



RAINBOW'S END

Issue 4 / 2

July/Aug 2002

Support & Information Newsletter of FIRST PERSON PLURAL
the survivor-led association for survivors of trauma and abuse who experience
dissociative distress, and for their family, friends and professional allies

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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 is not a recommendation. The contents of this newsletter are for information and support purposes only. The newsletter is not a substitute for individual therapy or professional supervision. It is an addition to, not a replacement for, other networks of support.

Contributions to next issue to be received 18th October, 2002

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

Originals will be returned if a suitable stamped addressed envelope is enclosed

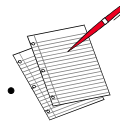
IMPORTANT:- When sending material for publication please clearly mark "FOR PUBLICATION" and say what name or pseudonym you wish to use.

ATTENTION

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



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:-

First Person Plural, c/o PO Box 2537, Wolverhampton, WV4 4ZL
Email: fpp@firstpersonplural.org.uk

I have greatly valued and continue to value the pioneering work that you have done through FPP without which the recognition and understanding of dissociation would not have progressed the way it has.

I certainly agree with you that UKSSD and FPP have a shared goal of better, appropriate and accessible treatment and services for people who experience dissociative distress.

Rémy Aquarone,
Chair, UKSSD

Professional Group Re-launches

After two years of dormancy, there is once again a UK society for professionals who are working with dissociative clients and/or have an interest in dissociation research. The United Kingdom Society for the Study of Dissociation (UKSSD) is a component society of the International Society for the Study of Dissociation (ISSD). The new society is focused on the internet as its primary means of communication. For further information visit their website at www.ukssd.org.

The UKSSD's aims are:- to promote research and training in the identification and treatment of dissociative disorders; to provide professional and public education about dissociative disorders; to support national communication and co-operation among clinicians and investigators working in the field of dissociation; and to promote the development of local groups for study, education and referral.

Full membership is open to professionals only. There is an affiliate membership for others who share the UKSSD's aims. In recognition of our shared goals the UKSSD has agreed to provide FPP with printed copies of some of the information (e.g. Treatment Guidelines and Screening Instruments) which appears in the Members pages of their website which can only be accessed by full UKSSD members.



PARTY IN THE PARK

Saturday, 21st September, 2002

11.00am to 4.00pm

Brockwell Park, (nr Brixton), South London

This event is being organised by the Survivors Trust. It is being planned as a music & cultural festival with optional activities taking place throughout the day. It's a chance to meet other survivors of childhood sexual abuse and those who support them in a relaxed atmosphere of celebration. FPP will be represented so come along and meet Kathryn (and possibly other members). Take a picnic and make a day of it (weather permitting).

For further details contact Colm O'Gorman (One in Four) on 020 8697 8022

FIRST PERSON PLURAL MEMBERS GATHERING

Saturday, 28th September, 2002

12.30pm to 3.30pm

**Holiday Inn Express, Stanley Mathews Way
STOKE-ON-TRENT**

This gathering is open only to FULL members of First Person Plural, who may be accompanied by a supporter of their choice if they wish. **Attendance is free** (its covered by membership fees, so in a sense you've already paid) **and lunch will be provided.**

There will be-

- speakers (to be confirmed) giving brief presentations,
- an update on the activities of the steering group (with an opportunity to volunteer to become a member of the steering group),
- a chance to discuss the first draft of a formal constitution for First Person Plural.

But mostly, it will be an opportunity to meet other people who understand the lived experience of dissociation.

FPP can refund travelling expenses for a limited number of full members (and their supporters, if necessary) who are in receipt of benefits and who otherwise would not be able to attend. This is on a first come basis so early application is essential to avoid disappointment. Sorry, overnight accommodation costs cannot be met.

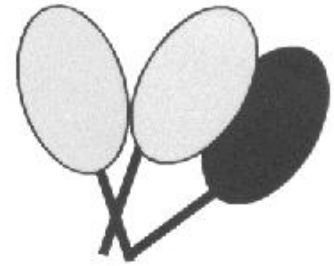
**TO BOOK YOUR PLACE
complete and return the enclosed form by 5th September.**

The gathering will have to be postponed if not enough bookings are received by this deadline so please be sure to return your forms early.

