

Volume 2: Issue 4

*FIRST
PERSON
PLURAL*

June, 2000

Newsletter for Dissociators and their Allies

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Subscription Renewals

Doesn't time fly? ☺ Yes, its that time of year again. Current subscribers who wish to continue to receive FPP please complete and return **enclosed** form with payment. Deadline for renewals is September 9th.

New subscribers - use form on back page. Thank you.



IMPORTANT - New email address
First Person Plural has a new email address fpp@collective1.fsnet.co.uk
Emails sent to the old aol address will not reach us as this account is now closed.

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 First Person Plural, members of the steering group or the editor. Inclusion of any reference to an individual or organisational resource should not be taken as a recommendation. The contents of this newsletter are for information and support purposes only. The newsletter is not intended to be a substitute for individual 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 9th Sept, 2000

articles; stories; resources; book reviews; tips; poetry; artwork; personal experiences

IMPORTANT : - When writing to First Person Plural please make it clear if your letter, article or other contribution is for publication and say which, if any, of your personal details can be printed. **The editor will assume permission to publish if you do not make your wishes clear.**

ATTENTION

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



See more MPD Toons on the internet at www.mirrorlady.net or in future issues

Writing to *Dear Kathryn*.....

- Keep your letters brief
- State clearly that your letter is for publication.
- If you wish to receive direct responses give permission for your contact details to be printed.
- If you wish responses to be forwarded from the FPP address **it is essential you send a large 33p s.a.e.** Your letter will be printed with a number.
- No replies will be forwarded if you have not sent an s.a.e.

Dear Kathryn....



First Person Plural encourages respectful open comment and debate about the issues, ideas and experiences of people who are dissociative, 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.

To reply to a numbered letter place your response in a sealed envelope with the number of the letter you are replying to marked on the outside and place inside a second stamped envelope addressed for posting to:-

**Kathryn Livingston, First Person Plural, PO Box 1309, Wolverhampton, WV6 9XY
email fpp@collective1.fsnet.co.uk**

Editor's note - I have received no letters for publication since the last issue. However, Madeleine has sent in this poem with an s.a.e. and a request that it be published with a number so people could respond if they wished.

This poem was written in September 1996 when we were trying to understand our multiplicity.

From Madeleine:

Hello,
Friend or foe,
Can I come where you can go?
Can I see when you are blind?
Are you free when I am bound?
Are my tears your pain or mine?
Is your grief mine, out of time?

Is my child in you concealed
or are your parts through me revealed?
If I am lost, then are you found
or do we share this measured ground?
If you are truth, am I a lie?
If you are me, then who am I?

From my Family:

We are captive, you are free
When you are you and we are we,
But when you're bound, we can see,
Then we are you, and we are free.

You are us, can you not see?
That we are many, bound yet free.
We will never let you be
A soul alone, for you are we.

Hello,
Friend or foe,
You can come where we can go.
And what we never let us show
You can feel, and you can know.

From Jesus:

