops.

The whole point is—we all grieve for our lost childhood. We know we can never go back. When we were small, we had this teddy bear. Only one. It was my most loved possession. I got Teddy when I was, like, two. One day when I was 8, I came home from school. Mom had decided I was too old for a Teddy Bear and threw it away. It got taken before we got home.

We lost it. We just fell apart, crying so hard Mom took us to buy a new one. But it could never replace Teddy. I/we had told him all the terrible things that happened. He was safe, because he could never tell anyone what we told him.

We collect stuff to say it's ok to have nice things. It's ok to want something for no real reason. Just because I like it. Dollar Stores have made all this possible. We understand that things are only possessions, but growing up—there really wasn't a whole lot that was neat and fun. Just basic needs—no special things, except Teddy.

By giving ourselves permission to simply have silly things, happy things, fun things—the things are not the important part. It's saying "Yes, we are worth it. We have value." We can say to one and another, "I know you like this - here, I got it for you as a present." That's the joy of a Dollar Store.

We give our friends part of our collections as gifts, with no pain involved. We think how happy it had made us. We give it to make our friends happy too. It's feeling great, not guilt. That bad-girl-guilt is not around much anymore, and who knows what treasure we may find? Keep it for awhile and then pass it on. We really feel joy to give a gift, because we know how happy we are when we get a gift.

By Maggie

MV

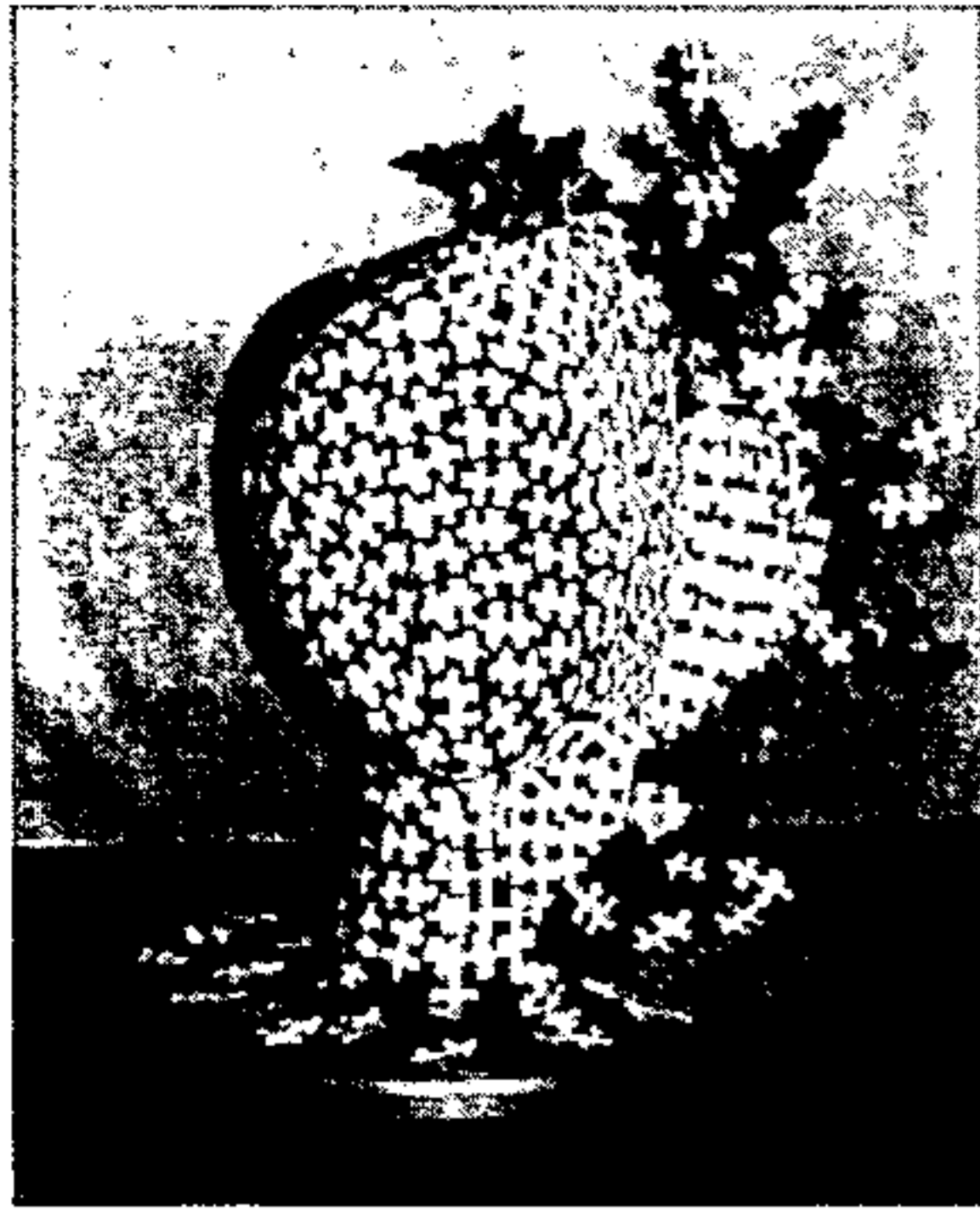
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## Memories Buzzing Round

