

First person plural

Newsletter for Dissociators and their Allies



First Birthday Issue



April, 1999

Vol 1: Issue 4

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**HAPPY BIRTHDAY
FIRST PERSON PLURAL**

Location of FPP Subscribers

(Areas = NHS Regions)



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First Person Plural, PO Box 1309,
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WV6 9XY, United Kingdom

Editorial Statement

While every effort will be made to keep contributions complete and unedited we reserve the right to make amendments when necessary. Decisions about the inclusion and amendment of contributions are the burden of the editor and are final. Contributions do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the editor and the inclusion of any reference to an individual or organisational resource should not be taken as a recommendation. Both lay and professional contributors to First Person Plural can be experts in their own experiences only. The contents of this newsletter are for information purposes only. The newsletter is not intended to be a substitute for therapy or professional supervision. It is intended that the newsletter will complement, not replace other networks of support

Contributions to next issue to be received by 11th June, '99
articles; stories; resources; book reviews; tips; poetry; artwork; personal experiences

ATTENTION

Material in this newsletter may trigger painful memories and feelings.
Read with caution and appropriate support if necessary

Time to Renew Subscriptions

Enclosed with this issue is a Subscription Renewal form.

ALL current subscribers **MUST** complete this form and return with payment if you wish to receive the 4 issues in Volume 2

Subscription renewals must be received by 30th June if you wish to be included in the mailing for Vol 2: Issue 1 which is due out in July.

Of course, we hope you all want to continue subscribing to or become members of First Person Plural (see below). If you do please complete the Reader's Survey on the reverse of the subscription renewal form and tell us what you have liked/disliked about First Person Plural and any ideas you have for the newsletter or the group's development.

If you are **NOT** renewing your subscription we would like to know why and receive your completed Reader's Survey too.

THANK YOU

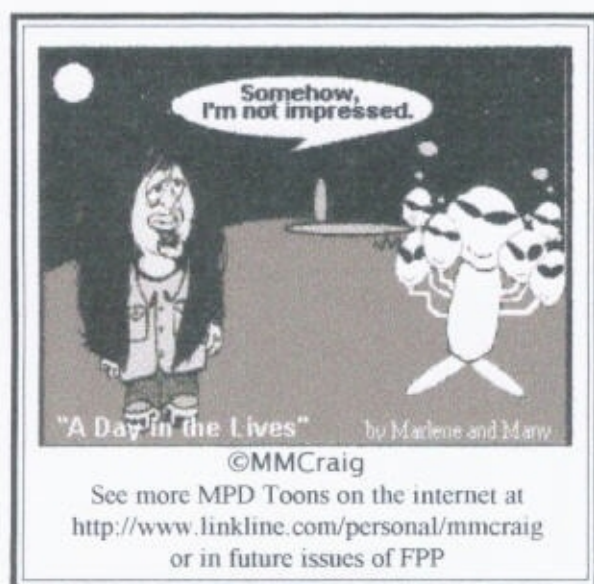
Optional Membership of F. P. P.

In our second year we are offering dissociative subscribers only the benefits of membership for a small additional charge of £1.50

As a member, in addition to receiving the newsletter, you will have the option to join a contact list which will be circulated to members only twice a year.

You will receive early notification of and have the chance to contribute, become involved or comment on projects the steering group and other members are working on.

See subscription renewal form for how to become a member.



Dear Kathryn.....

First Person Plural encourages respectful open comment and debate about the issues, ideas and experiences of dissociators, their supporters and allies. We welcome letters inspired by any article or other material published in the newsletter and other topics of interest to readers.

IMPORTANT : - If you write to First Person Plural please make it clear if you intend your letter for publication and indicate what, if any, of your personal details e.g. name, address etc can be printed. Please keep your letters brief. If you wish to receive replies but wish to use the FPP address it is essential you send a large 31p sae with your letter. In this event your letter will be printed with a number and replies forwarded in your sae. To reply to a numbered letter place your reply in a sealed envelope with the letter number clearly marked on outside and put inside another envelope for posting to First Person Plural. Any replies to numbered letters received by FPP but not placed in a numbered sealed envelope or replies to un-numbered letters will be considered for publication in the next issue but will not be forwarded.

