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UMI
LEARNING TO HEAL: A PERSONAL ACCOUNT
OF INTRAFAMILIAL TRAUMA AND RECOVERY

by

Matthew W. G. Stewart

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the
University of Toronto

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For Elizabeth
LEARNING TO HEAL: A PERSONAL ACCOUNT
OF INTRAFAMILIAL TRAUMA AND RECOVERY
Matthew W.G. Stewart, Doctor of Philosophy, 1998
Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
University of Toronto

ABSTRACT

The basic story of extreme intrafamilial violence is one of survival, the story of living while one is dying, being annihilated by a physically stronger but morally inferior (parental) force. Dying is the act of becoming disembodied, the act of being swallowed into what I have come to know as the dark caverns of the great fish. The biblical whale provides the key metaphor in my inquiry into self, trauma, and survival.

By acknowledging that extreme intrafamilial violence is integral to the childhood experience of many adults, some of whom are teachers, I hope to create a space for their stories to be told as well. How do teachers and students come to grips with the highly mis-educative experiences of terror and trauma that nevertheless hold powerful lessons? Teachers and students need new maps for understanding these lessons, in the hope that they can learn what constitutes an educative experience.

In mis-educative experience lies the seed of educative experience. The student who has been swallowed on the way to death but cast out into life needs the help of a compassionate listening teacher to help him/her make a map of the insides of the great fish. Only then can the great fish be seen as a vehicle, an underwater boat, a slimy submarine. The journey inside the great fish becomes integrated into the story of the whole journey. It becomes a key component in the Jonah-student-teacher's education, rather than a mis-educative detour. The map of the insides
of the great fish shows: (1) the way in, which is death-in-life; (2) the "belly" or the place and the lesson, which is life-in-death; and (3) the way out, which is new life. Thus, the belly of the great fish comes to be seen and appreciated as a critical place of growth where the Jonah-student-teacher's new self was being created, a paradoxical type of womb, a new matrix of meaning.

Survivors of chronic intrafamilial violence have been swallowed many times, again and again. Their stories need to be told and heard. But how can they be told? Arts-based storying curriculum creates space for the teller, the tale, and the telling. These stories, like this inquiry, cannot be forced to fit into a scientific, paradigmatic form or mould. They need space to breathe. Their form and content inform each other in a circular, self-supporting dance.

This arts-based narrative inquiry into intrafamilial trauma is constructed like a natural rhizome, growing underground, in darkness. It sends up shoots of unpredictable plural selves and voices, in unpredictable places, at unpredictable times.
Acknowledgements

Thank you Professor C. T. Patrick Diamond, Supervisor of my OISE/UT Thesis Committee, for courageously struggling with me and this material. You are the most brave teacher in my life. Thank you for creating space for me and this healing inquiry through your compassionate listening, your consistent patience, and your laughter, as you guided me through this intense journey. Thank you for sharing your own poetic research with me, and for being a generous and deep well of other researchers’ work.

Thank you Professor H. Howard Russell, as Member of my OISE/UT Thesis Committee, for your steadfastness, your teaching stories, and your penetrating questions.

Thank you Professor David Booth, also as Member of my OISE/UT Thesis Committee, for your wisdom and passion, and for teaching from your heart.

Thank you Professor Margaret Olson, now at St. Francis Xavier University, for helping me to take the first step into graduate studies, and for walking beside me all the way.

Thank you Professor Deborah Berrill, serving Queen's at Trent University, for your generous and spontaneous support in Peterborough, and for the teaching-learning opportunities you provided in your classrooms.

Thank you Dr. William Wehrspann, Assistant Professor, psychiatrist, University of Toronto Medical School, for being my first compassionate adult witness. Thank you for your bravery as my therapist-teacher, and for "being there" for my children and me over the past many years.

Thank you Professors Diamond, Russell, Booth, Cole, and Clandinin, for honouring this thesis with your complex, openhearted questions during my oral defense, March 25, 1998.
Thank you Kristina Mae Hopkins and Julius Rath for your contributions in support of this work.

Thank you Christine for taking good care of our family.

Thank you Marc Silnicki for your friendship and technical support.
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PROTECTIVE MEASURES

Professors C. T. Patrick Diamond, David Booth, Jack Miller, Margaret Olson, and Deborah Berrill have given me consent to use their names in this text. Names of some professors and others are disguised at their request. Some are changed in order for this story to be told. OISE/UT librarians' names are Carol Calder, Marian Press, and Christine Borowski.

My daughter's name is Kristina Mae Hopkins. She corroborates my autobiography, Playing to lose, as part of this inquiry. Her name was disguised in Playing to lose as Angela. Her husband's name is Jeff. To avoid confusion between my daughter and my partner Christine, my daughter's names are joined: Kristina-Mae.

My son's name is Wilton. His name was disguised in Playing to lose as Trevor.

Other names throughout the text include Christine's daughters Sara and Robin, and her sons Ram Das and Gobinde. Ravi Inder is their father, and Jovanna is their step-mum. Jesse and Gabriel are Jovanna's sons.

Julius Rath is the name of my brother-in-law. In Playing to lose, which he corroborates in this inquiry, his name was disguised as Jack.

The names of my siblings and parents are disguised throughout this text using the same as those in Playing to lose. Dates, locations, and other information have also been disguised.

The names of my paternal grandparents: Algernon and Emily. My maternal grandparents: William and Winnifred. My paternal great-grandparents: Benjamin and Louisa Rose. Their last names are disguised.

Jan, Rhea, and Joanne Rowland are my friends in Millbrook near Peterborough. Other friends and colleagues include Marc Silnicki, Catherine Downey, David Neelin, Margaret
Edwards, Sandy Greer, Jeff Edmonds, Lesley Malloy, Bernice Lever, Mary Cousens, Eli, Caleb, Marie, Elizabeth, Cara Sullivan, and Dilshad Macklem.

Dr. Wehrspann, my therapist-teacher, was Nathan in Playing to lose.
...his flesh was flesh his blood was blood;  
no hungry man but wished him food;  
no cripple wouldn't creep one mile  
uphill to only see him smile.

...and nothing quite so least as truth  
--i say though hate were why men breathe--  
because my father lived his soul  
love is the whole and more than all  
e. e. cummings  
"My father moved through dooms of love"  

All that is really essential is that children be genuinely loved and treated as  
individual human beings.  
The authoritarian personality. 975.

How I came to this Topic: Self, Trauma, and Survival.

In domestic situations where extreme violence is the norm, that violence, as I experienced it, is  
predictable only in its randomness and neverendingness. Neverendingness does not imply future-orientation, for exactly the opposite applies. Neverendingness seems to shut out hope, thereby  
shutting out the possibility of a future. Hope gives an oppressive situation a future, and hope is  
created, born, and lives within one's body cells.

Hope is the mainspring of human existence....Without hope, there is no incentive  
for learning, for the impulse to learn presupposes confidence in the possibility of  
improving one's existence.  
(Junell in Eisner & Vallance, 1974, 123)

I was born into captivity, terror and domestic "war." This is my "experiential background"  
(Eisner, 1994, 182)—my "starting point" (Dewey, 1897, 6). As a child, I could not learn how to
hope for a future. I had no before-war experience of life to help sustain me, to help me believe in a life after-war. I could not then learn how to gain faith in my own existence-in-the-future. I could not learn how to generate it from within. But I wanted to live so I learned how to focus all my energy on enduring my war situation. In my very particular situation, I could not have done otherwise. I agree with Frankl that

No man and no destiny repeats itself, and each situation calls for a different response....Every situation is distinguished by its uniqueness, and there is always only one right answer to the problem posed by the situation at hand.

(Frankl, 1962, 77)

While my siblings may have experienced the same family war different from me, it was not until I survived the traumatic experience of writing my autobiography that I began to learn how to imagine the possibility that I might be alive the next minute. Only then did I learn that I had endured my war situation. Only then did I begin to live, instead of surviving.

Connelly and Clandinin (1988) describe all situations as oriented in the future, building on those in the past, as "lead[ing] to another situation" (8). Situations are also "directional," that is, guided toward the future by our hopes or aspirations, "by the ends we all hold out before us" (9).

Connelly and Clandinin's theories of situation, although applied specifically to the classroom, also apply to the home: "All situations are historical....What happened in a classroom five minutes ago influences and is part of what is happening right now" (7-8). I am encouraged to see the scope of Connelly and Clandinin's work expand over time from the "Almost no one lives his or her life at random" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, 9), through the more inclusive "stories of being abused" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, 424), to the encompassing stories of "a life of war and random death" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1995, 74).
Unlike me, Frankl (1962) had learned how to hope before-war, before being taken prisoner. His hope sustained him during-war in the face of "hopelessness of imminent death" (39) during concentration camp experiences. Through hope, he expected an after-war, a not-war future. He cultivated his sense of humour by telling jokes to his friend about the "crazy" things they would do after their liberation (42-43).

The prisoner who lost faith in the future--his future--was doomed. With his loss of belief in the future, he lost his spiritual hold....We all feared this moment--not for ourselves, which would have been pointless, but for our friends.

(Frankl, 1962, 74)

Prior to being taken prisoner, Frankl had accumulated life experiences that were not essentially concerned with his immediate survival, and he was able to draw on these experiences to help his self survive. His maturity enabled him to gain critical distance from his situation. He could see his survival problem in terms of material for a lecture--an after-war experience similar to his before-war experience—that he would deliver in the future!

It is a peculiarity of man that he can only live by looking forward to the future—sub specie aeternitatis. And this is his salvation in the most difficult moments of his existence....Both I and my troubles became the object of an interesting psychoscientific study undertaken by myself....

(Frankl, 1962, 72-74)

The value of his single case study, undertaken by and of himself, lay in its concreteness as an effective tool for survival. Its value was defined as having inherent worth in terms of practicality, that is, its usefulness. The relevance of his research beyond the war situation is shown by his study forming the basis for his later theories on psychiatric "logotherapy" as are still being practiced (see Allport in Frankl, 1962, xii). Similarly, one of my survival strategies has been my planning to address future audiences, where I would read from my published autobiography (Stewart, 1995),
and demonstrate my boats and Popbottle People (see chapter 6), using my public Lecturing Voice.

Survivors of war and survivors of extreme intrafamilial violence share a common psychological distress called post-traumatic stress disorder. As Herman (1992) found,

Only after 1980, when the efforts of combat veterans had legitimated the concept of post-traumatic stress disorder, did it become clear that the psychological syndrome seen in survivors of rape, domestic battery, and incest was essentially the same as the syndrome seen in survivors of war (32).

However, it is one thing to learn how to endure great suffering amid seemingly inevitable death at the hands of a clearly identifiable "outsider" enemy as a mature adult. It is a similar but also different thing for a child to learn how to endure being forced to continually face deprivation and death at the hands of family "insiders," one's caregivers who call the experience love. In my autobiography, I portray how my struggle from early childhood to mid-teens just to stay alive in our family home constituted the formation of my war personality:

Once a week, [my teacher] read about ten pages of Johnny got his gun [Trumbo, 34th printing, 1983] to the class. When he read the part where Bonham was remembering how he used to have toes [60], I felt grateful that I still had mine. Bonham and I, we know war, I thought. Today we're still alive. I curled my toes inside my shoes to celebrate.