The next Members Gathering (Spring 2003) will be held at a southern venue



International DISS Day 2002



What is International DISS Day?

DISS stands for Disassociative Identity Survival System which is usually known as DID/MPD.

Vashti Wynne- Sutton a lady who is the core part of a multiple community, decided in the year 2000 that her multiple system was and is not a disorder, rather her multiple community was the reason that she is alive and relatively sane today. She wished to give acknowledgement to both her own and other multiple systems and so DISS Day 2000 was launched.

It is a day when folk all over the world are able to unite in expressing thanks for the work that multiple systems do, to remember those that must never be forgotten, and to be aware of the achievements of multiple people everywhere.

Gold, Silver and Black balloons are used to form a physical basis for the day.

Gold symbolises the achievements to date of DISS systems, Silver our hopes for the future and Black for those who were never allowed to continue life, and for those for whom the daily toll of life was too great and they had to leave us.

Where is it?

Wherever YOU are, is the place to celebrate — but if you can make it to London Then there will be folk at Wolfe Memorial, Greenwich Park.

If you want to link up with other folk, then find a venue and email Lucy, at VashtisCuckoos@aol.com with the details.

When is it?

October 21st 2002

1:30pm with a silence of remembrance at 3:00pm

The dragonfly is used by many multiple communities across the world as a symbol of multiplicity.

Dragonflies start life hiding amongst the garbage at the bottom of the pond, disguising themselves as best they can from their predators. But they emerge in time, beautiful and free!

We believe that this analogy speaks for itself.

Using Your Dissociative Skills In Healing

by Sara Lambert

While it is, of course, very important to deal with memories, there is really no reason why you need to take on more than you can cope with at any one time. Re-traumatising yourself is not one of the goals of therapy.

In fact, experienced therapists agree that keeping yourself to a gentle pace throughout your recovery work is essential. Pushing on with a memory beyond what you can reasonably tolerate is actually counter-therapeutic as it ignores your level of readiness, risks an intensification of dissociative defences, and terrorizes the inner system often to the point of suicidality.

Therefore, when you have obsessed all weekend over an horrific new memory, spent most of your time crying; dealing with physical effects; not sleeping; and you no longer feel like you are getting any value from the process, and you have to go to work tomorrow, and you are so tired you just want to die - STOP! Distract, dissociate, and distance yourselves from the memory.

If you give yourselves permission to do this before things get too much, you will not drive yourselves to desperation and end up using unhealthy dissociative and distractive techniques, like self-harm, taking drugs, or overeating. You also learn that you are in control of your recovery. The long-term benefit is that you become less frightened of having new memories, because you know you can stop and start them whenever you need, and so keep yourself safe.

Swamp the imagery with a beautiful colour or white light until it has dissolved.

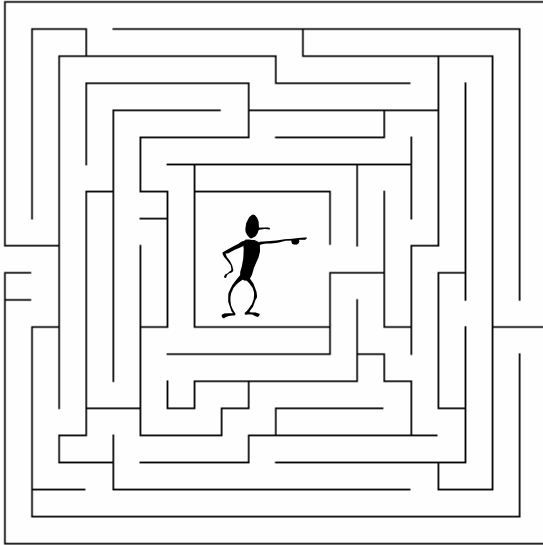
If you have a computer, put the memory on file and then shut the file, lock it with a password if you can, then switch off the computer.