Kathryn Livingston, First Person Plural, PO Box 1309, Wolverhampton, WV6 9XY
or email fpplural@aol.com

In receipt of DLA

I have been diagnosed with M.P.D. and I was interested to read the article on D.I.D. and Disability Living Allowance.

I receive this and have back up from my doctor and a community nurse who verify what I am putting in the form. Please encourage your readers to keep applying for it.

Stacey

Building faith in human nature

How wonderful to learn that FPP has received such a generous donation to fund information booklets on dissociative disorders.

It is things like that which are slowly but surely showing me that some human beings can be nice, kind and caring; showing me that there is a chance of a happy life ahead instead of a lonely, pain filled life I expect to have to stick with. My faith in human nature is slowly being built. Hooray and thanks.

Sue

Editors note:- The donation received is sitting pretty in the FPP bank account until the FPP team have more time to concentrate on writing and publishing the info booklets. Our main focus recently has been preparing for First Person Plural's presentation at the ISSD conference. That will soon be behind us and we can begin to start planning on spending that £5,000. ☺

Problem section for FPP?

Your submissions wanted

"Shame FPP doesn't have a 'problem' section". It started as a joke but now we're wondering if it could work. Amongst the subscribers there must be many ideas, thoughts or ways others have found of solving problems. What about inviting people to write in with "problems" and ask readers to offer suggested solutions. Do you think you would get enough input for it to work?

Lix & Angie

Editor's view:- judging from the small volume of responses to readers' letters I am doubtful this would work. I am willing to give it a go in the next issue if readers submit problems clearly marked "Problem section"

Early Warning Signs of Switching by Sara Lambert

One of the most common fears of multiples is that they will switch inappropriately in public. Not only is this embarrassing at times and hard to explain to those who do not know the survivor is multiple, it can also be dangerous. For these reasons, it is important to develop awareness of how to recognise the early warning signals of switching and have a variety of techniques for avoiding switching when necessary. There are ways for a multiple to recognise that she is about to switch, although it may take her some years to become aware of these.

The signs are unique for each multiple, but some common ones include:-

- Headaches: these may signal that there is tension/change going on within the system.
- Spacing Out: self-detachment may prepare the way for a full identity switch.
- A Feeling Inside: a physical sensation, like something inside is undergoing a major shift.
- Dizziness/Blurred Vision: again, this indicates chemical/energy changes.
- Doubleness Of Self: a sense that another self is standing inside or behind you.
- Infusion: being filled with emotions or thoughts that are not your own.

Remember the processes of multiplicity are different for everyone and, if yours isn't on this list, you're not doing it wrong! Becoming aware of your own warning signals requires time and patient study.

A number of survivors find it helpful to keep a journal of what happened just before and during their switches into specific alters. By doing this, they can track any patterns of feeling or behaviour. Others ask outsiders to describe what they see when a switch happens - one reason why therapists are helpful! An alter who can observe switching from the inside as it happens, and later pass on information about it may also be helpful, but this may be possible only once the system has developed good communication and co-operation.

The next question is, how do you stop switching before it happens? I believe it is possible to do so, although some survivors may not develop this kind of self-control until well down their healing road. In my opinion, to say that the system has no control over its traffic flow is to buy into the idea that life is always chaotic and that the survivor has no internal locus of control.

Different techniques for avoiding switching are suitable for different people (including the different selves of someone), and it is a matter of trial and error finding something that personally works.

Suggestions include -

- Negotiate in advance with your other selves when each can have time in the body to follow their own special pursuits.

For example, allowing a child time in the evening to colour-in or watch cartoons will mean that she is less likely to emerge during your work day in order to just have time out.