(Stewart, 1995, 73)

Frankl's desperate situation was radically different, yet eerily similar to mine. His poignant, first-person account of living and dying, like my own, is grounded in undeniable immediacy and realistic practicality—survival being both realistic and practical.

...some features of the situations always differ. Hence transfer is a process that has generalizing features. A person must recognize the similarity— but not the identity— between one situation and the next and then make the appropriate inference.

(Eisner, 1991, 198)
My act of recognizing the similarities between Frankl's prisoner of war situation and my own enables me to connect also with empathic compassion to other children and adults in other war situations, domestic and international, past and present.

The work of Connelly and Clandinin (1988, 1990, 1994, 1995) clearly demonstrate that teachers' rethinking, rebuilding, reconstruction, rewriting, retelling, and reliving of their life stories provides teachers with significant insight, transformation, and, therefore, learning. However, when a teacher's own childhood stories are predominantly stories of extreme intrafamilial violence including rape and torture, the very act of retelling and reliving these stories becomes an intense, traumatic experience--more so for the teller/writer than the untraumatized listener/reader because the reliving of the story also happens physiologically within the teller's body. The basic story of extreme intrafamilial violence is one of survival, the story of living while one is dying, being annihilated by a physically stronger but morally inferior (parental) force. I define extreme intrafamilial violence as harsh mistreatment of a child by a family member such that the child requires medical intervention and/or hospitalization. The term includes the most severe elements of abuse--physical, sexual, and emotional--child battery, maltreatment and neglect, and post traumatic stress disorder, up to and including one breath shy of murder. Dying is the act of becoming disembodied, the act of being swallowed into what I have come to know as the dark caverns of the great fish. The biblical whale provides the key metaphor in my inquiry into self, trauma, and survival.

Connelly and Clandinin's (1994) work encourages teachers to give "an account of their lives...the experiential knowledge that is embodied in them" (149) by using their multiple perspectives of self. If we are allowed to "give an account of our lives," we must be equally
allowed to give account of our deaths. Through enacting the holistic curriculum (Miller, 1996) we can acknowledge and honour the deaths of some of our selves so we can create the space for new selves to be conceived, created, and born. To allow some of our selves to grow old and thin and die means we embrace choice. Survivors' childhood selves die acutely painful young deaths without choice. The adult, in the act of inflicting life-threatening bodily trauma on the child, prepares the great fish of death. Unable to endure the physical pain and loss of bodily energy, the child welcomes the great fish. Under such severe conditions, escape into the relief of death cannot happen fast enough, but the great fish cannot be rushed. The great fish will taste this meal; being swallowed takes time. Neither the adult nor the child have the power to cause the great fish to relinquish its meal. Digestion begins in the mouth.

By acknowledging that extreme intrafamilial violence is integral to the childhood experience of many adults, some of whom are teachers, I hope to create a space for their stories to be told as well. The question is how. I do not want to retell, relive the countless traumatic stories of my dying. Those terrible moments dominated my childhood and early teenage experience. During the act of dying at-this-moment in intense physical pain, time changes—there exists no past, present or future, because there is no way to relate bodily to time. When one is dying now, one does not expect or hope for a future, not even a next minute. Imminent death erases the future because hope is being swallowed by the great fish. The present is being swallowed. Nothing in my past prepares me for this swallowing. The event has no inherent meaning while it is happening. It is. Being swallowed, that is the all. What is happening is loss of the world, loss of one's self, loss of one's sense and senses. Questions waste precious life energy. Indeed, for a child to make the deliberate act of choosing to think under such overwhelming
conditions is not possible. S/he is learning how to be swallowed. In the act of dying, s/he learns how to die. In the excruciating moments of dying, s/he has no time nor energy for trying to hope how to outwit death.

All that exists is this unbearably intense moment when I feel myself being swallowed. I know I am dying because my blood and bodily energy and my will to fight to live are draining from me and I have no control over anything at all. The fish is too great. I cannot know even if I have borne the unbearable until I am aware—conscious—that I have been cast out and am alive again. A survivor until the next time.

The retelling and reliving of such intense death-in-life stories is a painful, yet crucially important educative process. Holistic teachers actively demonstrate, by example, their commitment to a relevant curriculum for the survivor of extreme violence. The student's educative experience of being heard helps him/her to learn how to hear the teacher, and others— even his or her own childhood self.

Having a protective, nurturing atmosphere in which the trauma stories can be told, retold and relived is of central importance to this concept. Although I have not yet learned how to feel safe anywhere, particularly the classroom "made unsafe by participants" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1995, 74), I am slowly learning to feel safer. Feeling that I am heard is central to this learning. When the survivor is allowed to tell his/her stories, s/he is allowed to move, for we never tell the same story twice. This educative process is also the healing process of "letting go."

The traumatized teacher/student may not have access to any past experience other than that which is mis-educative; one cannot reconstruct what does not in some form already exist. Rather than the reconstruction, reorganization and transformation of his/her life of trauma, this
student's chief concern is the construction, organization, creation, and formation of a new life, a life that never was. His/her healing focus is the generation of new experience, and new ways of understanding these new experiences.

How do teachers/students come to grips with the highly mis-educative experiences of terror and trauma that nevertheless hold powerful lessons? Teachers and students need new maps for understanding these lessons, in the hope that the student can learn what constitutes an educative experience. They need to learn how they are "always in a constructive position. We make our experience, not simply have it" (Eisner, 1991, 60). The arts-based, holistic curriculum allows these creative new maps to come into being.

Map of Survival

A white-tail deer eats apples from my apple tree in September. It defecates in among the brush near my loghouse. Next Spring, a new wee apple tree sprouts forth. How? That exact apple was on that exact tree at that exact time. That exact deer crunched that exact appleseed open in its jaws without destroying it. It passed through the deer, protected exactly like that, to land in that exact spot on the earth at that exact moment. It survived my stomping on it every time I took out the ashes from the woodstove, and a bitter winter. This is a miracle. While that apple was being eaten and digested that appleseed was on its way to becoming a tree. This must be so; it is now an appletree. Gentle Reader, I combine words deliberately in order to hear more "than what has already been heard and seen. [I hear] what a word might mean" (Worsham, 1987, 234). I shift from past to present tense and back again unpredictably; living this inquiry means reliving many layered stories in the present moment. Learning and healing happen now. I also leave gaps in the text in order to present whole poems and wordpictures to you.
Map of Survival: A Healing Map of Hope

Jonah, while being swallowed and digested, was still on his way to Nineveh. See the man in the jaws of a Right whale, in the Toronto Star article "Exhibit offers a whale's eye view of world" (October 10, 1997), page 12. For Jonah, being swallowed was a detour. This must be so for Jonah made his way to Nineveh after being swallowed. Jonah and his friends probably called this a miracle. Through Jonah's major mis-educative experience of being swallowed, he learned something. In mis-educative experience lies the seed of educative experience. The act of surviving the experience of extreme intrafamilial violence is a miracle. Countless forces and factors, some knowable, others unknowable, come together at the same time to create the miracle. Whether one attributes the miracle of the survival of the appleseed to Nature, the miracle of Jonah's survival to God, or the miracle of the survivor of extreme intrafamilial violence to Fate, makes little difference. What is critical is one's deep appreciation of the miracle. Survivors and their teachers need to know that. Too many are swallowed and never seen again.

Being part of the great fish, Jonah becomes "great fished" and reciprocally the great fish becomes "Jonahed." How is the great fish changed by swallowing Jonah? The sustained terror of becoming "great fished" does not vanish after Jonah is cast out. Naming the callers of the great fish, the abusers, is an integral part of the survivor's healing story. When the abusers would not permit life, the suicidal survivor learned to call the great fish him/herself, in a desperate attempt to exercise a vestige of control over his/her own death. The survivor needs to hear the difference between his/her name and the names of his/her abusers. This is the way to self-acceptance, and hope.
Exhibit offers a whale's eye view of world

Hands-on displays, life-size models featured in new show

BY JOSEPH HALL
SCIENCE REPORTER

Did you know that a rather large dinosaur could walk through the upright jaw bone of an adult blue whale?

Did you know the evolutionarily diverse group of all whales was a furry, vicious dog-like creature named mesonychid that lived out its carnivorous life on land?

Well, these seem like fishy facts to you, they're not.

Whales are mammals.

And beginning tomorrow you can get all the facts you'd ever likely need to know about these magnificent sea creature at the new Whale exhibit at the Royal Ontario Museum. (Which explains the six-metre-wide tail fin sticking out of the museum's front portico on Queen's Park.)

"I think people are fascinated by whales for two reasons," says Mark Engstrom, curator of mammals at the ROM.

"First, because of their size, and second, because relatively we know so little about them. They're still a mystery in many ways."

That mystery might be pierced to a large extent by the new show - one of the most ambitious at the museum in several years - which comes here from the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County and runs until Jan. 4.

It takes in the length and breadth of whale life, from their evolution to their growth, feeding, and mating, to their vast diversity, their songs and their many and usually unfortunate encounters with humans.

And it includes many life-sized models of these intelligent creatures, along with hands-on exhibits to give you a whale's eye view of the world.

Whales are a scientifically diverse group of mammals, with 33 species lving to Canada alone, Engstrom says.

They range in size from the 90-tonne blue whale — the largest animal to ever exist on this planet — to the man-sized porpoises and dolphins that seem to have such an affinity for humans.

"Some of our well-known ones around Canada include the grey whales, the blue whales, the humpbacked whales and the belugas in the St. Lawrence," Engstrom says.

"But there are actually about 100 world wide, of which there are two main groups."

These groups are distinguished by their eating habits, to an extent, their size.

"There's the baleen whales and the toothed whales," Engstrom says.

"The baleen whales are the really big whales and rather than having teeth, they have these big plates of baleen (bone), which they use to strain food."

Baleen whales take in water by floating opened-mouthed through the ocean - or by opening their huge mouths in 4,500-litre gulps. They then force the water out through their baleen plates, keeping the edible things inside.

Baleen whales take in water by floating opened-mouthed

"These are the largest whales but they tend to eat the smallest things," says Engstrom.

"A blue whale couldn't even eat a decent size fish, they actually eat plankton."

"Whereas the toothed whales are usually picking up fish or squid or something like that."

The largest toothed whale, the one that enters the baleen battles with the giant squid famous in children's adventures, is the sperm whale, Engstrom says. The black and white killer whale, however, is likely the most recognizable of the cetacean carnivores.

Engstrom says that the 33 species of whales swimming through Canadian waters, eight are endangered. These include the right whales, two of which were found entangled by fishing gear in Nova Scotia's Bay of Fundy recently.

"But most of it's been due to whaling. I mean, the Arctic was really opened because of whaling," Engstrom says.

"They were after the oil for lamps, they used the baleen in place of steel for vehicles, they used whales for all kinds of things."