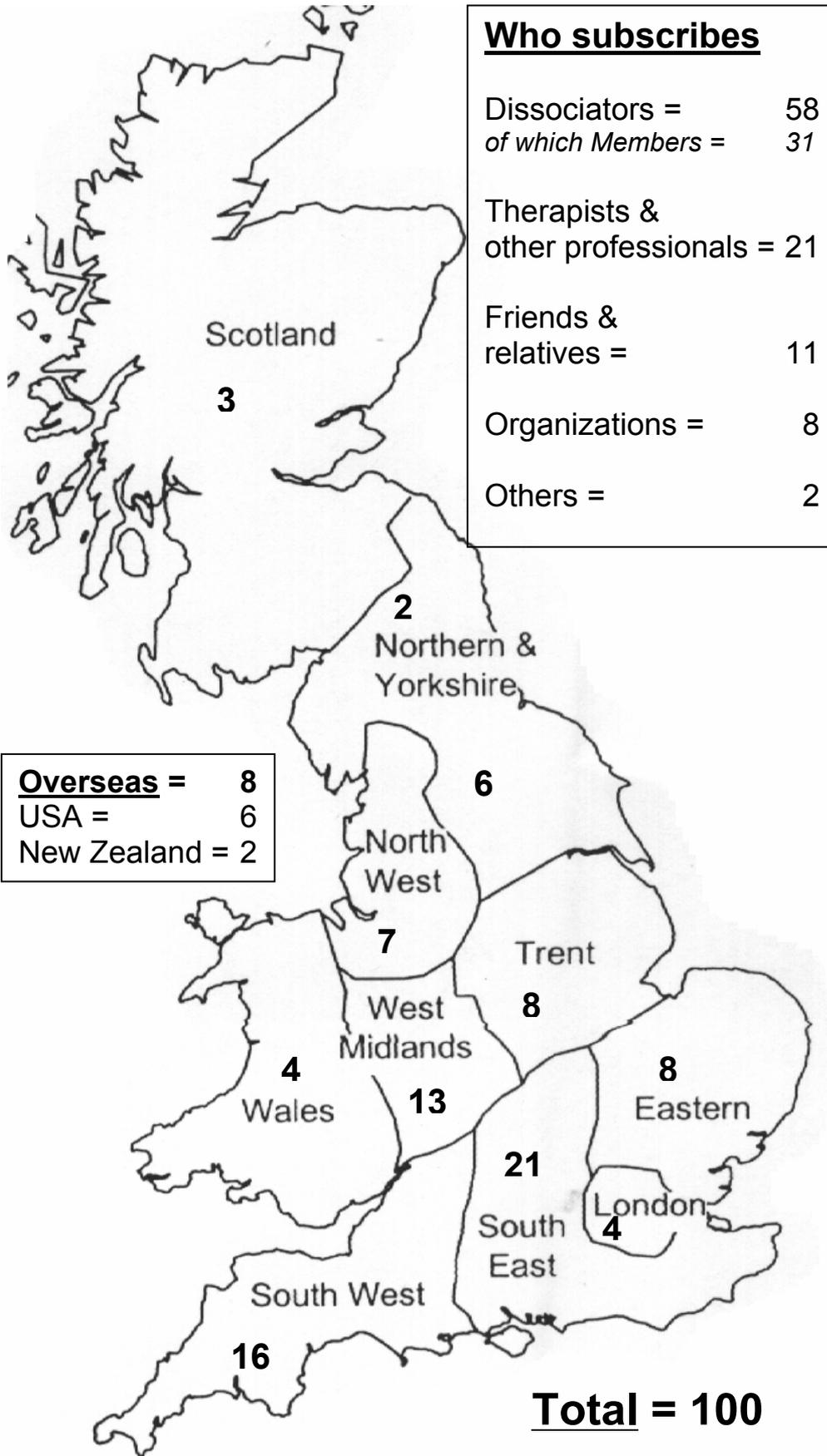
"I in you and they in me
As three are one, and I am three.
Choose this day whom you will be,
Single, silent: Plural, free."

Madeleine, 2.4/1



Thank You...

Location of Subscribers
1999 / 2000



Congratulations

The Beast by Jane

Editor's Note: this short story recalls a first memory of splitting. It contains some graphic word images of abuse which might trigger. Please read with caution and support if necessary. Give yourself permission not to read at all if that feels safest.

The room was cool, and very still, everything in it's usual place. I could hear the sound of laughter down below as the adults talked and drank wine. This was their time so I couldn't interrupt or tell them the secret. I waited for the return of the Beast. I waited for the creak on the stairs, the latch on the door, the turn of the lock, the footsteps that come nearer and nearer, all so strangely familiar.

I pretended to be asleep as I always did, it was the easiest thing to do. That way it did not need to be real, it could all be a dream, I could be whoever I wanted to be, I did not have to be me at all. At first I did not know that he was a wolf dressed in sheeps clothing. He was so gentle at first. I even looked at him once and he did not seem all that frightening at all. I liked the feel of the soft touches, the hand gliding backwards and forwards across my body. I even wondered what I had done to receive this nice feeling. I kept very still, there were no words spoken, but then I was supposed to be asleep and he told me it was best to stay that way.

Then somewhere in the tingling feeling came a flash of panic, **DANGER** ran through my body like lightning. The nice feelings were replaced with terror, choking, I couldn't breathe. The child had awoken from her sleep, she wanted to wriggle free but she couldn't move, she was pinned down, the Beast had returned. She was choking, her throat tight - she felt the hand that prevented her scream. She felt she would stop breathing soon, she was scared. The Beast moved faster, more frantic and aggressive, her body crushed beneath the weight of his. The Beast was over the top of her, she caught sight of his piercing eyes.