- If you are the sort of person who likes charting schedules (or if you tend towards chaos and need a charted schedule), then you might like to make a pie chart divided into segments representing the hours of your day, and allocate each segment to different selves. You can then include in this chart the various chores that have to be completed during certain parts of the day, and it is the responsibility of those selves present at that time to attend to those chores.

Drawing up this chart with the help of everyone in your system is a great opportunity for developing communication and co-operation - although be prepared for it taking some considerable time before you come to any agreements!

- If someone is going to come out because they have been triggered, have another alter self be with them inside, to comfort them until you are able to spend time with them going over what happened. If possible, take a few moments for them to write down what triggered them and why.
- Use breathing and grounding exercises to remain in your body. Try applying something very cold to your skin.
- Take time out, for example by going to the toilet or having a breath of fresh air. This removes you from a triggering situation, changes your environment, and gives you the chance to recover and to have a conversation with the alter self who wants to come out, without anyone noticing that you are "talking to yourself."

- Ask adults to keep the children occupied during work hours, perhaps by singing to them, telling them stories, or teaching them about things you have learnt about yourselves in therapy.
- Avoid overstimulation or, on the other hand, boredom. Be flexible, insofar as, if some activity is causing you to dissociate, take a break from it for a while or do something else instead.
- Have a buddy inside who can help you deal with internal and external stressors. Have an outside buddy as well, if possible.
- Use dissociation to put up a wall between you and your inner selves while in a situation where you need to be "singleton".

What does not work is trying to block other selves without compensation or denying their right to be in the body at all. As well as being unfair, this will only encourage conflict. Instead, work out compromises for sharing your day that will allow everyone a certain amount of freedom. (If you resent your other selves taking time that you consider to be yours alone, remember that they are actually all part of you, so in reality you are only denying yourself the opportunity to spend time doing things that, in part, you enjoy doing!)

While it is important to control inappropriate switching as much as possible, I do not believe that in general switching should be discouraged, on the basis that MPD is "bad".

Certainly, there are better and safer ways of dealing with problems, and much of the recovery process deals with learning new ways of problem-solving.



But denying the presence of alters, refusing them time, ignoring their needs and discounting the ways they defend themselves and the system as a whole are all recipes for disaster. In fact, if there is one thing guaranteed to worsen dissociation it is trying to make it go away.

What I strongly support is multiples finding ways to respect their alters, develop communication and co-operation, and find ways that everyone can have "body time" and get their needs met at appropriate times.

It seems to me that nothing happens in a multiple's system without a reason. Therefore the trick to stopping things that you don't like from happening is to find out why they are happening and then come up with a more suitable and effective alternative for action. For example, there is usually more to a child coming out at the office than her just being a brat.

She may be frustrated because she is never allowed out at any other time to play - in which case, the system must arrange time for that child to be out at home, where she will be safe and the system not embarrassed, and she must be allowed to play.

Another reason for the child's appearance may be that she was triggered by something in the office, and her appearance is a powerful way of the system drawing attention to the potential danger of the trigger. In this case it would be worthwhile to talk with the child about what triggered her, as this is valuable information which holds clues to what happened in the past. Once the trigger is known to the system, they can come up with ways for dealing with it in the future so the child does not have to be involved (and so is protected from further fear and distress).

The child herself will probably have some good ideas about how to defuse and/or associate the trigger.

The child may also appear inappropriately as a sign that something is wrong inside the system. It could be that the primary self has been neglecting her alter selves, or that they are rebelling against her denial of the diagnosis, or that there is conflict inside or re-enactment of abuse scenarios being played out on the child.

Letting other selves spend time in the body does not make multiplicity worse or create more switching. In fact, to the contrary - it eases conflict, promotes harmony and control, creates less need for inappropriate switching, and so makes things better for all.