Treat aspects of your memory in a very concrete way in order to stop the story from continuing. For example, if you are remembering being given electro-shock treatment, imagine someone pulling out the plug. (*From Safe Passage to Healing by Chrystine Oksana*)

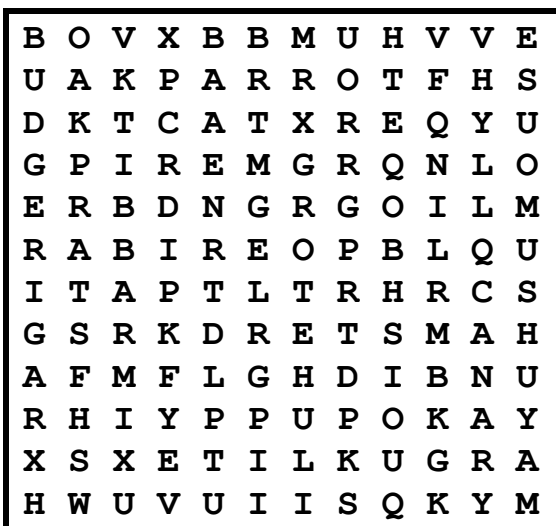
Continued on page 10

PUZZLES

Find your way out



Pet Word Search



BUDGERIGAR
CANARY
CAT
DOG
FERRET
GECKO
GERBIL
GOLDFISH

HAMSTER
KITTEN
MOUSE
PARROT
PONY
PUPPY
RABBIT
RAT

PLAY

JOKE



Roses are red

Violets are blue

There's an octopus in the bath

So I'll get washed in the sink

Doctot, doctor, my sister has gone all
furry and she smells like mints

*This could be serious, sounds like
she's turning into a polo bear!*

*What do you call a detective who
solves all his crimes purely by
accident?*

Sheer - Luck Holmes!

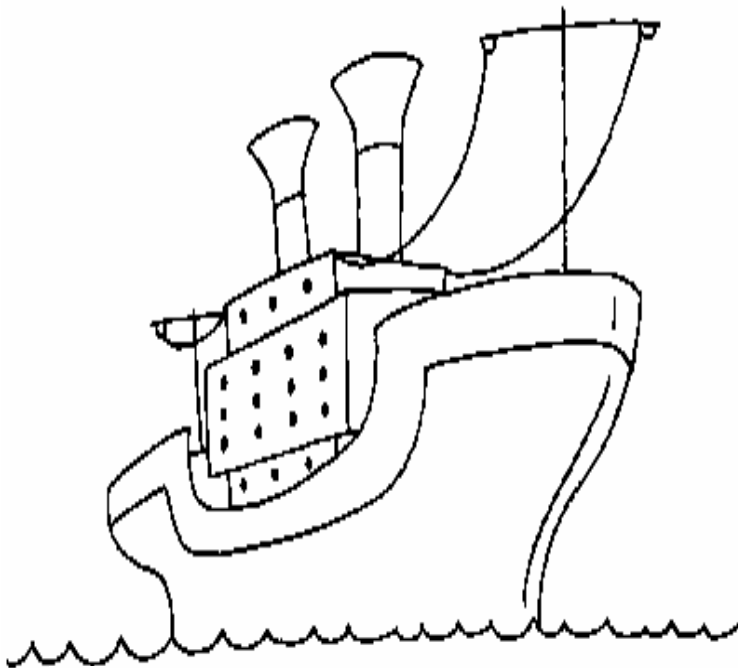
What do you call four
elephants in a mini car?

A game of Squash!

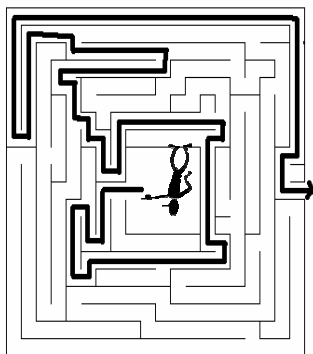


CENTRE

Two Pictures

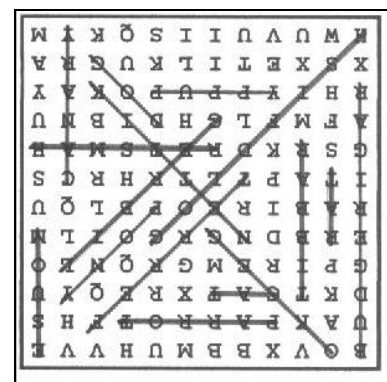


To Colour



**Answers to
Puzzles on Page 8.**

Turn page upside
down to see



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Using Your Dissociative Skills In Healing (continued from page 7)

Give yourself a specific period of time (in addition to therapy) to explore aspects of the memory - for example, five minutes a day. Set your alarm clock to let you know when it is time to stop. Afterwards, distract yourself immediately with some enjoyable occupation.