While the International Whaling Commission implemented a global whaling moratorium in 1986, Norway, Japan and many northern native communities still take hundreds of the creatures a year.

Engstrom says the show is both child- and parent-friendly, with enough facts and fun to appeal to all ages.

"You look at our audience and we're getting mostly families coming in, " he says.

"So we need something that appeals to and teaches all ages range."

Among the attractions targeted to the younger set are a pair of doors — one a bowhead whale mouth, one a minke whale jaw bone — that lead into a children's section added to the show by the museum.

The section features a series of fibre-optic whale spots that teach children to identify different whale species by the unique pattern of the water they expel from their blow holes.

Some other exhibits include:

• A steerable dolphin head that allows users to see how these creatures use sonar to locate and judge the food and other objects that lie ahead in the ocean.

• A juke box that plays the distinctive songs of the different whale species.

• A wharf with displays that can help visitors participate in ongoing whale conservation projects.

To coincide with the ROM show, the Ontario Place Cinesphere is running a new IMAX release titled Whales through April.

Admission prices to the ROM will be raised during the show to help offset the costs of bringing it here, museum officials say.

Adult prices are up $2 to $12 for adults, while students, children and seniors get in for $7 instead of the usual $5. Family or group passes will increase to $25 from $22.
Organization of this Arts-Based Inquiry

The swallowed student reeks of the great fish and must find his/her way anew among others who have been swallowed, and still others who have not. The student who has been swallowed on the way to death but cast out into life needs the help of a compassionate teacher who is grounded in arts-based, holistic storying curriculum to help him/her make a map of the insides of the great fish. Only then can the great fish be seen as a vehicle, an underwater boat, a slimy submarine. The journey inside the great fish becomes integrated into the story of the whole journey. It becomes a key component in Jonah's education, rather than a mis-educative detour.

Arts-based narrative inquiry is not a search for truth but a never ending reconstruction of meaning, based on personal and aesthetic approaches. We seek to chart those previously forbidden features of the terrain that include human awareness of lived experience. Rather than providing precise descriptions of what to see, this map suggests promising directions along which we might look.

(Diamond & Mullen, in preparation)

The map of the insides of the great fish shows: (1) the way in, which is death-in-life; (2) the "belly" or the place and the lesson, which is life-in-death; and (3) the way out, which is new life.

The bodily meaning of this map, like this inquiry, is revealed only through the story of its construction.

Narrative also convinces...because it provides a web of meaning and of connectedness to events, which reassures people that things happen as they do because they take place in a moral universe.

(Parry & Doan, 1994, 2-3)

This map takes its honoured place among many other maps of the student's knowledge, all subject to re-vision as his/her inner landscapes change.

A delegitimized, postmodern world is a place without any single claim to truth universally respected, and a growing realization that no single story sums up the
meaning of life....no story or theory is sufficient to correspond fully to its subject matter.

(Parry & Doan, 1994, 10)

Thus, the belly of the great fish comes to be seen and appreciated as a critical place of growth where Jonah’s new self was being created, a paradoxical type of womb, a new matrix of meaning. This narrative inquiry is such a map.

Self-inquiry into the world of our experience provides an arts-based metaphor for education wherein knowledge of the world is yielded through knowledge of the self. If everyday experience provides an ideal context for the construction of knowledge, self-narrative helps contain and convey the character of that encounter.

(Diamond & Mullen, in preparation)

But Jonah was swallowed only once. Students who survive chronic intrafamilial violence have been swallowed many times, again and again. Their stories need to be told and heard. But how can they be told? Arts-based storying curriculum creates space for the teller, the tale, and the telling. These stories, like this inquiry, cannot be forced to fit into a scientific, paradigmatic form or mould. They need space to breathe. Their form and content inform each other in a circular, self-supporting dance.

This arts-based narrative inquiry into intrafamilial trauma is constructed like a natural rhizome, like Wild Ginger or the Fragrant Water Lily (Elliott, 1976, 54, 112). It grows underground, in darkness, and sends up shoots in unpredictable places at unpredictable times (see also Bold & La Claire 1987, 100).

...this model of a rhizomatic web...is, generally a way of thinking, a way of writing, that contains multiple lines of association; that is organized not only linearly, but laterally; that follows, not a single hierarchical outline, but a labyrinth of continually returning, criss-crossing pathways. Each particular step or link within a rhizomatic whole can be conceived as a line between two points, but the overall pattern is not linear, because there is no beginning and end, no center and
periphery to be traced. If a link is a line, it is both a line that we follow and a line that draws us in, like a fish...also a net that catches us up.

(Burbules, 1997, 5)

Like Jonah, I throw myself overboard into the vast sea of this inquiry, to embark on this wild ride in the darkness.
CHAPTER 1

MY STORY OF TRAUMA AND SURVIVAL

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven....a
time to keep silence, and a time to speak....

(Ecclesiastes 3:1-7)

I begin this chapter by listing the questions that guide my inquiry. They are meant to sustain me
and you, Gentle Reader, and not constrain our quest to understand trauma and how I survived. I
ask: How can the child physically and psychologically survive extreme intrafamilial violence?
How can this child who has been effectively silenced by the terror of extreme intrafamilial
violence ever be heard? How can this student learn how to learn? How can this student learn
about him/herself as a Being-in-the-world with others? How can this student learn to integrate
his/her experience and knowledge of extreme violence into a story within a wholesome story of
hope? How can this student’s teacher add the stories of geography and arithmetic to this student’s
life story of facing imminent death at home--of going through the great fish? How can this
student endure the traumatic retelling and reliving his/her story without being swallowed again by
the great fish, without a compassionate listener/witness/guide who is first supplied by another, but
ultimately by the victim-survivor? How can this student learn how to develop his or her voices
and grow into a nurturing human being unless s/he is nurtured first by other compassionate human
beings? How can teachers understand what this student is living unless they open their hearts to
hear his/her voice(s)? Gentle Reader, my pain is heard only to release it and to enlist your
empathy. My voices need to be heard and are capitalized. They record and ensure my survival.
My Nonvoice—being silenced.

Gag. Hold your breath, Gentle Reader, and say the word aloud. Hear how it comes from the mouth fast and easy. Gag. It's just a monosyllable; you can neither locate nor feel the word in your body. Now say it aloud again, slowly, as you exhale. Ga-g. Feel it in your throat. The word starts and stops by choking itself. Now say it aloud again, more slowly, exhaling as you stretch the word. Ghaa-ahg. Recognize the sound of yourself when you vomit.

One of the most consistent and repugnant memories of my childhood and early teenage life is that of my father withdrawing his snotty white handkerchief from the front right pant pocket of his tailor-made blue pin-stripe suit and stuffing that whole handkerchief into my mouth while holding the back of my head with his left hand. To stop me from begging for mercy. To stop me from crying out during the torture he was about to inflict on me. To stop me from being heard by himself or my mother in the next room, or my older and younger brothers and sisters about the house. To stop me from hearing myself. My existence kept being distilled down to one unbearably intense moment when I was not allowed to scream or breathe. But

...it is right to scream under torture, because screaming is a concentrated expression of the last vestige of human dignity....it is a man's way of leaving a trace, of telling people how he lived and died.


Except I did hear myself. In my autobiography (Stewart, 1995) I told the story of sharing this story with my therapist-teacher, Dr Wehrspann. Now, Gentle Reader, you too can come with me into the belly of the great fish.

"[Dr. Wehrspann], being here, being heard, is akin to taking dad's snotty gag out of my mouth. The first time he gagged me and strapped me from head to toe both sides on his bed, it all seemed to happen in slow motion, as if time had slowed down."
"I know what you mean. Last winter I was driving about five miles an hour down a little hill and hit some ice and slid right through the intersection for what seemed like a long time, temporarily out of control and powerless to save myself—"

"—But while you were out of control you were trying to regain control. You didn't let go of the steering wheel and close your eyes and resign yourself to crashing—"

"—No. I held on and watched and resigned myself to crashing."

He laughs.

"It was all over in a few seconds."

"That fist tanning, and the countless hundreds that followed it, lasted so long, sometimes I feel like they're still happening, but in reality they probably lasted only about half-an-hour each. I held on and watched too but I never stopped trying to save myself."

"You were totally overwhelmed—"

"—Not totally. At least not instantly. As long as I could think, I tried to fight. Until I blacked out."

"How?"

"It's crazy, but it's true. A paradox. I couldn't fight my dad while he was beating me but I could too. The gag absorbs all the moisture in my mouth and dad says "bite" it so I do but he means bite it only once. I can't breathe and I can't say anything out loud but my insides yell No No No really loud and I tell my mouth to bite and bite and when he starts strapping me I'm lying on my tummy chewing like mad and make the gag wet and smaller and tuck it in my cheek like a squirrel so I can breathe but I have to push my forehead into the mattress to stretch my neck and lift my chin to get air because if I turn my head he might hit me in the face. I am little because my dad is so big but I must be big because the tanning is taking so long and when he straps my feet I think oh good now it's over but then he yells "roll over." The pain is crazy; I can barely think with my body screaming so loud so I study how he does it, by staring in his eyes and taking in the whole picture. How he holds the strap like this and stretches it behind his head and how he brings both arms down, aiming, like this and lets go with his left hand and how his right hand keeps swinging down like this and how when the strap hits my chest first it pushes me down into the mattress and how when dad's hand is lower than the mattress both ends of the strap lick my sides and bounce me up a little and how he catches the loose end with his left hand when it flicks back like this and how his sweat drips off his face onto me and how he stands up straight to do it again and how he moves his feet a little sideways, closer to the door before each stroke, so all the lines on my body are straight, and how his rhythm is so predictable. Then suddenly, between whacks, I can think, so I scream inside my head louder than my body No No No and tell my body to not listen to the pain. I think one inch of life and I picture a hard black shape about one inch by one inch by one inch, like a lump of coal, hiding deep inside me, behind my stomach, that not God nor dad nor
pain can break open, because only I can unlock it from the inside. So I imagine myself hiding inside it and I think nyah dad you still can't get me but then he hits me in the testicles and it gets harder and harder to tell my hands the words stay at my sides so he can hit me there again. I'm dying, so I tell my body to stop breathing and close my eyes and I lift my other self up out of my body into the air—"

"—Dissociation—"

"—Call it what you like. I'm in the corner of the room above the lamp and watch my dad strap my body. I don't feel pain, or cold, but I hear everything. I'm dead. I don't have to go back there if I don't feel like it. That first tanning, [Dr. Wehrspann], I learned that life and death meet, like links of a chain, where disintegration of self and unity of self happen simultaneously."

"I've never heard it articulated like that before. Write it down."

"And when dad straps the front of my toes my dad yells at me to get out of his sight but my body can't move because I'm not inside it and he keeps shouting and strapping here and there criss-cross. I love my brave self, I do not want to abandon my body, so I go back into my body into all the pain and it's hard work to think words and tell myself what to do and slide over the edge of the bed onto the cold red concrete floor. I scoop my clothes against my privates with one hand and crawl out of his room and crawl past Mum and everybody in the kitchen and out the door toward the outhouse and the last thing I think is black."