This article first appeared in Team Spirit.
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ISSD(UK) and FPP Message from the Editor

Readers will be aware that we (the editor with support from some FPP subscribers) have had a series of misunderstandings and differences of opinion with the International Society for the Study of Dissociation(UK) committee.

I am pleased to report that the most recent correspondence between myself and Marise Maddison (on behalf of the ISSD(UK) committee) has indicated far more positions of agreement than were previously evident. I am hopeful that any outstanding differences can be laid to rest in face to face discussions at the forthcoming ISSD conference in Manchester which I and other FPP subscribers will be attending. Hopefully the way will be opened for more collaboration between our two groups towards our common goal.

The ISSD(UK) Committee have acted on some of the suggestions I made to make their conferences more accessible to people who dissociate.

Letters Extra

Some letters in support of the Playcentre

Dear Kathryn.....

I am about 13 years old now and I live with two mommies in my head. We are called "Diane" but my name is Rebecca. I am not an alter. I am a person.

I saw the Playcentre in First Person Plural magazine and I think it is a very good idea. When I was first here in my now life (not my before life) I was very little and it was hard to grow up with no-one to play with who was little like me. Only people know that who have felt it really. I really, really wanted to play with other children and I couldn't because they wouldn't understand. They might think I am funny or something. I do think I look like Mr Bean. So I was very sad. I tried hard to find friends to play with. I got 3 outside grown-up friends to talk to but they don't play and I only see them for a bit sometimes.

But I did have Bandit. He was my cat. He was a friend to me and he was my best friend because he was always there for me and he came to me when I cried and he was fun, but now he is dead.

So, you see, it is very important to have a Playcentre for lots of little people inside who are lonely. And it is a good idea to have it in the middle so you can go straight to it and miss the other stuff, some of which is sometimes upsetting and I don't read that.

I am very glad you listened to your little kathryn and are having a Playcentre.

Rebecca Jones



"Yes, yes, yes" we would like to see more for the young ones. The section in 'Survivorship' has always been popular but it would be really nice to have more, especially as FPP is more frequent and British.

Liz & Angie



Your idea to have a child alters page is an excellent idea and my child alters would be happy to respond to it.



Stacey

Dear Kathryn,

Thank you for making
a childrens page for the
magising. We liked it a
lot. Here's a sort of
puzzly joke we heard
on a radio -

Q: What sort of biskit
can fly?

A: A plane biskit



a digestive plane



a choc chip plane



a moo cow biskit plane



a squashed fly biskit plane

I can't think of many
more at a moment.

I getted a watch for my
birthday now I are four
but I have a share it with a
others most especially Robyn.
I have to stop now.
x x x from Lizzie x

TRANSCRIPT

PLAY

Dear Kathryn,

Thank you for making a childrens
page for the magazine. We liked it
a lot. Here's a sort of puzzley joke
We heard on a radio -

Q: What sort of biscuit can fly?

A: A plane biscuit. ☺

a digestive plane

a choc-chip plane

a moo cow biscuit plane

a squashed fly biscuit plane

I can't think of many more at the
moment. I getted a Watch for my
birthday now I are four but I have
a share it With a others most
especially Robyn. I have to stop
now. love from Lizzie

A Book Review by Rebecca Jones

'The Butterfly Lion'

by Michael Morpugo

This is for like junior school children.
It is a beautiful, sad, lovely story
that all comes together in the end.

It is about Africa and the War and
about being lonely and finding a
friend.

It is very sad and Will make you cry
but that is how good it is. It is
alright in the end, though.

It is magical.

CENTRE



Chaffinch

B = blue

P = pink

R = red-brown

X = orange

G = green

Y = dark brown

by Rebecca

Letter Words

Climb down the ladder
changing one letter on each
rung to get from Hurt to Safe

HURT
SAFE

Pen-Pal wanted

Dear Playcentre,
I am Marie and I would like to
write to someone. Jamie is
writing this for me because I
don't write too good. I belong
to the gang and there is lots of
us. Please someone write soon.
Love, Marie

If you want to write to Marie place your
letter in a stamped envelope marked
'Marie' and put this in another stamped
envelope. Send this second envelope to:-
Playcentre, First Person Plural, PO
Box 1309, Wolverhampton, WV6 9XY



An Undelivered Letter to My G.P.