Quickly she thought of the sun, thought of the rain, anything to stop the pain that she felt. She focuses on the window, the darkness, the moon. "That's the moon", she told herself, "cling to it, focus on it, don't lose sight of it". She could hear the laughter of his sick satisfaction, she panicked. "Don't let go, or you'll die, hold onto the moon". He hurts, he pushes hard and she feels pain going through her whole body. All she can do is look through glazed eyes and hold onto the moon.

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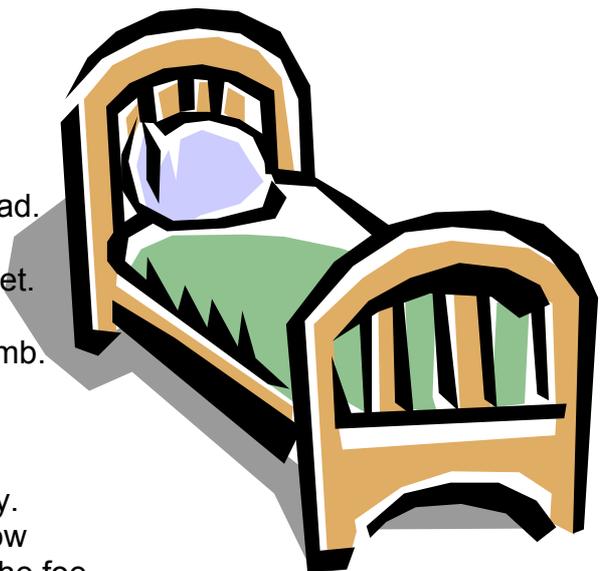
For a brief minute she feels pain. "I'm going to die", she tells herself, "I'm going to die, going to be sick, I can't move". Her breathing goes out of control, she tries to focus on the moon, but she shrinks back into the blackness as she passes out. The child is lying back in her bed.

Perhaps I am dead, I'm very still, I feel numb, just like I slipped out of my body. In fact it was true she knew that she was dead. It wasn't very beautiful like in the movies, but she looked the right colour for dead, she was drained and waxy looking, straight faced like a porcelain doll. She was quite dead. It felt a strange thing to be killed like that, in your own bed as well. Even more bizarre to have to clear up after yourself. Usually someone finds you and sorts you out when you are dead, call the undertakers to remove the body, but I did it all myself. Of course, I couldn't tell anyone that as they would never believe me. But I stood up from my bed, afraid to move. I could see the blood, not mine though, it was far too red to belong to me, that was part of the dream and that's the way it should be kept, just a bad dream, then it does not have to be real. After all once the blood was cleared up no one would know anyway. Nothing looked any different, it was like waking from a bad dream, except there was no one there to hold me.

She dragged the dead corpse across the room to the bathroom and started washing the body. She shook it to make sure it was quite dead. Then she would lie the body back to rest in the clean sheets, just as if nothing had ever happened. She thought to herself being dead hardly hurt at all.

Purple Morning by Rhymaster

Like an unmade bed; chaos in my head
Heaps of purple blankets abandoned by the dead.
Straighten out the sheet, folding corners neat.
Smother purple feelings before the day you greet.
Tidy up my room with psyche-cleaning broom
Sweeping purple memories into the deepest tomb.
Pretty up my face, hide the night's disgrace.
Cover purple bruises; marks of vile embrace.
Start another day, a lying role to play.
Keep the purple secret; be happy, smile, be gay.
Letting no-one know; pain and shame don't show
This fearful purple morning after sleeping with the foe.



PLAY

HoW many sheep does it take
to make a sWeater?

I didn't even knoW sheep could knit

History Teacher : - **Martin, Where Would I find Hadrians
Wall?**

Martin: - Wherever Hadrian left it, Sir!