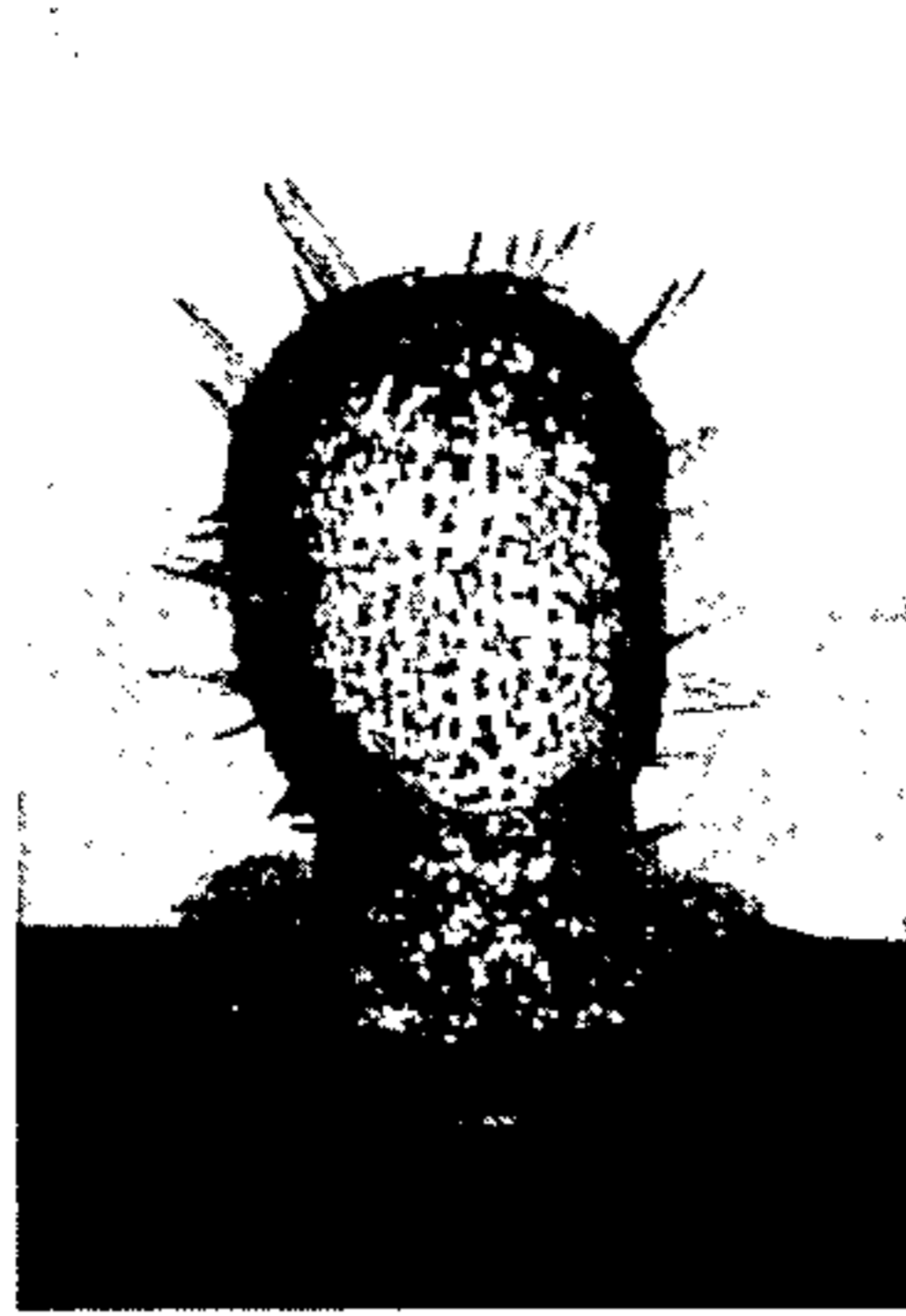
Memories buzzing round and round in the night  
like fireflies taking flight  
One pops in giving me fright  
One slips just out of sight  
The mind whirls round and round, it dances and swirls  
finally giving way to morning's sweet pearls.