Dear Doctor,

On previous occasions when I have asked for a sick note to cover absence due to my mental health problems I have not wanted to tell you more detail beyond I have hit a rough time in my therapy, am feeling depressed and not sleeping. You, for your part have been accepting and respectful of my wish not to detail further; trusting of my own assessment of my ability to work; and have issued sick notes certifying 'depression'. I thank you for this caring consideration and respect. However, on this occasion I would like you to understand a little more of the history of what has once more brought me to the point of not being able to function at work and the nature of this non-functioning.

I believe some time ago you talked/corresponded with my therapist who spoke of my extreme dissociative defences. To my recollection you and I have never discussed this so I am uncertain how knowledgeable about and/or accepting of trauma-based dissociative disorders you are. To the uninformed and close-minded what I am about to describe would seem bizarre and there are those who would be dismissive and unbelieving. From my experience with you as a caring, respectful GP I am hopeful that you will remain open-minded and accepting.

I can date the start of my current crisis to the beginning of January. I had survived unharmed through one of several dates in the year which trigger extreme dissociation and sometimes precipitate self-harm but I was struggling in the aftermath which I commonly refer to as 'chaos-time' because inside my head I hear the clamour of other selves' voices without any clear communication. I had not seen my therapist since before Christmas (itself a stressful time) and was not due to see her until the 11th January. Her absences are always stressful. My sleep had deteriorated and I was finding it hard to concentrate through the chaotic internal noise and tiredness, but I persevered with getting myself into work and trying to do my job.

Then on the 7th or 8th January, an enquiry letter was received at work (it is part of my job to respond to letters of enquiry on mental health matters). The contents of this letter caused a great deal of distress as it described traumas which triggered memories of abuse for some of my dissociated trauma-surviving parts.

During the weekend of 9/10th January I lost a lot of time. When I again became fully aware (not until 13th January, so I missed my therapy appointments of 11th and 12th although dissociated parts with me had attended) I discovered that an overdose had been taken by one of my dissociated parts. The OD was not life-threatening and we did not receive any medical or psychiatric treatment. It is hard to gauge if it was an incompetent but none-the-less serious suicide bid but my assumption is that it was an attempt by one self-harming part to prevent a more seriously suicidal part from becoming active.

The internal chaos, lack of sleep and general feelings of being out of control intensified but we were trying very hard not to take time off work.

On 14th January I had to attend a conference in London. This, of itself, was very stressful and given all that I was already experiencing it was a very, very difficult time. An incident occurred there which threw me over the edge and in a crowded conference venue I 'switched' into very distressed child parts, whose distress was patently obvious to all around. With the support of colleagues and phone support from my therapist we came through this but it seemed my system of dissociated selves had seen it as the last straw and subsequently when I tried to go into work I lost time and the part that came out kept us away from the office. Eventually, I gave in to the apparent message from my dissociated selves to reduce external stressors and voluntarily took the time off work, which decision seemed to calm some of the internal chaos, and allowed us to settle into what seems for us to be a more natural sleep cycle (i.e. not going to bed until the early hours of morning and not rising until 10 or 11am) which reduced some of my tiredness.

This Monday, (25th) I prepared to return to work but yet again time was snatched from me and we did not make it into the office. When I returned to awareness I discovered a disturbing drawing from one of my parts and some superficial cuts on my arm. After subsequent conversations with my therapist I decided that all that was going on internally was making it impossible to return to work. My therapist, myself and some of my dissociated selves are trying to identify and to work through what is causing the internal chaos and uncontrolled switching, meanwhile it seems, no matter how much of a sense of urgency I have about my return to work, some of my dissociated selves have other ideas.