Books On the shelves in the library

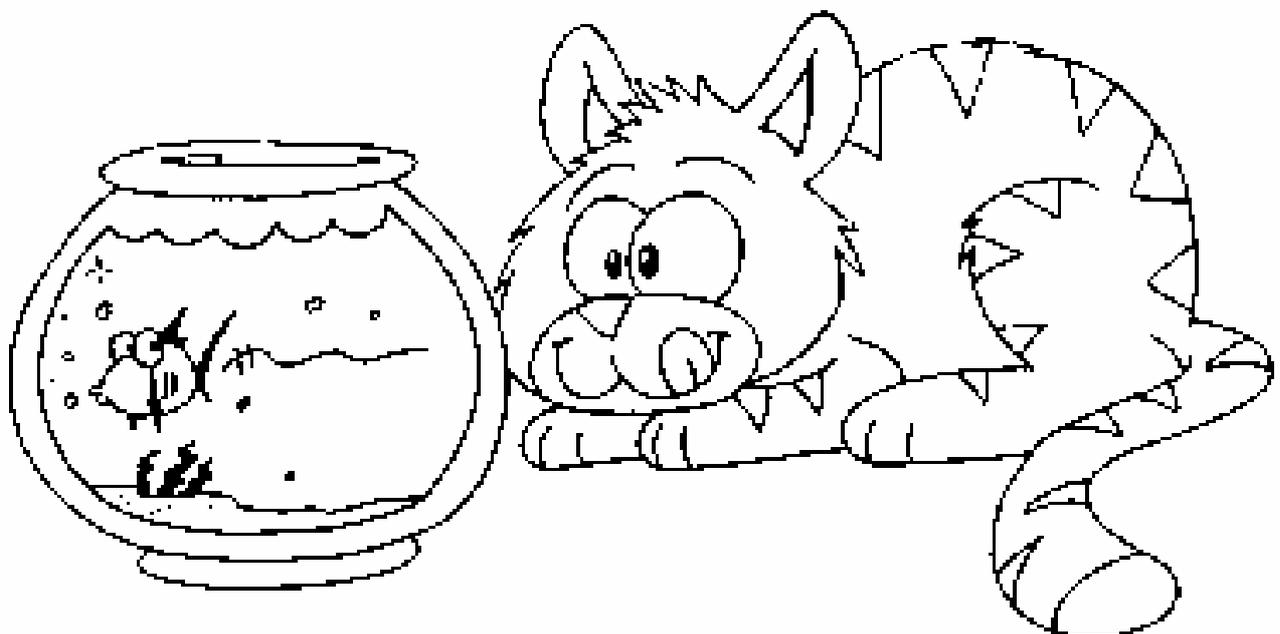
"Butterflies of the World" By Chris Aliss

"Bird Watching" By Haydn Secombe

"Drawing and Painting" By Art N Desine

"Stamp Collecting" By Phil Attlee

Picture to Colour



CENTRE

A Bear At Bedtime



*One bear in a bed is cuddly,
and two are better still.
With three teddy bears
you are sure to be warm
And just one more is no problem at all.*

*Five teddy bears in a bed can help you
sleep, while six teddy bears are very good
indeed, Seven is a lucky number for bears.
And eight teddy bears are best of all.
But nine teddy bears in a bed?
Be careful! There may not be room for you.*

L		F	
	M		
	I		
T			E

MAGIC SQUARE

Complete the grid to make four words which read the same across and down. Some letters have been entered to help you and here are some clues.

1. Opposite of right
2. An Arab ruler
3. It is hot
4. A large plant

Answers : Left; Emir; Fire; Tree

Please hear what I am not saying

Author unknown

Don't be fooled by me. Don't be fooled by the face I wear for I wear a mask. I wear a thousand masks; masks that I am afraid to take off and none of them are me. Pretending is an art that is second nature with me but don't be fooled; for God's sake don't be fooled. I give you the impression that I'm secure; that all is sunny and unruffled with me, within as well as without; that confidence is my name and coolness is my game; that the water is calm and I am in command; and that I need no one. But don't believe me, please.

My surface may seem smooth but my surface is my mask; my ever-warying, ever-concealing mask. Beneath lies no smugness; no complacency. Beneath dwells the real me in confusion; in fear; in aloneness. But I hide this. I don't want anyone to know it. I panic at the thought of my weakness and fear being exposed. That's why I frantically create a mask to hide behind; a nonchalant, sophisticated façade to help me pretend; to shield me from the glance that knows. But such a glance is precisely my salvation. My only salvation and I know it. That is if it is followed by acceptance; if it is followed by love. It's the only thing that liberates me from myself; from my own self-built prison walls; from barriers that I so painstakingly erect.