By Dawn A.

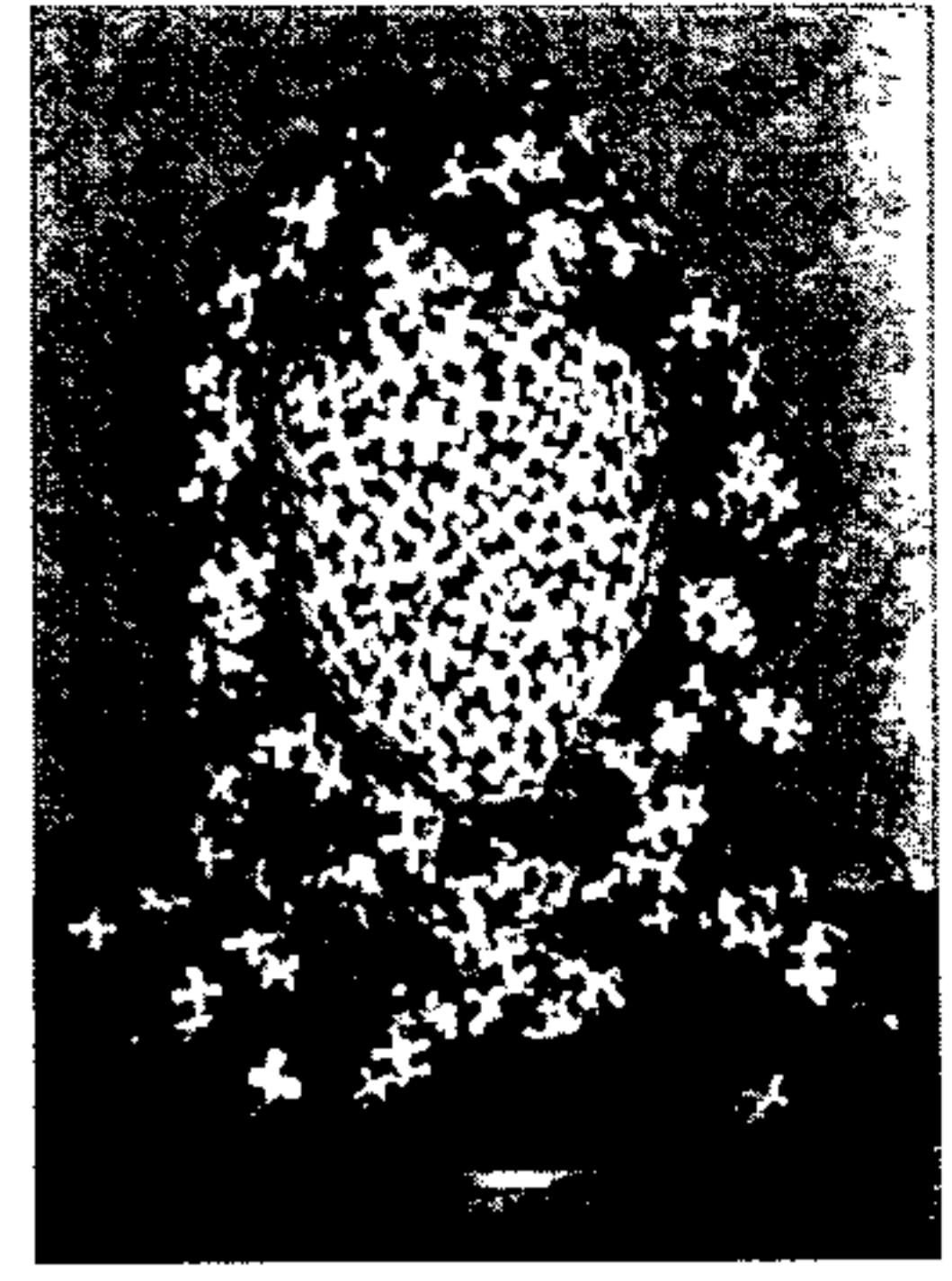




*Confusion* - by ggeyer



*Lessons* - by ggeyer



*Choices* - by ggeyer

## Books

### **I Am More Than One: How Women with Dissociative Identity Disorder Have Found Success in Life and Work**

By Jane Wegscheider Hyman, PhD.  
Published by The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. ISBN 0-07-146257-0 © 2007. \$18.95 US, \$23.95 CAN 278 pgs + Index. Softback.

Finally—a very readable book to help people who dissociate, their supportive family, friends and helping professionals, understand separated “parts” and explain the process of thriving in spite of being divided.

Author Jane Hyman previously wrote the excellent book, *Women Living with Self-Injury*. A clinician and researcher as well as a talented writer, Dr. Hyman interviews several high-functioning dissociative women in depth, probing for accurate descriptions of what it really feels like to experience consciousness through the perspective of multiple parts. Although each woman experiences her existence differently, their statements convey the motivations and mechanisms that actually allow a person with parts to successfully live through a difficult childhood, become educated, work, raise a family, and develop relationships—even healthy relationships—before, during and after therapy.

To my mind, the book is a brilliant success in conveying the nuances of dissociation. Reading it has made me reconsider the way my own process

works (or fails to work) in several areas, and may offer other MV readers examples of better functioning that they can put to use in their own lives.

It was refreshing to learn how Dr. Hyman comes to use specific terminology (such as using the word ‘parts’ rather than ‘alters’ – and the term ‘partnered’ for those unmarried dissociatives who live in a committed relationship.) She shows both awareness and flexibility in her personal understanding of dissociation, as her initial assumptions are confronted by the realities of these women’s lives. Initially, she expected each woman would have a single personality accompanied by peripheral parts of the mind, but Dr. Hyman soon understood that often the highest-functioning identity was a “part,” and was not necessarily the “core” or first part created.