So this is where I am at. Yes I am depressed; yes, I am anxious; yes I am suffering insomnia; and yes, I am feeling generally stressed out but most disabling of my symptoms is the uncontrolled dissociative switching and consequent loss of time. It is this latter, together with the aforementioned "chaos-time", which are most responsible for making me unable to work. In my self-certification I give the reason for my absence from work as "dissociative crisis". Maybe you are restricted by guidelines and cannot be more accurate than describing my diagnosis as 'depression' but if you are able to be more flexible and in light of the detail I have told you I would value the affirmation of your diagnosis on my sick note reflecting my own description of why I can't work.

The model of functioning described by the diagnosis Dissociative Identity Disorder has been useful to my own and my therapist's understanding and addressing of my mental health problems. I believe a dissociation-informed psychiatrist willing to fly in the face of sceptical colleagues would consider Dissociative Identity Disorder a valid diagnosis of my experience. These are my opinions but I hope you will give them consideration as you make your clinical judgement as to what diagnosis to place on my sick note.

Yours sincerely,

KL



Note:

My desire to have my dissociative disorder confirmed by a medical practitioner fluctuates. I am thankful now I didn't send the letter. I fear my GP would have reacted negatively. How do other dissociators relate to their GPs?

Music Review by Kathryn Livingston



"Too Close to Reality" A CD album by Jan Marvel



Survivorship - Honesty - Validation

Jan Marvel's lyrics find their mark in the hearts of her listeners. Her powerfully sung words and moving music stir deep emotions. This album is a tribute to those who had no voice. It is empathic adult contemporary music with depth of feeling and glimmers of hope.

It all started with "Altar Boys", which Jan felt compelled to write after shows such as Primetime Live and Justice Files broke the story of abuse within the priesthood. These disturbing events happened in the southern Massachusetts community where Jan is originally from.

"Seeing those men courageously coming forward on national television, after their lives were shattered, deeply moved me to write this song. It is my darkest song, how could it be written otherwise?"

Jan proceeded to write about friends who had been likewise devastated by childhood abuse.

"Kaleidoscope" was written about a very dear friend with MPD/DID.

"Freight Train" was her story, but written for everyone who has experienced that kind of fear at the hands of another. The other songs portray feelings of hurt, anger, and finally healing and regaining strength in songs such as "Love Again" and "To Get Away".

"Jan's lyrics are as good as they get, on the level of Joni Mitchell" - Dan Serafini gold record writer/producer.

*taken from Atta Girl Records web site
with permission*

Atta Girl Records!

www.attagirlrecords.com

This is one of the best and most touching, spoken from and to the heart albums I have heard in recent years. I stumbled across it while surfing the internet. After listening to the few sound clips at the record company site, I just had to order it. I've played it over and over since receiving it in the post. My favourite tracks are Kaleidoscope and Dancin' in Denial. The one word of caution I would give is there is a very brief spoken track at the end of the album which is a bit eerie.

The album is only available to order through Atta Girl Records web site (www.attagirlrecords.com) but their service was friendly and very quick even though the CD has to be shipped from America. Of course, to order goods on the internet you have to use a credit card. The cost of the album is \$12 (plus \$3 shipping costs). This is approximately £9.00 in total - considerably less than a CD album here in Britain.

If any reader would like to order a copy but does not have access to the internet, does not have a credit card or is unsure about shopping on the internet please write to Kathryn Livingston at FPP enclosing a cheque for £9.00 made payable to First Person Plural and I will order for you. Please be sure to give your address so I can get the CD mailed directly to you.

Book Review

from publisher's flyer

"Healing the Hurt Within"

Understand and relieve the suffering behind self-destructive behaviour

by Jan Sutton

Self-harm is a sign of deep distress. Only by exploring and understanding what is hurting within, can the deep wounds be addressed and the healing begin.