It's the only thing that will assure me of what I can't assure myself - that I am really worth something. But I don't tell you this. I don't dare. I'm afraid to. I'm afraid you'll think less of me; that you'll laugh and your laugh would kill me. I'm afraid that deep down I am nothing; that I'm just no good, and that you will see this and reject me. So I play the game; my desperate pretending game, with a façade of assurance without, and a trembling child within.

And so begins the parade of masks, and my life becomes a front. I idly chatter to you in the suave tones of surface talk. I tell you everything that is really nothing and nothing of what is everything; of what is crying within me. So when I am going through my routine do not be fooled by what I'm saying. Please listen carefully and try to hear what I'm not saying; what I'd like to be able to say; what for survival I need to say but what I can't say. I dislike hiding. Honestly, I dislike the superficial game I'm playing; the superficial, phoney game. I'd really like to be genuine and spontaneous, and me, but you have got to help me.

You've got to hold out your hand even when that's the last thing I seem to want, or need. Only you can wipe away from my eyes the blank stare of the breathing dead. Only you can call me into aliveness. Each time you are kind and gentle and encouraging; each time you try to understand because you really care my heart begins to grow wings; very feeble wings, but wings. With your sensitivity and empathy, and your power of understanding you can breathe life into me. I want you to know that.

I want you to know how important you are to me, how you can help recreate the person that is me if you choose to. Please choose to. You alone can break down the wall behind which I tremble. You alone can release me from my shadow-world of panic and uncertainty; from my lonely prison. So do not pass me by. It will not be easy for you. A long conviction of worthlessness builds strong walls. The nearer you approach me, the blinder I strike back. I fight against the very thing that I cry out for. But I am told that love is stronger than strong walls and in this lies my hope - my only hope. Please try to beat down those walls with firm hands, but with gentle hands, for a child is very sensitive.

Who am I you may wonder. I am someone you know very well. I am every man and I am every woman you meet. I am the person that you see in your mirror; the person behind the masks.

Dissociation and Headaches

Causes and Remedies

By Sara Lambert

The most common symptom reported by people with dissociative disorders is headache. Most multiples report that their headaches are extremely painful, often to the point of being literally blinding. Medication seldom works to relieve the pressure or pain. There are some different explanations for why multiples get more headaches than the general population.

- **STRESS:** Life can be very stressful for multiples. In addition to normal daily problems, you have to deal with post-traumatic stress arising from your abuse history. Other stresses specific to multiples include lost time, waking up in the middle of situations, trying to find ways to continue functioning when all you want is to hide under your bed forever. All of this can leave nerves ragged, muscles tense. It can also drain you of emotional strength. Headaches are a natural result. Considerable physical stress is also a consequence of having a dissociative disorder as you use your physical senses to contain and come to terms with your psychological disabilities and "strange" experiences. Take de-realisation, for example: a common occurrence of dissociative misperception wherein the world seems distorted or two-dimensional. The effort to focus your vision all the time can cause eyestrain and thus headache. On top of this, it can be incredibly distressing to experience de-realisation. The emotional toll is enough in itself to cause headache. But it doesn't end there because, in addition to the physical effects of trying to deal with dissociation and the emotional effects of it, most dissociators also fight hard to hold everything together and look "normal" to the outside world. This can be exhausting, especially when selves are struggling to get out. As the brain works furiously to manage all these layers of stress, the dissociator develops a headache. To relieve stress headaches, find what works best for you to ease tense muscles. Some prefer ice whereas others need to stand in a warm shower. Massage can be helpful. Music is soothing but, for some people, the noise simply adds another layer of stimulus onto the load the brain already has to deal with. Some find the only thing they can do to help the pain is sleep. This works by giving your body a chance to rest and revitalise. There are also a number of self-hypnotic techniques you can use to let the stress and pain go. As dissociators are highly hypnotisable, these techniques can be particularly effective. You can create any hypnotic scenario you want from your own imagination. For example, fill your mind with a gentle, soothing colour that washes the pain away.
- **OVER STIMULATION:** Multiples are very prone to pressure-type headaches caused by too many incoming stimuli. This barrage of "noise" may come from inside - e.g. too many alters standing near the front of consciousness. The noise may also come from outside - too much sound or colour. There are two reasons multiples are overly sensitive to external stimuli. First, because of their chronic abuse experiences, multiples have developed a hyper-alertness, which means they are constantly aware of

everything around them in case danger is lurking. Secondly, they have so many different "eyes" perceiving the world around them, often simultaneously. To help ease headaches caused by over stimulation, ask inside for everyone to step back and give you some space and quiet. Explain that it's more effective for them to tell you about their experiences when you have time and energy to listen properly. Alternatively, they may like to write in a journal if they can't wait. Some multiples find it helpful to carry pen and paper around with them for this purpose. There are ways to achieve ventilation of some of the noise - deep breathing exercises are good for this, and again you can use a number of self-hypnotic techniques, such as picturing a steam-valve on the side of your neck. If you find it overwhelming to go out in public surrounded by "noise pollution", you could try wearing a walkman that is playing peaceful, soothing music which blocks out the other noise.