She also learned that for many if not all of the women interviewed, full integration is not a goal nor, in some cases, necessarily desirable when there is sufficient harmony, communication and cooperation among parts.

However, I’m glad to say this is not some rosy-tinged *“dissociation is a fascinating miracle”* book (though, at times, it IS a fascinating miracle that humans in trouble have the capacity to endure, thanks to the dissociative process.) There is no glossing over the complications, confusion and pain

that dissociation and internal separateness can bring. Each interviewee experienced severe trauma and struggle, followed by years of competent therapy, and is personally (and within themselves, severally) dedicated to healing and constructive life. Each participant has a career—though the effects of dissociation or therapy may transform their careers. Several are mothers and some are grandmothers. Most blend into society, appearing ‘normal’ most of the time. These are extraordinary individuals (though ‘individual’ may be an inaccurate term), willing to share deeply personal information to help others understand.

According to figures cited here, as many as 1% of the adult population may experience dissociation. The questions Hyman asks are those that any neighbor, co-worker or puzzled partner of a dissociative person might wonder about. The richly detailed responses from the dissociative participants help me believe that members of the general public—curious about themselves and their neighbors—will take an interest in the dissociative process. I urge you to read and share this book with them, to help the world at large become better informed about the origin and truth of dissociated parts, and more supportive of the strength, dedication and long-term effort required for healing.



**THANK YOU FOR SHARING!**  
 Please keep your writing and artwork coming. We need you to help us help others! All ideas welcomed!

**February 2007**

Sexual Problems and Solutions.  
 Healthy Relationships.  
 Artwork: Images of Intimacy and Trust  
 DEADLINE: Dec. 15, 2006

**April 2007**

What you like/don't like about dissociating. Grounding techniques. Understanding your system.  
 Artwork: Meeting Yourself(ves)  
 DEADLINE: Feb. 1, 2007

**June 2007**

Good Food & Good Sleep  
 Developing healthy habits.  
 What to do if you 'slip'.  
 Artwork: Cooking or Exercising.  
 DEADLINE: April 1, 2007



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