Pretend you are looking at the memory through a "backwards telescope" so that, instead of being magnified, it is tiny and becoming smaller and more distant from you until, at last, you cannot see it anymore.
(Idea by Richard Kluft)

Give the memory for safekeeping to another self inside who will not be affected by it, for example an angel, animal, totem, or wise one. Although it is not usually recommended to create new selves, you may find it helpful to create a "fragment," a pseudo-self who personifies positive energy and can soak up the negative energy of the memory.

Let the remembering self go to sleep until the rest of you have the time or renewed strength to support her process. Assure her she is not being punished, but in fact that you want to comfort and care for her. She may like to imagine the bed she will sleep in and/or the room, cloud, island, mountaintop, cave or garden in which the bed is held. She may also like another self to sit with her while she sleeps.

Have a long, warm shower. Imagine the memory is a colour painted on your skin, and let the water wash it away. After the shower, pamper your body.

Put the memory in an imaginary chest and sink it to the bottom of the sea, under coral and plant life, guarded by sharks.

Use your dissociative skills to empty your mind, thought-stop, or simply let the memory slide away.

Put the memory on an imaginary television screen and switch it off

Erect a big, strong wall to block the memory.

Diversity in Unity, Unity in Diversity by Kali

A response to "Middle of the Spectrum"

A thank you to Anon for voicing your experience of being somewhere in the middle of the spectrum of dissociation. (see Middle of the Spectrum in Issue 4.1)

Your experience resonates with mine in a way that I find supportive and validating of my own reality. I empathise with the difficulty you've had with finding a therapist who is aware of dissociative processes and how to work with them. I personally believe that there is a lack of awareness of what I find to be in fact a common way to survive trauma. This is a major factor in why I find it empowering to be part of FPP. FPP provides a voice for those of us who have survived trauma through a whole range of dissociative processes. This voice can help to raise awareness and educate ourselves; the professionals who may work with us; our friends; our families and all of our society. I believe this work to be crucial for us all in working towards ending unnecessary violence and trauma that many of us suffer through various forms of abusive behaviour.

I was also interested in your experience of encountering the view that the aim of therapy is 'the integration of the parts and assimilation and disappearance of parts into the here and now self'. I wonder if this is currently a fashionable view. It is one that I've encountered myself and found 'counter productive' as you mentioned. This view of integration was met by parts of me feeling the terror of annihilation. Quite possibly, it triggered off contact with a very real terror from the times of the original trauma. This view however did usefully challenge me to discover just where I stood in relation to the concept of integration. I discovered like you, that each part brings enrichment, a wealth of experience, skills, knowing and potentialities, to the whole of the self / collective of selves. The uniqueness and individuality of us all is not lost in coming together, working, living and playing together as a cooperative whole. Integration to me is a coming together, an inner communion, that interestingly also brings me into a fuller and more wholesome contact with my outer world.

'Diversity in Unity, Unity in Diversity' is a concept that I value (I know this phrase through the teachings of Hazrat Inayat Khan who brought Sufi teachings to the West). I've recently been training in the Hakomi Method, a body centred form of psychotherapy and was delighted to discover that it is based on the concept of us all experiencing our lives in a way that embraces multiplicity to various degrees. So perhaps this view is gaining ground, giving therapists more access to this viewpoint and perhaps various parts of ourselves will be welcomed and valued by therapist and client alike.

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As I journey through life I have been a client and at present I work as a therapist. I hope that my journey, the part of your journey that you shared Anon, the journeys of those who I meet as clients, friends, fellow trainees, all relationships ~ I hope that these journeys enrich my understanding and ability to be with myself and others, in a way that is helpful to us all. I feel my hopes are realised and from this place I thank you Anon for sharing from your unique position in 'the middle of the spectrum.'