- **SWITCHING:** Switching from one alter to another causes headache mainly when there is conflict between the selves for control. The solution to this is better communication and co-operation within your system. When there is a disagreement about who should be "out", many selves may be happy to accept a third party to take the out position to act as a mediator so both voices can be heard through her. Often this third party is an automaton self who has few sensitivities of her own, and so is not disturbed by being a channel through which others can communicate. Another suggestion is that the two selves stand in a place on the edge of inside, where they can be heard without a complete switch having to occur. Most people find that, as their co-consciousness increases, struggles for control (and the consequent headaches) cease to be a problem. There are some multiples that experience headache or other symptoms, such as nausea or dizziness, with even the most uncomplicated and unconflicted switches. This is usually the case for those who are early in their healing process, or whose dissociative barriers are profound. It is not surprising when you consider the physiological changes that happen when a multiple switches between alter selves. It has been proven that selves have their own unique pattern of brainwaves. Furthermore, everyone has at different ages a different biochemistry and mental capacity - thus the switch from adult to child is going to be more physiologically complex than between two adults.

- **SPILLAGE:** When alters have disputes between themselves at a subconscious level, or when one is seething because of some anxiety they have, the tension often emerges in the form of headache. In this way, the person who is out may have a migraine without being aware that it is being caused by a stroppy teenager who is figuratively stomping around inside because she is angry about something. Alter selves are also notorious for sending headaches to the front person as a kind of message. This headache can be seen as a kind of acting out. In cases like these, pain-killing medication is of no use, because there is no actual physiological problem - the pain results from emotional disturbance. It is necessary to get the selves talking to you about what is going on for them. If they are willing to do this, there is a better chance they will get their needs met than if they simply radiate wordless feelings and pain.



A Real Life Fairy Story

By Writer on Glass, with Lili, Little Caro & friends

Once upon a time, a long, long time ago, there lived a very little girl. She lived in a tiny house where there were two rooms. Although they stood right next to each other, the rooms did not seem connected. There did not seem to be any way to move from one room to another without going out through the front door first and then coming back in another way.

One room was quite warm and sunny. When the little girl lived in that room, it was easy for her to feel happy. In that room she could not see any dark corners, she could feel no cold, biting winds, the floor was covered in soft,

warm fabric and she did not feel afraid. In that room she could feel loved; she could believe she was safe and that she need not be afraid.

The other room was dark and cold and gloomy. There were no windows, the door had stiff, heavy bolts and the floor was hard and stony. In that room she was always afraid. When the little girl went in this room it felt as though she would be there for ever and that there was no way out. She knew there was a door, after all she came in through a door, but once she was in the room she might as well have been in an underground prison

with iron bars and giant crocodiles guarding a moat outside. In this room there was no light. In this room there was no warmth. In this room there was no one who could see or hear or touch the little girl. In this room she was all on her own for ever.

One day the little girl was sitting in the warm room practising her reading and writing. She loved to read and write, it made her feel so grown up and it seemed to make her mother happy. Suddenly her mother stood up, took the little girl by the hand and led her through a door, down a long dark passage and into another, strange room. The little girl was not afraid. After all, she was with her mother so she knew that she would be all right. Everything was always all right when she was with her mother. So she held her mother's hand and followed her into the cold, dark room. She shivered as she held tight onto her mother's hand.

Suddenly her mother pulled her hand away, leaving the little girl's hand empty and cold. The little girl looked about her and felt a twisting pain in her insides. She shuddered. All at once she recognised the room and she knew she had been there before - if only she could remember when. She stood very still, trying not to make a sound. Very carefully the little girl looked round the room, hoping that she had made a mistake. She really couldn't remember this place, it was just her tummy was mixing her up and making muddles in her head. After all, she had come here with her mother, so nothing could be wrong really.