(Stewart, 1995, 141-143)

My brothers and sisters and I washed all those gags with Javex on laundry day, hung them on the line, ironed, and folded them, for my father never ran out of handkerchiefs.

My own Trusting Father Voice

The day of my daughter's wedding, in August, 1997, I ironed and folded two cotton table napkins with embroidered blue flowers sprawling out of their corners—one for my son Wilton, and one for myself. We helped each other fasten cuff links, suspenders, and bow ties, laughing, as we eased into our Tuxedos in the washroom by the cafe in the Royal Botanical Gardens, one hour before the ceremony.

Jeff, the groom handed me a yellow rose boutonniere—a gift I had requested.

"My bride is waiting for you outside, sir," he said.
Dear Kristina-Mae, you look like you just floated down from Heaven. I feel more joy and thankfulness than I can possibly contain and my napkin with blue embroidered flowers sprawling from its corners helps me create space in my eyes for more joy. Joy in my knowing that you know I love you. Wholesomely. No question. No fear. No possibility of momentary forgetting, not today. Today I can only trust this joy that overflows me. This voice is my open heart. No secrets. No shame. This voice is calm—trusted and trusting as sprawling flowers. No need to say it aloud. I am here for you, honoured to be your dad. Thank you for blessing my life. Thank you for being.

"Dad, are my earrings straight?"

"Yes, Sweetheart. You look lovely. Breathe."

My Untrusting Voice

Sometimes I forget I'm a good dad; I believe that other, Untrusting Voice. That voice is loud, and tries to disguise itself as rowdiness, when any good listener can hear it shake with fear. When I make the mistake of letting that voice overpower the others, I lose my balance. I feel like I never knew trust at all. I am lost, and my life, which is grounded in my desire to be an honourable father, is worthless. In despair, I am suicidal.

How do we learn to distinguish our voices? How do we learn to integrate our own sirens, those voices that call us toward danger, destruction, and death? How do we learn which of our voices are actually the synthesized voices of others? How do we learn to distinguish their voices? How do we learn which voices must be heard now, which must never be heard, and which must wait to be heard? How do we learn which voices to trust?
My Violent Voice and My Parents' Child Abuser Voices

One of my voices, previously the loudest and most terrifying, has faded completely away. I needed to hear, and allow others to bear witness to my hearing of, my own Violent Voice in order to begin healing from the wounds of abuse I endured for the first fifteen years of my life. During the writing of my autobiography (Stewart, 1995) and intense therapy, I came to hear the differences between the Child Abuser Voices of my parents and my own Violent Voice. I acknowledged I had a problem. My parents did not have problems; they were always right. Only their children had problems.

If the conditions which penetrate the home are authoritarian, rigid, and dominating, the home will increase the climate of oppression. As these authoritarian relations between parents and children intensify, children in their infancy increasingly internalize the paternal authority...Internalizing paternal authority through the rigid relationship structure emphasized by the school, these young people tend when they become professionals (because of the very fear of freedom instilled by these relationships) to repeat the rigid patterns in which they were miseducated. (Freire, 1970, 152-153)

How often our parents voiced the explanation that all our problems sprang out of our disobedience to them and to God. How dare we question their interpretations of the King James Version of the Word of God, inspired by God Himself (II Timothy 3:16)! How dare we not "obey the voice of the Lord your God..." (Jeremiah 26:13)! Our father, as the Obedient Servant of God (Hebrews 5:9), and our mother, as the Obedient Wife of the Servant of God (Titus 2:5), tried to teach us obedience (Ephesians 6:1) by using violence sanctioned by God (Proverbs 10:13, 26:3). How often our parents equated love with brutality, quoting Scripture to justify sadistic cruelty. Their favourite: "He that spareth the rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes" (Proverbs 13:24). Solomon echoes the words of his father, King David:
"...thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" (Psalm 23:4). And my father, as Obedient Servant of God, diligently followed the example of the Heavenly Father: "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" (Hebrews 12:6). I have never found comfort in being beaten, but I have often heard my older brothers, Norman, Greg, and Michael, voice their belief with pride that, because dad beat them, they have never spent a night in jail. Being beaten made me more defiant, not obedient. My inquiry is not meant to embarrass or question my siblings. The story must be told.

When I became a father, and I wanted my children and their mother to obey me, we were all in trouble. I sought help until I found a therapist-teacher—Dr. Wehrspann—to help me learn how to accept responsibility for myself so I could learn how to be a loving dad. I am no longer afraid of being with children; no voices of my parents intrude on that joy. Trust. I still spend considerable energy trying to create a safe environment for myself, trying to feel safe. I realize that I may never accomplish this goal, although over time I do feel safer. More importantly, what my children and other children know, and what I know now, is that I provide a safe place for them.

**My Suicidal Voice**

I was suicidal every day of my life until after my autobiography was published, desperately wrestling with my own violent nature, trying not to be like my father. The writing of my autobiography took me twelve years from when my father died. That's how long it took me to integrate being suicidal while I was writing my story and trying to learn how to be a loving dad to my children.
...the most important things in our lives, what we value most, have equal power for hurt or for healing....The more important and powerful something is to us, the riskier and more dangerous it may be to our being.

(Connelly & Clandinin, 1994, 150)

I most feared becoming a rapist and a terrorist, words that accurately describe my father. I needed to write to learn how to face this fear. Only through the traumatic writing of Playing to lose did I come to realize that my struggle to come to terms with being violent was how I was the opposite of my father, how I was choosing to be, in fact, myself. In the act of straining my father through myself, I discovered a body of my own, selves of my own, voices of my own. Separate from him. The act of me listening to my own voices, of recording, erasing, and re-recording them on the page became also the act of me hearing my selves, of becoming my own therapist.

It appears, then, that the "action of telling a story" in the safety of a protected relationship can actually produce a change in the abnormal processing of the traumatic memory...[and] relief of many of the major symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. The physioneurosis induced by terror can apparently be reversed through the use of words.

(Herman, 1992, 183)

I discovered this for myself. "Every person is a psychologist" (Hunt, 1992, 4-5). Through autobiography, I taught myself how to speak.

A living thing seeks above all to discharge its strength--life itself is Will to Power; self-preservation is only one of the direct and most frequent results thereof.

(Nietzche, 1907, cited in Aiken, 1956, 217)

The most important word I learned how to speak was my name, Matthew. My belief in that one word helped me accept responsibility for being violent: "...one punch and I might as well change my name to Herman" (Stewart, 1995, 132). I declared my "right to a name by which [my] parents, brothers, sisters and friends can call [me] and recognize [me] wherever [I] may be"

(Colossians 4:14) knew, some words have healing power.

And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die....the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof: Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed....[Jesus said] I say unto you, I have not found so great a faith, no, not in Israel. And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

(Luke 7:2-10)

In this example, whose words had the healing power? The words of Jesus, or the words of the faithful centurion in believing in the healing power of Jesus' words? Is it the word spoken in faith, or the faith in the words spoken that does the healing? Both perhaps? I found (and still find) myself in my struggle to be who-I-am-becoming.

...the focus of one's identity is not centred on the sameness of an underlying substance but on one's process of actualizing one's life. The emphasis changes from "What am I?" to "Who am I?" This "who" is found in the person's actions....Narrative presupposes and draws on the human competence to understand action. Self identity becomes linked to a person's life-story, which connects up the actions into an integrating plot.

(Polkinghorne, 1988, 151)

Being a loving father is central to my self-identity, an integral part of who I am. I'm still amazed, but thankful that I've made it. For three years, while I was writing my autobiography full-time, I lived alone in a loghouse in the bush. The location was isolated--my nearest neighbours about a mile away, similar to the physical isolation that I lived as a boy. I didn't set out to live there three years, that's how long my job took. Three summers and three winters I spent there, like Jonah's three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish. One morning, about 7:30, I wrote the word "mother" and became furious.
Unsent letter to my mother—Taken to Dr. Wehrspann Instead

Like a windshield
loves a moth
at 70 miles per hour
you are my loving mother.

(Stewart, September 3, 1990)

I went outside to split wood. I could always power my way through, if I chopped at the same piece of wood about 77 times. I split wood until sundown, learning how to see the line in the piece of wood where it was willing to yield. When my aim was true, the wood split with one blow, literally flying apart, releasing memories of all the birds that had landed in the tree of which it was part. Where was I willing to yield? Where inside me was my line? How could I tell the horror of my life and survive the telling of it? In-sight: memory yields to imagination.

Meanings in this personal realm are concrete rather than abstract, as in language, science, and art...personal meanings are concrete in the sense that relational understanding is not a fragment, a perspective, or a transformation of some other more complete experience. Rather, it is itself the prototype of experience in its wholeness or concreteness.

(Phenix, 1964, 194)

My Thankful Voice

I began to give thanks to the trees for wood for heat and for paper upon which to write. I trimmed the apple trees, and watched deer and the groundhog (whom I named Willy) come to eat apples. As you know, Gentle Reader, new apple trees sprouted up from the deer droppings. During hunting season, I roamed around the 100 acres in my red coat, shouting, to warn the deer of the hunters parked on the road in plain view of the apple trees. Instead of killing the wasp on my arm, I learned how to catch one of its wings in a spring clothespeg, and set it free outside.

When I sat very still, butterflies landed on my toes. Their little "feet" tickled mine! I learned that I
was not all alone in the world.

Writing is a techne, an art, understood in its original sense of "a bringing forth," and it brings forth how, not what, things are and how things might be. More subtly, it brings forth allusions to what is conceivable but unrepresentable: The impossible, the other. Writing brings forth a world, a world of possibility, and opens up a space in Being in which we are invited, not compelled, to dwell along with others, other beings and other things...it re-members our connection to the earth.

(Worsham, 1987, 235)

The innocence of butterflies touched me deeply. Each one is a miniature Jonah; metamorphosis happens inside dark cocoons. Each one brought me a gift of pure beauty. Each time they opened their wings they lifted my heavy heart a little. How can something so light, so fragile, fly thousands of miles? They must be little angels or healing words. In 1984, I hired a yacht for a half-day to take Kristina-Mae fishing on Lake Ontario, and we only got one nibble. But while we drifted, a cloud of Monarch butterflies descended for a few minutes to rest, magically transforming our plain white boat into a floating butterfly sanctuary. Butterfly wings are "completely covered in tiny, flat scales, "shingled" in overlapping rows" (Klots, 1960, 50). Scales—a word we generally associate with the skin of fish. We were fishing; we were hoping to snare some innocent creature from the depths. We had a V-8. We bore down. We had a fish-finder. We had down-riggers. We bore down. But the gift floated down from above, touching our hearts. We cannot demand gifts; they float to us when we are ready, when we are open to receive them. Paper is one such gift. I stopped wasting it. I began to give thanks to the trees for providing resting and nesting places for birds. I began to listen to the songs of bluejays, robins, cardinals, and the wings of the hummingbird. I began to rise early, with them, and often stood naked outside, bathed in birdsong.
I'd rather learn from one bird how to sing
teach ten thousand stars how not to dance
(cummings, cited in Matthiessen, 1950, 934)

I changed my mind about cutting down an almost-dead thornapple tree; a white owl landed on it and kept me company most of one night.