Survivors Trust Meeting

A report by Melanie
(additional information inserted by Kathryn)

On 14th July I represented First Person Plural at the Survivors Trust meeting in Southampton.

The meeting discussed criteria for membership of the Trust. Empowerment and support, rather than exclusion was the main focus during these discussions. Essentially the Survivors Trust will be an organisation for organisations. Any organisation which meets the criteria which are yet to be finalised will be entitled to full membership. However, there will also be an affiliate membership category which will be open to individuals working on their own or to organisations that aspire to full membership but don't yet meet the criteria and need some support to do so.

Members of the Trust's executive committee have recently attended a meeting with representatives from the Department of Health. The meeting seemed to represent a genuine, new wave of thinking emerging within the Department in regard to the needs of survivors.

Antony Sheehan, joint head of mental health at the Department, has appointed Kathy Borroovee to take forward survivors' issues. She will engage with the Survivors Trust. This is one of the reasons why it is important for First Person Plural to be an active member of the Survivors Trust. If the Department listens to the Trust, through them we will be able to convey the concerns and ideas of First Person Plural's members to influence national mental health policy. Initially, the Department is interested in a comprehensive mapping of the work currently going on for the support of survivors. Much of this has already been done through the crucial work of DABS (Directory and Book Services). They produce an up-to-date directory listing many voluntary organisations that work in this field. First Person Plural has an entry in the most recent edition of the DABS directory.

The Trust asked organisations present to respond to the DoH's consultation on a national strategy for suicide prevention.

The strategy includes a section on high risk groups but fails to mention childhood abuse survivors here, or indeed anywhere else in the strategy. The deadline for consultation on the national strategy was 26th July. This tight deadline meant FPP couldn't collect comments from our members but Kathryn did manage to write a response on behalf of First Person Plural. (See below). We have received an acknowledgement and thank you from the DoH for our response. We will now be kept informed about progress on the strategy. It will be interesting to see if the final version includes specific action to prevent suicide by survivors.

Finally, (as you've already seen on page 4) the Trust is organising the Party in the Park for 21st September in Brockwell Park, near Brixton, London. The party starts at 11.00am and runs to 4.00pm. Take your own picnic. It will be a chance to meet and spend time with people who are or who support survivors. Weather permitting it sounds like a good day with various activities (optional) taking place throughout the day. There will be a quiet area where support will be available if required. Kathryn intends to be there representing First Person Plural – hopefully with a stand so you'll be able to find her easily.

National Suicide Prevention Strategy First Person Plural responds to consultation

The main focus of the FPP response was to argue that in a strategy which lays claim to comprehensiveness not defining any actions targeted on childhood sexual abuse survivors is a gross omission. The strategy lists comprehensiveness as one of its underlying principles.

The strategy identifies a number of groups as high risk and targets these with specific actions to reduce suicides amongst each group. It sets restrictive criteria for inclusion as a high risk group which is probably why survivors don't get a mention. FPP's response challenges the criteria as inhumane and argues that the omission of specific action to prevent suicide in childhood sexual abuse survivors will be counter-productive to the aims of the strategy. In particular, we highlight the paucity and inadequacy of current assessment and treatment for dissociative survivors within statutory services. Improvements in this would very probably reduce the number of tragic deaths by suicide of dissociative survivors.

To view FPP's response to the National Suicide Prevention Strategy visit our web site at www.firstpersonplural.org.uk or to receive a paper copy send your request together with a large stamped addressed envelope (19p or 27p) to the First Person Plural address.

☹ **So little understanding** ☹

by Jacqui L

As a survivor of childhood sexual abuse who developed the technique of dissociation as a means of survival I find it distressing to hear how little understanding there is in the mainstream mental health system for working with abuse survivors in general and dissociation in particular. I have been very lucky to have found the therapists who have worked with me and enabled me to untangle the memories held by my different alters at a pace of my setting, or rather that of my emerging parts. To be forced to break down the corporate system would have flooded me, the one now writing, with so much traumatic material and experiences that I would not have survived with my sanity.