At that moment the door slammed shut behind her and she was alone. It was dark inside. Cold and dark and scary. The floor felt hard and rough and the bare furniture looked large

and uncomfortable. A heavy feeling came over the little girl: like the heavy feeling of a bad dream when you wake up all stiff and afraid to move. Only this was worse because she was awake - unless this really was just a bad dream and she didn't know how to wake up!

The little girl could not move. She looked around her but there did not seem to be any way out. Dimly she thought she could see a door, with keys hanging in the lock but something told her it would be useless to try to escape. In her head she could see outside the door and her heart began to sink.

She knew without looking that there were eyes everywhere, inside and out, watching, waiting, hoping she would cry out, hoping she would struggle, hoping she would suffer. She understood what would happen then. She could hear them laughing under their breath.

The little girl tried very hard not to cry. She bit her lip, held her breath, turned her heart and head to ice and her feet to stone. But still the sobs came and the tears fell from her empty, blinded eyes. She felt frozen in time, lost and all alone. Worse still, she knew she could not escape, that she was trapped here for ever and ever and that there was nothing she could do. No one would ever come back to save her, she was destined to stay locked inside this bleak room for eternity.

It was like suffocating under heavy wool blankets, drowning in dirty water, wading through sinking mud, trying to scramble up a sheer cliff face, stumbling through brambles and stinging nettles, looking for a ray of sunshine in the darkness. She knew then that the only thing for her

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to do was to give up completely. That way, although it would hurt, it would soon be over - for ever. Then they could hurt her no longer.

After what felt like forever, the little girl opened her eyes and found that she was back in the warm room again, with the sunshine and the soft floors and her happy families life. Everything was just as it had been. It was as if she had never been away. Everything looked exactly as it always did and the people were doing the same things they always did. The other room seemed just a vague dream and, just like a dream, it slipped away behind the curtains and was gone. It was as if someone had taken a board rubber and rubbed it out. All that was left was chalk dust.

For years and years the little girl lived like this. For some of the time, perhaps most of the time, she lived in the warm room, thinking happy thoughts and growing up like any other girl. From time to time, though how often she cannot say, she was taken back into that cold, dark room and left alone and terrified, for ever and ever. Each time she woke up and found herself back in the happy families room. Each time she forgot everything that there was to know, everything she had felt, about the dark, cold room - until the next time, and the time after that.

One day many, many years later, the little girl looked at herself carefully and saw that she was grown up, that

she was now a woman. She had a strange feeling inside, a sense that something was not quite right. That very evening she had a dream - perhaps the most scary dream she had ever had. It was so scary that when she woke up she did not dare to breathe or move or make any noise. She just lay there petrified, walking backwards through her chilling nightmare.

Yet the strangest thing about it all was that this terrifying dream seemed so familiar, as if she had been there many times before, long ago when she was small. The woman was glad, then, that she was grown up and strong - big enough and strong enough to go back into the scary world of the cold, dark room and bear to see what she had to see. She could even take the very little girl with her, to help her make sense of the blankness and the muddles in her head.

The woman could hold her hand, so she did not feel so totally alone, could help her to listen to the scary whispers from the dark voices and bring brightness and warmth into the chilly emptiness. Together they could explore the whole tiny house and open up the padlocked door which kept the two rooms apart. Then they could know all ^{they} needed to know about the house and about themselves. Then they could feel safe and sound and they could be truly free

MPD from Carole's point of view

Where am I now that I need me?
Exactly where have I gone?
I'm so terribly alone here without me,
To be living seems so terribly wrong,
Once I did most things together
I went for walks hand in hand,
I shared my life so completely
And I met almost every demand.

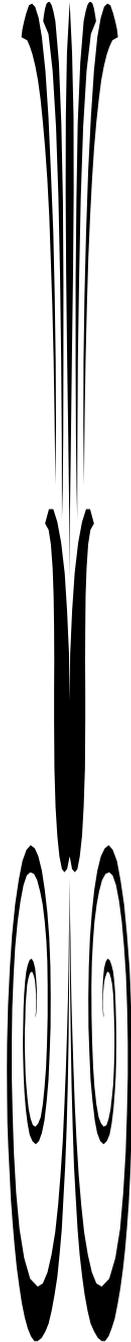
I wonder if I'll come back tomorrow
Should I keep my arms open wide?
I wonder if I'll ever see me again,
Take my place back here at my side.
Maybe I've simply misplaced me,
Maybe I shouldn't have cried,
Maybe I've never been here at all
And its long ago that we died.