There is a resonance that is sounded between the unknown depth in the self and the unknowable depth in the nature of things. Deep calls to deep. Here the distress of alienation ends. We are at home in a mystery that suggests some meaning of which we are a part, though we cannot know it in any precise conceptual way. And given any kind of meaning, we are thus given one more motive to sustain us in our solitary journey as mortal beings through this world....As our perspective changes, beautiful and ugly shift with them. In time one learns not to pick apart beauty from the whole....These rocks and trees are companions with me in suffering....[they] do not indulge in the impertinence of foisting lessons upon us. Their method of instruction is more circuitous and indirect, but perhaps all the more potent for that.

(Barrett, 1979, 372-373)

I began to give thanks for the birdmuck on my windshield. No birdmuck, no bird. Birdmuck on my windshield slows me down, and that's what I need to do. My bodily trauma is like a dumptruck full of toxic muck. Muck is not bad. It is part of life. No muck, no life. I'm learning to spread my knowledge about trauma-muck very thinly, carefully, in the rhubarb patch of education. Through my inquiry, I can help teachers grow who can help abused children grow. As Hanson, (1986, 133) explained,

Just as imagination can take us to our selves it can carry us out of and beyond ourselves--if we are interested, if see some object as dearer to us than ourselves.  
(cited in Witherell & Noddings, 1991, 89)

Through writing my autobiography, my life, I worked out some muck. I needed to write that muck to create space inside for joy. In the writing, I kept finding moments of joy in the muck. As I build this inquiry, Gentle Reader, I perpetually revise, editing out the muck. Sometimes I
can't see that what I'm writing is muck—I lose my focus. My thesis Supervisor, Professor Diamond, draws my attention to sentences with too much muck—anger—in them.

"What do you mean here, Matthew?" he asks.

I mean I need to growl. Writing this is hard work and it hurts. I need to roar. His question helps me remember not to growl and roar, Gentle Reader, at you. What you are reading is not my first draft. As I worked muck out of myself writing my autobiography, Life itself became more valuable to me. I began to learn how to see and hear, as Dewey (1934) understood seeing.

Seeing requires sustained attention to the qualities of an object or situation; it is exploratory in character. Recognition is the act of assigning a label to an object. Once assigned and classification has occurred, exploration ceases.

(Dewey, 1934, cited in Eisner, 1988, 17)

I cultivated my child-like sense of wonder and awe for the beauty around me by slowing down and noticing some of the innumerable gifts floating my way. Each gift that I could see, that I allowed to touch my heart, dislodged a little fear. The memories of being with my brother Greg in his truck are such gifts. I remember these stories as a way of honouring them.

My Truck Baptism

Ever since I was a little boy, I've loved trucks, and this year I finally bought my first one—a Suburban. One of my eldest brothers, Greg, had a front-end loader for filling up his yellow and black dumptruck when I was a young boy. If I begged him enough, he'd take me away from the violence at home for a day. I stand on a little hill where Greg can see me while he loads up the dumptruck. He lowers the empty bucket—the front scoop—of his loader onto the ground, and tilts it upward. I climb in and lie down on my back. Loader's engine revs. The steel arms on either
side of the body of Loader lift Bucket. Bucket is a hugesteeel pair of warm hands, offering me a glimpse of the summer sun, of the open sky. Slowly, Loader moves forward, and stops. I must be above the full dump. Down comes Bucket, only a couple of feet, and stops. Greg never lets the arms of Loader hit the top edge of the dump. He doesn't want me to fall too far. I must be above the last load of gravel Bucket put in the dump. As Bucket tilts forward, I roll onto my right side. I see where I'm going to land. Bucket keeps tilting downward and here I go downplop. Bucket and Loader back away. I stand up and look around and flap my arms like I'm a bird.

"Yeah!" I shout. "Thank you! What a great ride!"

My brother smiles as he walks toward the truck.

"Okay, kid," he says, "now climb into the cab. Let's go."

Greg hauled all the broken concrete and rock and gravel to build the pier in Morganville. When he was backing his dumptruck down the steep beach with a full load, I'd sit forward to look out his right sideview mirror. He always made sure his truck was as level as he could get it; when the full dump is up the truck can tip over if the centre of gravity is not maintained over the chassis side to side and front to rear. Level: matching the curvature of the earth. The surface of the lake is level, not flat. The waves of the lake splashed round the big set of double tires. Up went the dump. Of all the dumptruck voices I've ever heard, that dumpgoingup voice is still my favourite. It is the sound of the hydraulic pump working, pushingup the heavy load. It pumps hydraulic fluid through the pressure hoses, from the reservoir on the chassis, into the piston. The dumppushingup piston is made of three telescopic sections. The top of the uppermost section is hinged to the underside of the front (the part closest to the back of the cab) of the dump. This
section comes up first. When it is fully extended, the second section extends out of the third section, which is hinged to the chassis. As the piston elongates, the top of the dump moves farther away from the cab. The whole piston "leans back" (away from the back of the cab) to maintain its position perpendicular to the load it is lifting.

"Zh-zh-zh-zh."

Low and slow. Pushing up power. The whole truck shakes.

"Zh-zh-zh-zh."

The front wheels of his truck bounce up and down off the ground as the weight shifts. Through the back window of the cab I see around the huge dump-pushing-up piston. As the dump rises, it exposes its underbelly, its rows of welded steel ribs. I see between the truck's chassis—two big steel beams that run the length of the truck, and where they were connect with steel cross-members. I see the drive shaft, and the universal joint—the big knuckle where two lengths of the drive shaft join. I see the drive shaft, and the universal joint—the big knuckle where two lengths of the drive shaft join. I see the hanger bearing—the U-shaped support for the driveshaft. I see the lake lapping the rear end—the big bulge for gears—in the middle of the rear axle and where the universal on the drive shaft connects to the pinion yoke on the rear end. I see the leaf springs buckling under the load. I see where the dump hinges at the back of the chassis. I see the lake steaming as it splashes against the muffler closer to the cab.

"Zh."

The dump stops. Nothing inside it moves. Greg swings out his door, pulls the lever on his side of the dump to release the tailgate, and swings back in.

"Zh-zh-zh-zh."

Then the load lets go and dives into the water. The whole lake moves back. Now the
truck is hungry again. One truckload at a time, we build a little peninsula out into the deep water.

A good place for the whale to poop out Jonah.

Greg turns the hydraulic pump off; the weight of the empty dump forces the hydraulic fluid back into the reservoir. The dump comes down slowly; the hose-pump mechanism acts as a governor. Down comes the dump with its own dumpcomingdown voice.

"Pshhhhhhhhhhh-thmp."

The narrowest, uppermost section of the telescopic hydraulic piston slides down inside the bigger one.

"Pshhhhhhhhhhh-thmp."

The second section slides inside the third one.

"Pshhhhhhhhhhh-krk-krk-thmp."

The dump settles on the chassis. Greg puts his truck in its lowest gear.

"Bull low." he calls it.

The truck crawls up to the road.

"Rrrohwrrr-rrohwrrr-rrohwrrr" is the voice of Bull Low.

Every gear has a different voice. Only novices need to check the tachometer--the gauge that indicates engine speed in revolutions per minute (RPM’s)--to know when to change gears. Experienced truck drivers know when to change gears by the sound. Twenty-seven hundred rpm sounds different than 2750 rpm. A professional truck driver does not need to use the clutch to change gears. This does not cause damage to the truck. It's harder downshifting without the clutch than upshifting. It's a matter of timing--the driver meshes with the truck to the point that s/he acts like part of the truck's guts. The reason you use the accelerator after you take the truck
out of one gear and before you engage another—as you change gears—is to match your engine speed, transmission speed, and road speed.

In the act of giving a name to their trucks, truck drivers acknowledge the "personality" of their hard-working machines. Greg never called his truck by its name, printed in big black letters on both yellow doors: Haulage. Greg's Haulage. He gave me a beige plastic bottle-opener, a key chain, with "Greg's Haulage" printed on it in green capital letters, and his phone number too. I carried it around in my pant pockets until the name wore off.

Greg's old truck smelled of oily rags and gas and tools and pipesmoke and red Amphora brand pipe tobacco on the dashboard and pine air freshener. Smells of freedom, of kindness. Some days my truck smells just like that, even though I quit smoking a pipe over ten years ago. I only started to smoke to be like him. Greg took me to auctions with him too. He'd look over a tractor or a bulldozer and holler a price to start the bidding, then walk away to look at something else. Most of those machines smelled good. Cared for. I didn't smell like that. My father drove trucks too, but I always vomited in them.

In my isolation at the loghouse I could feel myself opening to life like a yellow rose to the sun. Does not the rose, rising from the dark earth, like a Jonah-flower, help hold the sun aloft on the shoulders of its radiating, fragrant beauty? The fragrance of a rose transcends gravity. The reason for the rose is its blooming. How could I open my heart to the world instead of protecting myself from it? What gift could I humbly offer to others? The art in my heART. My writing. Me.

But if poetry is your goal, you've got to forget all about punishments and all about rewards and all about selfstyled obligations and duties and responsibilities etcetera ad infinitum and remember one thing only: that it's you—nobody else—who
determines your destiny and decides your fate. Nobody else can be alive for you; nor can you be alive for anybody else. Toms can Dicks and Dicks can be Harrys, but none of them can ever be you. There's the artist's responsibility; and the most awful responsibility on earth. If you can take it, take it—and be. If you can't, cheer up and go about other people's business; and do (or undo) till you drop.

(cummings 1953/1981, 24)

We say we fear death. We fear the pain of life. We forget our fear when we give thanks, when we rejoice for being part of Creation.

i thank You God for most this amazing
day:for the leaping greenly spirits of trees
and a blue true dream of sky:and for everything
which is natural which is infinite which is yes

(i who have died am alive again today,
and this is the sun's birthday;this is the birth
day of life and of love and wings:and of the gay
great happening illimitably earth)

how should tasting touching hearing seeing
breathing any—lifted from the no
of all nothing—human merely being
doubt unimaginable You?

(now the ears of my ears awake and
now the eyes of my eyes are opened)

(cummings 1953/1981, 91)

Blue Jay Messenger Voice

On October 15, 1993, at 8:50 in the morning, a Blue Jay landed on the woodpile on other side of the window directly in front of my desk. The bird pecked the glass so hard I thought it might break.

"Pay attention!" I'm here! I'm alive! See me!" it banged.

"I see you!"

"I'm watching you!" it banged. "Watching over you! I am Part of The Great Spirit
watching over you! Hear me!"

"I hear you! Thank you!"

A pair of Blue Jays kept me company all winter. I do not miss them now; they are part of my heart. Every Blue Jay I see or hear is a living gift.