This heart-rending new book reveals the truth about why people self-injure, misuse food and abuse alcohol. Many sufferers' voices are included. Their courage and words will offer comfort, hope and relief to others. The important discoveries made by the author will also give those who have contact with sufferers, either personally or professionally, a deeper understanding of self-destructive behaviour and what helps relieve the emotional suffering.

"A ground-breaking book, in the subject material and presentation. It's easy to read, yet helps the reader to understand the complex nature of self-harm. The life stories are authentic and incredibly moving. I felt totally engaged." - William Stewart, author of the highly successful 'A-Z of Counselling: Theory and Practice

Jan Sutton is an independent counsellor, trainer and author. She works with people who self-injure, adult survivors of childhood abuse and people with food and alcohol related problems. She is author of *"Thriving on Stress"* and co-author with William Stewart of *"Learning to Counsel"*

£12.95

paperback

204pp

ISBN 1 85703 299 3

Editor's note: Jan spoke with me when she was writing this book and has included a perspective on dissociation and self-harm. She has also listed First Person Plural contact details in the resources section of the book.

"Healing the Hurt Within" is available from How To Books Ltd, Customer Services Department, Plymbridge Distributors Ltd, Plymbridge House, Estover Road, Plymouth, PL6 7PZ. Tel: 01752 202301 Fax: 01752 202331 Email: orders@plymbridge.com
Cheques payable to Plymbridge Distributors Ltd. Please add £1.25 p & p per order.

The Acceptance of Children

Babysitting my niece and nephew I was having to stay functioning on the outside even though there was chaos on the inside. It was lunchtime and I'd gone out to the garage to get a pizza from the chest freezer. My niece was moaning about not wanting pizza and I was beginning to feel frazzled. Having retrieved the pizza I turned around swiftly trying to contain an angry part who was very short on patience. I tripped over one of the kids bikes and CRASH!! fell hard onto the concrete floor. OUCH!! momentarily it hurt like hell then whoosh I was inside hearing my niece through the ears of one of my inner children who did not seem to feel the pain - "Who will make dinner now.....", said my niece. Now that auntie is hurt? No! *"Who will make dinner now that big auntie isn't here?"* Ah, the innocent acceptance of children. The quality that makes children vulnerable to abuse also gives them powers to see and accept the reality of the MPD abuse survivor. I regained exec control quickly. The pain of my fall now dissociated away I was able to make the dinner and clear up afterwards. In fact, I never did get to feel the pain from that injured knee until several weeks after the injury itself had healed.

POEMS & RHYMES

The team's got loads of trouble - many are distressed
 If things are 'seen' NOT as they are - results, the "kids" have guessed
 So often, almost always, she is NOT as she is seen --
 People talk, discuss, DECIDE, this is how it's always been.

If those two meet to chat and discuss her case
 What if they get it wrong, not their fault - they only see her face.
 The team try hard to let 'her' out - she's fast locked, tight inside.
 Now if they get together - talk - we fear what they'll DECIDE.

They both mean so much to her, its important that they share
 But 'we' are frightened for 'her', because it's vital that they're fair.
 Cos no-one's ever fathomed 'her', so they just decide --
 Not understanding how it crippled her - but US --
we've watched her as she's CRIED.

Each tiny bit she shows them both, is only but a peep,
 There's layer upon layer, each one, going way down deep.
 There truly is a mess inside - and this is why we ask
 PLEASE don't DECIDE when she's not there - she hides behind a mask.

She longs so to be free, to understand her SELF --
 To laugh -- enjoy and prosper - to really know life's wealth.
 Her value lies in those two - they've EVEN got her trust.
 But 'WE' her team this message send "BE FAIR and that's a MUST.