For me dissociation is not the problem, it is the assumption that integration is the desired goal when healing from the trauma damage should be the real focus. The more I have discovered about my "younger" parts the more I appreciate "their" ability to split off. As a very small child unable to move or speak the only way to deal with extreme mental and physical anguish is to split from it inside your own head, rather like choosing a different route. Each time something unbearable happens, you learn to split again. For anyone, recovering memories of sexual abuse can feel as though you are experiencing that all over again. Taking down my own barriers at times felt as though I was being invaded, as all the separate memory parts wanted my attention at the same time.

Being asked by one person who worked for the NHS mental health system if I heard voices, I said 'no'. Had I told her what was really going on for me at that time it would probably have got me another "label" and medication that would have made my present level of healing and understanding impossible. Everyone who has D.I.D. is unique and to try to standardise the approach is disrespectful of that person.

I have used writing and various art forms to allow my separate parts to communicate both to me and to my therapists. I know from a purely logic point of view I would be the physical one creating any or all of the work but the truth is the I writing is not capable of the art work.

That is definitely the domain of the younger parts. My experience on a foundation art course proved to me that they do not come out to order.

My own parts are very different and choose the people they want to work with. I know it must be very difficult for some therapists to accept this but taking control of my own healing has been the key to my recovery, which is ongoing. Reading clinical descriptions of "treatments" and "clients resistance" makes me feel uneasy about the level of true understanding of the inner world of individuals with D.I.D.

To have developed D.I.D probably means abuse or trauma-based experiences started very early on and are very prolific. One of the things I have learnt is that many innocent seeming activities can bring on feelings of fear and panic. Ordinary, everyday activities can trigger memories from a single word, a colour, a smell, a touch bringing a flashback to mind or the appearance of another part of me that still feels to me as though it is a separate entity in its own right.

Learning how to remain grounded and simply to breathe was essential before any of my parts felt safe enough to speak.

Understanding Dissociative Disorders

to be published in October, 2002



have begun pre-publication advertising for this new booklet, which was written by FPP's own Kathryn Livingston in collaboration with a number of First Person Plural members. This publication brings to fruition one of FPP's early plans to make available plain English information on dissociation. Doing this in partnership with Mind brings a recognition that FPP alone could not have achieved.

The brief booklet is designed for those experiencing dissociative disorders, their relatives, friends and allies. It will also be an invaluable first resource for non-specialist mental health, health and social care workers who encounter dissociative clients/patients on a daily basis but may not be recognising this.

ALL FIRST PERSON PLURAL MEMBERS & SUBSCRIBERS WILL AUTOMATICALLY BE SENT ONE FREE COPY OF THE BOOKLET.

Multiple copies (up to 10 per individual or 40 per organisation) will also be available free from FPP. Applicants for free multiple copies will be required to give a written description of how they intend to distribute these. Watch future mailings for further details of how to order.

POEMS & RHYMES

You took away my trust, my love, my body and soul
You took away my happy thoughts, my feelings, my control.
You took away my warmth, my feelings I always gave to others.
You took away my touch, my love and so many others.
You took away my dignity and left me feeling dirty.
You took away my world and left me feeling empty.
You took a lot away from me and left me feeling scared.

But you did not take away my courage of my heart, that you spared.
You tried when you ripped me apart, but you never had that power,
That control of my life, that's mine.
But you opened my mind always to find the colours of my soul
Overpowering the turmoil of all the feelings and memories
Beyond my control.
Many years to the day and I'm still going, still fighting the pain
Overflowing my brain, the memories and the fright of the night.
Dealing with the pain, I know it will be alright.

A broken family, a broken home, but no more broken bones.

I know I will survive for the strength I've drawn from talking to others,
Helping me and being my guide. I will survive
After all I have people on my side.

Anon (name supplied)

A Poem by Alison

What do you do with your anger, child,
When the way is blocked with words
You do not understand and your fear
Is worse than any punishment?
Where do you go with your hate, child,
When your world is full of people uncaring
And all you ever hear is the laughter
You can never understand?
No comfort, no rescue, no belief
And all you ever feel is terror
Which you will never understand?

What do you do with your fear, child,
When there's no one there for you.
And where do you put your pain, child,
When alone you suffer and learn not
to cry,
When your heart feels like breaking
And the shadows scream and tear
at you
And you realise the pain is worse than
any punishment?
How do you stay alive child?