I wrote my autobiography and others called it cathartic. Did I vomit something bad out of my system through writing? No. I did not let go of the past through writing; it cannot so simply be done. Blue Jay knows that if it lets go of the branch it will fall onto the rock below and break its neck and die. It cannot let go; it wants to live. I have never met a suicidal bird, never heard of one walking deliberately into the path of a dumptruck. Blue Jay reaches for the next branch and, in the reaching, he flies, becomes part of the sky. This is how he learns, how he remembers that the sky will hold him and carry him. He does not try to leave his past behind, rather all his past equips him for flying forward—he cannot fly backwards—into his future. I change the past, not by trying to change it, but through acceptance of it. My re-collections are my way of wrestling with life and death.

My Narrator Voice

In the act of voicing my story, I was creating a narrator’s voice as well as my own, which were similar but not the same. I had experience writing concrete poetry with different narrators. This poem speaks with the Voice of the Raped—a combination of my voice and the voices of my sisters:
Learning how to weave together the protagonist Narrator's Voices of my autobiography and my other voices was particularly distressing. The Narrator's Voices included the merged voices of a youngster being tortured and a therapist-teacher's suicidal client, being spoken in the present tense, as demonstrated in the extended passage above. My protagonist Narrator's Voices included those of a suffering father, a lover, and so on. The task became more complex, as I linked and merged these voices with the different voices of every other character in my story, especially those of my suffering brothers and sisters, my children, and their mother. I do not want to harm any of them. It was hard work to transform such an overwhelming amount of sadness into an inquiring work of art without losing my sanity. Yet I was unwilling to "take the heart out of the situations [I was] trying to help readers understand" (Eisner, 1991, 37). How to tell the story and make it readable to the reader and to me now?

My autobiography has become part of the larger healing story that is this inquiry, wherein I extend compassion to myself. Telling it enabled me to learn how to live, to move on to tell this healing research story of helping children. Part of my story includes this song:

Like a concrete bridge under water
I drowned in my insecurity,
Slowly, my sorrow lead me to laughter,
I don't have to die to be free.
I walk in sandals, but I swim like a sailor.  
It would be another Jonah story  
Had he tossed the captain over,  
For not saying the words to calm the sea.

Like a broken blue boat full of deep blue water  
I drifted, and lonely winds blew me  
To a cove, to drop anchor  
Where none of my friends could see.

I walk in sandals, and I swim like a sailor.  
It'll be another Jonah story  
When he tosses the captain over,  
For not saying the words to calm the sea.

Like a boat with new sails, I'm stronger,  
Heading back out to sea  
With a load of my friends who know the danger,  
We all need to live to be free.

I walk in sandals, and I swim like a sailor.  
They know I'm the other Jonah story  
For I've tossed the captain over.  
And I'll say the words to calm the sea.

Walk, walk in sandals. Swim, swim like a sailor.  
Live, live your own Jonah story.  
Toss the captain over.  
And say, say the words to calm the sea.  
(Stewart, February 1996)

**Helping Children/My Playful Child Voice**

When Kristina-Mae was a toddler, she didn't like her Uncle Randy—the husband of her mother's sister. Whenever he approached her, she held onto my leg and would not let go until he left the room. I believed that she was picking up or responding to some signal that I couldn't detect, and I didn't try to force her to humour Uncle Randy. My daughter didn't trust him; neither did I. Not long ago, I built a playhouse in the basement for our friends' children. I sit in it with
them, and we tell stories and eat pie and drink milk. They laugh to see me sitting on such a little stool. I tell them, with my Playful Child Voice, that, inside, I'm still little too. Recently, Gabriel (aged 3) and I had a talk about the thunderstorm. We decided a purple horse named Bimble was driving a bulldozer on our roof. Too often I've heard the Word of God used to exhort adults to act like grownups: "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things" (I Corinthians 13:11). Part of becoming a healthier man means I recover and integrate, not disown my Playful Child Voice.

Society pressures us...but we must resist, because when we kill the child within us, we kill ourselves....what is inside my old body is deeply alive, simply because I preserve the child within me. I also think my body is beautiful and as alive as this child who I once was and continue to be, this child who leads me to love life so much.

(Freire, 1985, 197)

My birthday present to myself when I turned 38 was a used set of five Tonka Mighty toys—a dumptruck, a front-end loader, a bulldozer, a truck-mounted hydraulic shovel, and a grader. I played with them for a year, before sanding and painting them blue. They are all parked beside the playhouse, waiting for the children. When they come over to visit, I grab one too and we all roar around the basement.

When I'm in a restaurant or other public place, being gruff and rowdy, toddlers come up to me and tug at my leg, speaking their own language. How do they see me? How do they hear me? They touch me with their little hands and funny words, offering me a gift. I feel honoured. By taking time to notice them, I also notice and take care of the little boy I used to be that desperately needed positive attention. These children bring me the gift of my own childself. I figure maybe they're saying "I've been hearing you all the way back there where my Mummy is
sitting, see her? Now it's your turn to hear me." That's fair. We have a little conversation. I always thank them for coming to visit me. I mean it. "Thank you" is the word that brings life's gifts. Not "please." I used to beg my father and God for mercy. My father used to call all of us beggars, which we were, by his command. No more begging. "Thank you" means I appreciate the gifts I have been given and give. Breath. Flowers. Rocks. Trees. Children's voices.

Kristina-Mae had trouble sleeping as a baby. She cried instead. The doctor called it colic. When I held her against my chest (I always held her on my damaged left side) and danced around the house singing loudly in my Big Fearless Happy Daddy Voice she floated away to dreamland in about one minute. Colic? She was lonely. I too have colic. Some things are not to be stomached.

My Voice of Death

Basically, my large intestine doesn't work properly. I process the world with my guts. My guts are highly sensitive to spices of any sort. Gentle Reader, please be assured that words like "guts" are not offensive. They are real, like my own experience. I am not trying to demonstrate "social science but ethnographic realism...lived life, at once raw and subtle, coarse and complex" (Greenblatt, 1997, 20). I'm about twelve pounds overweight from eating bread. Comfort food. Bread doesn't hurt my guts. At any moment, I can tell exactly where my food is in my digestive tract. My gut is raw, and food feels like razor blades as it moves through.
As I write this thesis, I focus all my attention on creating this sentence, one word at a time. I speak out loud as I write to help myself focus. The chronic pain I experience throughout my whole body—like I'm made out of shards of broken glass—is partly a result of my large intestine's failure to process my food. Many doctors call it fibromyalgia. Dr. Singh, my Homeopath calls it toxaemia. Dr. Wehrspann, my therapist-teacher, calls it psychosomatic. I call it my Voice of Death. Inasmuch as I have no bodily knowledge of painlessness, I can only associate this intense pain with being beaten by my father. I endured so many thumps in the guts with two-by-fours or his fists or boots or cane that I often had blood in my stool as a youngster and teen. I was afraid pieces of my guts would come loose and fall out of me. When he reached out and snared me with the crook of his cane, it dug deep into my descending colon on my left side, and as he twisted his wrist I felt like I was literally breaking apart inside.

If my colon is in pain because of anxiety, then that organ is not just a piece of biologically functioning flesh. It has some link with consciousness and a particular mode of expression....My colon was unhappy, and if I could attend to its complaint I might begin to understand what was making it uneasy, or, so to speak.
"dis-easy." ...Many people going to the doctor have their own "cognitive maps" of their bodies, their own imagination of what the body looks like inside and what is going on at the moment in its illness. If we weren't so insistent on univocal meanings, wanting only expert opinions, which are as much fantasy as patient's thoughts, about what is going on, we might pay more attention to the patient's imagination of the illness....The word disease means "not having your elbows in a relaxed position." "Ease" comes from the Latin ansatus, "having handles," or "elbows akimbo"—a relaxed posture, or at least not at work. Dis-ease means not elbows, no elbow room. Ease is a form of pleasure, disease a loss of pleasure. (Moore, 1994, 163-164)

Most days, my brothers and sisters and I urinated and defecated where we stood, in terror, whenever our father called our names.

The sight of an enemy stimulates in the brain those patterns formed by the previous experiences of the individual with that enemy, and also the experiences of the race whenever an enemy had to be met and overcome....we find an inhibition of the functions of every organ and tissue that consumes energy, but does not contribute to motor efficiency. The mouth becomes dry; the gastric and pancreatic secretions are lessened or are completely inhibited; peristaltic action stops. The obvious purpose of all these activations and inhibitions is to mass every atom of energy upon the muscles that are conducting the defense or attack....though an enemy today [sic] may not be met by actual physical attack, yet the decks are cleared for action, as it were, and the weapons made ready, the body being shaken and exhausted....If the activities are consummated, the fuel—glycogen—and the activating secretions from the thyroid, the adrenals, the hypophysis [pituitary gland] are consumed. In the activation without action, these products must be eliminated as waste products and so a heavy strain is put upon the organs of elimination....Chronic emotional stimulation, therefore, may fatigue or exhaust the brain and may cause cardiovascular disease, indigestion, Grave's disease, diabetes, and insanity even. (emphases added, Crile, 1970, 138-140)

I tried to contain my fear by fisting my anus and holding everything in as long as I could. Trying to exercise some bodily control. Trying to stave off total humiliation. Trying to hold onto my life like Frankl.

I still carry my Voice of Death around in my guts. I am not afraid of it now. I honour this voice by creating and keeping a sacred place for it in my life. I keep old dried flowers around;
they don't look dead to me. When the pain is too severe to bear publicly, I retreat to my little cabin beside the lake, unplug the telephone, close the blinds, and allow myself to hear my Voice of Death without an audience. As a child, I had no choice, but now I choose to meet Death regularly. We are friends.

When I moved from the loghouse in the bush to this cabin near Peterborough in May, 1994 (within commuting distance of The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto—OISE/UT), I slept on the floor beside the large windows overlooking the lake. I was still afraid of the dark. I left the blinds open all night. I only took naps, day and night; I needed to be able to see my way out, to be able to get out. Escape. Like the fictional Nick Adams,

If I could have a light I was not afraid to go to sleep, because I knew my soul would only go out of me if it were dark....And I am sure many times, too, that I slept without knowing it—but I never slept knowing it, and on this night I listened to the silkworms.

(Hemingway, 1973, 130)

Whenever I awoke, I recorded my dreams in my dream journal on the floor beside me. Months later, I moved my mattress into my bedroom. I fastened a large white slice of bristol board to the wall beside the head of my bed, and kept a sharp pencil in the window sill. I would roll on my right side and draw and scribble on the wall whenever I felt like it. I wrote my name. I drew bears and trees and birds and flowers and rocks and lakes and rivers and fish. My creatures face to the left. (My OISE/UT class notes are full of doodles of birds. I still draw them beak first. Facing left.) I wrote funnylooking words. I filled in the paper from right to left, bottom to top. In the upper left corner, Wilton drew the initials of his name in 3-D, and signed his name. Over the 1995 Christmas holidays, I cleared out so Kristina-Mae and her fiance Jeff could stay here. In the lower left corner, Kristina-Mae wrote "Merry Christmas!" on my wall. She drew a decorated
Christmas tree with presents beside it, and signed it. Over the last three years, I've slowly been learning to feel safer in the dark, closing the bedroom door a little more as the months go by.