Quester for the team

Woman

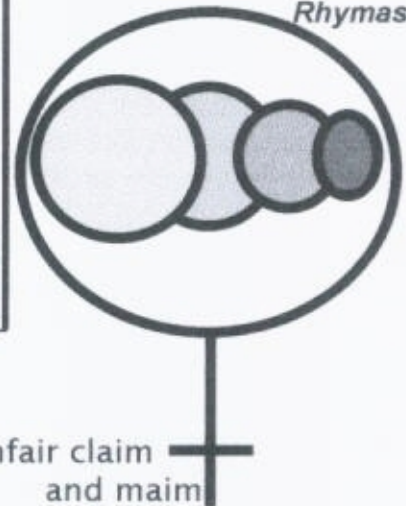
Woman, deep within you
 Wounded children shout.
 Only you can heal them;
 Free them, let them out.

Woman, don't ignore them;
 Don't let them cry in vain.
 Only when you heed them
 Will you be freed from pain.

Woman, when you hide them
 Where others cannot go
 Their wounds can only fester
 And joy you'll never know.

Woman, if you show them;
 Hear their awful tale,
 You'll heal the wounded children
 And loose yourself from jail.

Rhymaster



Naming the game

Profuse abuse and
pain insane
 Kill the will and train the brain
 To hide inside the fears and tears
 Forget and let the spears of jeers
 Recede.

Love above is told and sold,
 We buy the lie to hold the scold
 But dreams of screams and
shame of blame,
 The yells from hell proclaim the game
 Abuse

Despairs unfair claim
and maim
 But a recall wall disclaims the game.
 While the true self - the mild child -
 Goes in mute pursuit of vile and wild
 Spectres.

Such daunting haunting strains
the brain
 Controls the soul, yet explains the pain
 So you seek the leak and tame the same
 Recall it all and name the game -
 Abuse.

Rhymaster

What I have been and what I have felt
 I have forgotten.
 And sometimes the thoughts stay quite still
 In my head until morning.
 But the room is full of ghosts tonight
 Who tap and sigh at my window and wait for a reply:
 And in my head there stirs a pain
 Of unremembered images
 That will again return to me at midnight.
 With a cry.
 I cannot say what thoughts have come and gone.
 I only know life lived in me a little while
 And it lives in me
 No more



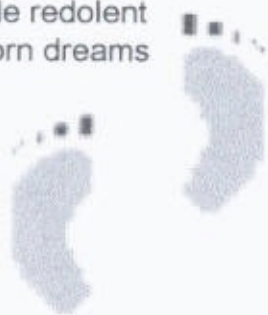
by Alison

Bare Footsteps by Caro Archer

Stepping out across the damp sward,
 Bare foot, soles bared,
 I pick my way,
 Picking up wet grass
 Between my open toes
 Feeling, exploring
 Aware of every blade, every leaf
 On my pathway.

Stepping out uncluttered
 Stripped of leather and synthetics,
 Free footing
 I can detect the minutiae,
 Each tone and texture
 Of earth's surface,
 As moist droplets cling
 And spider threads glisten.

Stepping into the cool warmth
 Of morning land
 My toes savour
 The exhilarating gasp
 Of sun-warmed, dew-dropped lawn
 Vernal, vibrant, verdant,
 Each blade redolent
 Of new born dreams



Stepping out of the sun's gift
 Where young leaves shade,
 The ice cool sod
 Thrills my senses
 In chilling contrast,
 Sends my blood coursing,
 Sends me hot-foot
 To a warmer place.

Stepping back into the light
 I sense relief,
 The warmth radiates from below
 But my mind remains
 Open to both light and dark,
 The glow and chill
 Of every pathway,
 Inside and out.

Stepping back into my day shoes
 And another dimension
 I see that each of us
 Carries within ourselves
 The outer certainty
 And the inner vulnerability
 Of the adult and child
 We will always be.

And stepping out down the road
 Of growth and healing
 I know that we,
 My hidden child and I;
 Go hand in hand,
 Wrapped up in each other
 As we walk the stormpaths
 Of life and death

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