WRITINGS OF A RITUAL ABUSE SURVIVOR by Kali

Part 1 : Naming what it was

= making it come out

They put an eye in me
forced it in my mouth
when I was in infant school
I'd stand there
by the gate
by the field
full of it in my mouth
wishing I was on the otherside
expanse and free
but I was at the gate
revolted and sick
unable to get it out
it's here to this day
today it's in my throat
there was a hole there
because where it is I'm not
it eats me away like acid
in this body I hate
it in me but I can't get it out
it sees everything
and makes me sick
makes me bad
if I open my mouth to say.....
if I get close to saying what it was
it will tell them
they know everything
and they won't let me
they'll hurt me
they hurt me
it's still in me
and I hate it
I want it out
I want to sick it out
but I don't know how
it's stuck
today it's here
because I said too much
because I say too much
even though it seems to you



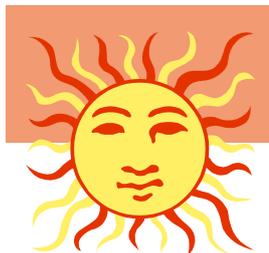
that I haven't told you
you can't notice what I've shown you
that I've slipped around the eyeball
blocking the way
what's got round the hole in my throat
where it was meant to disappear
but I made it come out
like I am making this come out.

I pray to be stronger than this all seeing eye of Satan. I heard with my today ears that I'm not the only one who's had this eye put in them, it's not just me. It's not just you. We're stronger when we are we, so I thank you

Part 2 : After the Naming

= in tenderness

Can you feel the opening?
like the unfurling of petals,
of lips of vagina,
unfurling, spreading,
spaciousness seeping in
like morning mist
wetting inner caverns,
that open to it's touch,
to the winds of naming
that have been spoken,
transforming,
reaching deep places,
each cell changed and changing,
deep places that have been frozen,
warmed by the love,
strengthened by the courage,
as I name what has been kept apart,
as I learn to live with what I don't know how to,
as I allow myself to be,
finding spaciousness in tight places,
melting warmth where it's been hard.
I'm an explorer of new vistas,
unfurling, revealing the beauty of my soul



After The Horizon Programme! by Naome James

I am currently having treatment with a psychotherapist who is fully aware and experienced in treating DID but I am also involved with the psychiatric services. Part of my care plan includes visits from a community psychiatric nurse for whom the whole concept of DID was totally alien. She made a point of watching "Mistaken Identities" (A BBC Horizon programme on DID broadcast in November, 1999) in order to try and gain some new insight and understanding. WHAT A MISTAKE. The total misconception of the condition she got from the programme was highlighted at our next meeting and marked a definite downturn in the therapeutic relationship. I was deeply affected by this and felt strongly enough to write the following poem. [Ed's note - Mistaken Identities was filmed entirely in America and showed a sequence filmed in a therapy session which included the therapist asking the client to switch into a child alter]

*Susan, can I speak to Suzie now?
I cannot comprehend how
Karen could be so beguiled
And think therapy is easy.
Does she think of us as filed
Away in neat little boxes
Ready to be called up
To answer to a whim
To please, to comply?
Then let her tell me why
It so often feels like sink or swim,
With struggles, conflicts, battles
Raging deep within -
Sudden onrush, harsh onslaught,
Like volcanoes erupting under the skin.
How could she have even thought
We exist in rows*

*In even layers?
Think instead
Of a World Cup match
With too many players
All fighting for fame -
Fists at the ready
This isn't a game.
Which ones will stay
And which ones will flee,
Knowing whoever is left
Has to answer to me?
That is a task too hard to fulfil -
Makes the rest of the world
Think I'm mentally ill.
But that is a label I'll carry no more,
Though long past still uncertain
And future unsure.*

After this I invited my CPN to sit in on one of my psychotherapy sessions, to enable her to see, hear and understand that the switching and dissociation process is not as linear and simple as Horizon made out. This combined with allowing her to read the poem did enable us to build bridges and she is now willing to ask me for clarification and explanation as we go along. Hopefully, things can only get better for both of us as a result.

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