Daytime or nighttime, now I can close my bedroom door all the way. No light comes through the curtain over my bedroom window. I lie down, naked, close my eyes, place my hands over my colon, and say my mantra softly aloud over and over.

"I allow myself to die...I allow myself to die...."

During this healing ritual, I often see and feel jagged chunks of pain break off from my body and dissolve in the air. I say my mantra aloud until it becomes work, then I think only those words until I feel my spirit lift out of my body, away from the pain. "Frequently an OBE [out-of-body experience] occurs as a result of stress, sickness, or physical trauma" (Kalweit, 1988, 52). Closing the door is my way of inviting my Spirit to stay closer to my body, of allowing my Spirit to minister to me in the darkness. "We only know that an OBE can occur in an awakened state, during sleep, in a dream, in the hypnogogic phase preceding sleep, and in other transpersonal states (Kalweit, 1988, 55). Again, I feel like Nick Adams in the good places.

I myself did not want to sleep because I had been living for a long time with the knowledge that if I ever shut my eyes in the dark and let myself go, my soul would go out of my body. I had been that way for a long time, ever since I had been blown up at night and felt it go out of me and go off and then come back. (Hemingway, 1973, 127)

I have the only key to this cabin. This is my sacred healing space. No one is allowed to come here without securing my permission first; I do not want to be jarred when I am this vulnerable, this open.
I live my breath.

Behold it, I cannot, 
nor hold it 
in.

'Tis no more mine 
than in is in mine, 
part of before and after, 
sound changes.

'Tis more mine 
how in is in wind, 
beheld and held 
up and in.

Life inhales me.

Thank you Life, for this gift of life, 
this breath to breathe 
my death.

(Stewart, June 1, 1995)

Living takes guts. I tell the story of each of my survival strategies in later chapters as this 
inquiry shifts from the past into the future.

My Untrusting Voice Again

When I'm afraid, in order to physically keep myself together, I still, automatically, clench 
my anus. The pitch and volume of my Untrusting Voice go up. My Untrusting Voice quivers and 
my hands shake (but not in harmony). I forget to breathe and I say the wrong thing and 
embarrass myself in class, like Valerie Walkerdine (1985).

I felt, in the old place, as in the new, that if I opened my mouth it would be to say 
the wrong thing. Yet I desired so much, so very much, to produce utterances 
which, if said in one context, would not lead to rejection in the other. 
(cited in Franzosa, 1992, 398)

I rely, therefore, on my own bravery, rather than a sense of safety to tell my stories.
Unfortunately, my stories are more intense than most teachers and other students want to hear or could imagine. My stories cannot, under any circumstances, be considered "normal." I break out in a cold sweat and if I maintain this stress level for more than a minute or two, I start to cry and must excuse myself. This has happened more than a few times during courses for my Master's and Doctoral Degrees at OISE/UT. Going to class takes guts. Writing this thesis account takes all the guts I've got.

Being defiant helped save my life, and I have trouble discerning when I need to be defiant and when I don't. I take myself too seriously. I felt guilty for being defiant for most of my life, until I looked up that word in the dictionary and found that it also meant brave. My guilt instantly vanished. Being brave is synonymous with "having guts" to me. Yes, I'm afraid. It takes guts to admit how afraid I really am and keep going, rather than let fear paralyse me. I'm just more brave than I am afraid. That's how I live. I'm counting on my bravery to get me to the end of this thesis and to the end of this stage in my recovery.

Hitch
my guilt is bolted
under
my bumper of insecurity

outstuck
And tongues and hooks and chains
of past lies and fears and pains
tow me back

And my desire to be
free
is my hacksaw hacksaw
hack

(Stewart, December 10, 1990)
Brave and Biblical Voices

From the time I was a young schoolboy, I liked it that North American Indian warriors were called Braves. I never tired of reading the stories of my brave Bible heroes, the warriors David and Samson. Brave men, the good guys, like me, had guts. They stood up to bullies, the bad guys, like my father, who wanted all the power, and scared everybody. The good guys had a secret weapon—bravery. The bad guys had no hearts. The good guys fought with their whole hearts, and were ready to die to stop the bad guys. The story of David, the shepherd boy who became King of Israel, inspired me in my constant battle against my father:

And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side; and there was a valley between them. And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. And he had an helmet of brass upon his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail; and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of brass. And he had greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders. And the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron; and one bearing his shield went before him....And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together....And [David] took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine....And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance. And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of field. Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand...when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon the earth....and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and
drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith.
And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled.
(I Samuel 17:3-51)

My father told almost everybody that he was six-foot-four-and-a-half inches tall. He had a big
mouth too. I hated the words "size thirteen," the size of his boots, for the pain they stomped into
my body. Last fall, I happily learned a new meaning for those words when I bought my sixteen-
year-old son Wilton a new pair of size thirteen Nike sneakers for school. I took him to a party,
and he bopped around to loud music in his new sneakers. I wrote a poem for him, and framed it.
He pinned it to his wall. The last line: "lace up your angelboots son i'm taking you dancing"
(Stewart, November 23, 1995).

Samson was a different Bible hero from David. David sounded confident when he went
against Goliath--confident he would not be killed. Goliath was big and cumbersome, like a
bulldozer. David was agile and fast, like a dirt bike. Different kinds of power. David faced
Goliath alone. Samson's trusting someone led to his humiliation. That was the lesson. Don't
trust anyone, especially those closest to you. Love will betray you.

She mustabin.
Delilah,
I mean.
She mustabin a beaut.
I mean,
She mustabin alay anahalf
Or
Why dhe lether chophis hairoff?
(Stewart, September 22, 1985)

Mum said she loved me yet always called Dad to beat me whenever she didn't like what I was
saying or doing. Love is war. Samson knew he would die. Even in chains, Samson made peace
with God and himself, and fought back. He alone determined the price of his freedom and
willingly paid that price to set himself free.

And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, so that his soul was vexed unto death; That he told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like other men. And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once, for he hath shewed me all his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up to unto her, and brought money in their hand. And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him. And she said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out and as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him. But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house. Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven. Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god...And they called for Samson out of the prison house; and he made them sport: and they set him between the pillars...Now the house was full of men and women...and there were upon the roof about three thousand men and women together. And Samson called unto the Lord, and said, O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes. And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left. And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life.

(Judges 16:16-30)

As a boy, I figured that, for a moment, as the house was crashing down (see illustration, page 48), all the bad guys who were laughing at Samson suddenly stopped laughing. Bad guys, like my father, hurt people for fun, and laughed. Samson's hair grew back. Slowly. If I could stay alive, I would grow to be big, and one day, I'd get revenge too. Like David and Samson, I'd bring my father and his memory down. I never wanted to be bigger than him, or even as big as him. He measured himself, everybody, and everything on the outside.
(While you and i have lips and voices which
are for kissing and to sing with
who cares if some oneeyed son of a bitch
invents an instrument to measure spring with?
(cummings, 1953/1981, 4)

No Quantitative Voice for me

I hated those little straight black lines on his shiny stainless steel superlong tape measure he used
for surveying. I hated the tape measure in his tool box. I hated the yardstick at school, and the
foot-long ruler in my desk. My ruler had a hole in the centre, and I used to twirl it on the
sharpened tip of my pencil, especially in grammar class. Who cares about irrelevant verbs and
conjunctions and predicates? I'm going to get killed when I get home. I'm flying this machine way
past you teacher. I'm flying this machine where nobody can find me. I went home. The lesson at

"I'll teach you. I'll tan you within an inch of your life."
I thought of the yardstick—thirty-six inches of life—one inch was only two
fingers wide. How could I hold onto it with only two fingers?
"Close. The. Door."
"Please dad..."
"Get your. Clothes off."
"Please dad," I begged. "Please no..."
I folded all my clothes and piled them in the corner of his bedroom, near
the door. Even my underwear. With one hand, he lifted me off the floor by the
throat and stuffed his snotty handkerchief into my mouth.
"Bite!"
I bit. I choked for air. He tossed me onto his bed. I landed face down.
Down came the strap on the back of my head and ears. Down on my neck. Down
and down, he measured the length of my back by the width of that strap even to
the soles of my feet.
"Roll over!"
And down from my chin to my hands on my privates.
"Hands at your sides!"
And my privates. And my privates. And...
"For good measure!"
Down to the tips of my toes I watched myself turn from white to red to
purple. And I learned.
That was the first time he tanned me that way.

(Stewart, 1995, 10-11)

My father was not a good teacher.

...the best that the educator can do is to ensure that (i) the methods he uses are morally defensible—torture, savage punishment, and persistent conditioning are ruled out; (ii) the 'content' is in line with the best thinking available; in morality, for example, the moral principles taught should be universalizable and related to feelings of other people rather than narrow, specific, and egocentric; and (iii) the 'content' should be presented in such a way as to encourage the child to develop a critical spirit towards it....Since a way of life is caught as much as taught, it would be futile as well as presumptuous to suggest that a parent train a child to a way of life he himself does not follow. For the essence of training lies in consistency, and the parent's own outlook has to be part of this consistency.

(Snook, 1975, 94-95)

I hated hearing "lines of scrimmage" at whatever yard-line, as his television blared his football game through his house day and night. I hated those little black lines between the numbers on the face of the clock. Tick tick I'm running out of time tick tick time's up here comes Dad I'm in trouble.
i watch
my
rpm

i rev
when
you call my name

i go
fear
fearful
fearsome

i grind
my 3-speed
gearsome

i find
neutral
when you go home

(Stewart, August 23, 1990)

Dad was never late. I hated every curved line he inscribed on my skin with his knuckles and fists and elbows and feet. I hated every straight line he inscribed on my skin with his weapons. Did he use me to try to banish his own self-loathing and rage against himself? Was he using my blood, shed in sacrifice, to cleanse himself, to redeem himself, more or less than intentionally indulging in the pleasure he derived from being sadistic? The only thing I could do with my life was try to survive. The only way I could try to do that was to be brave. Is it possible that my being brave taught my father something inarticulable?

...sooner or later being less human leads the oppressed to struggle against those who have made them so. In order for this struggle to have meaning, the oppressed [become] restorers of the humanity of both. This, then, is the great humanistic and historical task of the oppressed: to liberate themselves and their oppressors as
well...And this fight, because of the purpose given it by the oppressed, will actually constitute an act of love opposing the lovelessness which lies at the heart of the oppressor's violence....

(Freire, 1970, 28-29)

In some strange way, did my father think that, by shedding my blood and leaving stripes on me, he was purging something sinful from within himself in some way like God using Jesus, His son, to redeem the world with His blood?

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

(Isaiah 53:5)

Who his own self bare our sins on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes we are healed.

(I Peter 2:24)

I hate striped clothes. Prisoner clothes. I hate straight block walls and brick walls like my father built. My favourite walls are those of the loghouse in the bush where I finished writing Playing to lose. These walls are more than a foot thick. About 140 years ago, the grandfather of my 83-year-old neighbour, the now deceased Hugh Winter, built this loghouse. We generally think of logs as dead. When we say "tree" we mean "living, growing tree." Hugh Winter's grandfather built me a tree-house. A refuge. Those big hewn logs smell honest. Their honest knots and cracks tickle the eye. Their lines flow to and from dovetail corners to form a giant, friendly ribcage. The corners are breastbones. The walls breathe. They have honest voices too—they creak and groan in the wind. These walls are full of nothing but tree. These walls are meeting places—places where inside warmth radiates outward to meet and mingle with winter.

During the winters, I carried wood indoors to warm up before loading it into the stove—to prevent dramatic temperature change within the firebox.
My Truckbody

My left foot is flat on the ground. I park my right buttock on my right heel. My right forearm waits on my right thigh. I'm a truck. A worktruck. I'm a selfloading dumptruck, loading mydumptruckself up with 18-inch lengths of split oak for my airtight woodstove. I grip each heavy piece with my left hand, and load up my right arm. Seven pieces. A good load. I turn my head sideways and stack them tight to my neck. Nine. A full load. I can do it. I can do it.

Twelve. Overloaded. One more for good measure. Right leg buckling. Push up, legs.

Puuushhhhh.

"Zh-zh-zh-zh."

Strain of load transferring to right arm and right shoulder. Balance load over chassis.

Don't bounce, don't break my axle, my ankle. Walk, legs. Bull low.

"Rrrohwrrrr-rrrohwrrrr-rrrohwrrrr."

Made it. Down, legs.

"Pshhhhhhhhhhh-thmp."

I'm a selfunloading dumptruck. Unload, one at a time. Get the next load. High gear.

"Zzzzoooommmm."


Unload two. Full load. Push this load up, legs.

"Zh-zh-zh-zh."

Not such a strain on my leafsprings; this load is not as heavy as the last one. No danger of
broken axle, broken ankle. Bull low.

"Rrrohwrrr-rrrohwrrr-rrrohwrrr."

Not such a strain on my gearbox, my gut. Squat down to unload.

"Pshhhhhhhhhhh-thmp."

I'm a selfunloading dumptruck. Unload one. Feel the space open up inside. Unload one. Feel myself lighten. Lighten up.Unload one. Not such a strain to unload myself of this load. Unload one, create more space inside me. The more I unload-write my trauma stories and poems, the more I lighten up, the more space I create inside me for lighter stories and poems. Next load. Low gear.

"Rrrohwrrr-rrrohwrrr-rrrohwrrr."

I'm a selfloading dumptruck, loading mydumptruckself up. Seven pieces. A good load. Wait. Unload two. Unload two more. Revise this story. Unload them all. The healingstory always starts right here, right now.


These loghouse walls you can respect. This loghouse has no walls inside it, no hollow two-by-four stud walls, stuffed with superitchy insulation and covered with drywall and paint, like
the kind of walls my dad built. As if his walls could forever imprison his children. As if he could teach his children to fear him and God more. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom..." (Psalms 111:10). Telling my story is the beginning of learning to live instead of merely surviving. How much fear can a child hold in his/her body? As if my father's walls could gag forever the voices of his children. As if the God he feared would not and could not see and hear through his walls. As if God pretended to be as deaf and blind as my mother.

BELSHAZZAR the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand....They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone. In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote....Then Daniel answered and said before the king...I will read the writing unto the king....the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, thou hast not glorified: Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written. And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians....In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. (Daniel 5:1-30)

As a boy, I wrote on my dad's walls. Sending him the same message. He escaped the Canadian justice system, but he did not escape my judgement.

"If you scribble on the walls again, tonight," [Mum] said, "your name will be mud in the morning."
"Yes Mum, I mean no Mum."
Every chance I got, I pretended to correct myself with both answers, for inside I had only one response to any demand. No. I still do.
I was in Grade 5, and my pen was mine. I took it from my satchel. I knelt in the bed and printed my name in capital letters on the wall. I pressed hard, and I thought about mud. Mud pies and lemon meringue pies and Dad's pies. I printed my name again, vertically, so the w's matched, like in a crossword puzzle, and I pressed harder. My name made a perfect cross. I capped my pen and played at writing my name in the air. I liked to put a little curl at the beginning of my
In the morning, Thomas and Michael held me kneeling over a chair by the ankles and wrists while Dad strapped me from head to foot and back again. A week later, when I could sit down, I went back to school, and every time a big truck drove toward me on 12th Avenue, I looked at its front bumper to see if my name was written there, ready to step into its path.

(Stewart, 1995, 46-47)

At the loghouse I learned how to accept being suicidal on a moment-to-moment basis. I tied my sturdy rope to rafters at the top of the stairs and pulled the hangman's noose tight to my neck. I cannot write my book; I am in too much pain. I cannot even write a page or a paragraph. I am going to commit suicide right now. But first I am going to change this one word. Add a comma here, move this line over here. Wow, a poem! Thank you Poem for coming by! Now I'm hungry again. I am going to commit suicide right now. But first I'm going to have one more slice of toast and Laura Secord strawberry jam. What's going to happen to the rest of this good jam when I'm dead? I am going to commit suicide but first I am going to brush my teeth. Maybe I should leave a little will. To whom shall I bequeath the rest of my strawberry jam? I am going to commit suicide but first I am going to call Dr. Wehrspann for an appointment. I am going to commit suicide right after my appointment with Dr. Wehrspann. Right after I call my children. I just want to hear their voices one more time. Wow, a red cardinal landing on the barbwire fence! Thank you Birdy for coming by! I am going to commit suicide right after I rip that ugly barbwire fence out of the Earth. A cardinal is the embodiment of The Christmas Spirit. The sight and sound of cardinals bring me joy. Since I was a young lad, I've felt that a barbwire fence is no place for a cardinal to land. "I was looking out the window, watching a cardinal on the barbwire fence across the road" (Stewart, 1995, 12).

I am deeply moved by the comfort brought to Frankl, in the midst of his despair, by a bird.
This scene is but one example of the power of Frankl's (1962) own qualitative inquiry:

For hours I stood hacking at the icy ground. The guard passed, insulting me more, and once again I communed with my beloved. More and more I felt that she was present, that she was with me; I had the feeling that I was able to touch her, able to stretch out my hand and grasp hers. The feeling was very strong: she was there. Then, at that very moment, a bird flew down silently and perched just in front of me, on the heap of soil which I had dug up from the ditch, and looked steadily at me.

(Frankl, 1962, 40)

I am viscerally moved by Frankl's language, by the way it conveys the tangible quality of his love for his wife. I vicariously mourn his loss and rejoice with him for the affirmation of her life and her love, embodied in the presence of that bird of life. I came to know a deathbird, a rescuer, that delivered me to the whale.

Dad held my feet together in his left hand, and he stabbed and stabbed stabbed over and over and over with the point of the twist spike until the soles of my feet were red mush.

He chased us out the back door onto the gravel.

“You're not fit to sleep in my house!”

We ran for the van between the poplars. Stones in the feet. It was a big bread van. We opened the rear doors.

“Get your clothes off! You devils get any blood on the floor of my truck, and we do this again in the morning!”

It was a frosty October night. We stripped. We kneeled just inside the doors, so our feet wouldn't even drip onto the bumper. We didn't touch each other, or say a word. We just cried. I lay down. All my skin on the front of me stuck to the cold metal.

I thought about a big mother pterodactyl, coming to rescue me, swooping down, folding her big wings as she came through the back of the truck, digging her big long sharp talons into the middle of my back and lifting me up and flapping her big wings and crashing out through the windshield and flying over the ocean and dropping me plop into the waves and me sinking down down down.

Then all I knew was blackness.

(Stewart, 1995, 31)

Frankl survived four Nazi concentration camps. His story, like mine, is about life behind and beyond barbwire.
In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below....
(McCrae, cited in Gustafson, 1984, 110)

Life Beyond Barbwire

Barbwire fences aren't built to keep cattle, sheep, or people between the lines. All sorts of fences do that. Barbwire has one function only: to inflict pain. Pain is the bad guy. The fear of Pain keeps you fenced in. You don't even approach that barbwire fence. You build your own fence within the perimeter, shrinking the size of your trap. I like friendly fences that people can climb and sit on, fences that animals can approach and chew or kick or rest their chin on while people pet them. I hate how barbwire fencelines leave gashes in the wind. As I pulled the barbwire up out of the Earth, I was pulling it out of the veins in my wrists. I left black lines in the earth, cutting the sod, as I tore out the painwire. Bonus! I filled a yoghurt container with worms for fishing. Wilton and I burned fenceposts for months in our outdoor firepit. During his visit with me in June 1993, I told him a story by the fire every night. In one story, themes emerged about violence at home and school, an indoor-outdoor classroom, the power of a pencil, a teacher with different selves, life in death, resurrection, and healing. Wilton loved the story. In September 1993, the beginning of the school year, I wrote it. I share it now, Gentle Reader, with you.

Interlude: A Short Story Entitled "Drawing"

Nobody knew Railway was not an ordinary kid.

Just after the school bell rang, he charged into Biology, out of breath. He sharpened his
new yellow pencil.

"Have a pickle," said Rob.

From a very large jar, he flopped a frog upsidedown on Railway's desk.

"Ugh."

"You're welcome."

If you were alive and I tickled you, frog, would you laugh?

"I'm sorry Mrs. Brannigan, I can't do this," said Guy. "No way. I just had breakfast."

"Guy, you little wimp," said Lilly. "Hop up on my desk, and I'll cut your little froggy belly open then we'll all know how much ketchup you had with your scrambled eggs!"

"Lilly!" yelled Monica, "You're gross!"

As instructed, Railway fastened the frog's splayed form with long pins. He made a clean vertical incision from the lower jaw to anus and two lateral incisions between the forelegs and hindlegs. He opened the frog—like a child opens a small box of cereal along the perforated lines—and pinned the rubbery skin back.

"Ugh."

He took the pencil from behind his left ear. On a clear page in his notebook, he carefully drew the frog as he saw it before him.

Head, shoulders, arms, leave a space, legs. What did you look like before, frog?

He removed the pins; the doors closed. He drew the sides, belly, the lines of incision.

That's not what you looked like before, frog.

He slowly erased the vertical line from the lower jaw, and the two lateral lines. He turned the page on his notepad, and set it down on his desk. But as he reached for pins he saw no
incisions in the frog.

"You feeling a little squeamish too, Railway?" asked Mrs. Brannigan.

"No, not too much," he stammered.

He showed her what he had just drawn.

"That's rather good."

"I just wanted to show what he looked like, before--"

"--He?"

"It. I mean, I'm not sure yet."

"Well," she said. "This isn't exactly art class, I suggest you get on with it."

"Yes Ma'am."

Railway drifted over to Jimmy's desk. Jimmy ate popcorn from his shirt pocket.

"Hi bud. Want some?"

"No thanks," he whispered. "Hey Jimmy, let me draw your frog."

"Okay bud, sure."

Railway drew. Head, shoulders, arms, leave a space, legs.

"Take out the pins, just for a minute, so I can see how he looked before."

Railway drew the sides, belly, and lines of incision. Then, as he slowly erased the lines in his notepad, the cuts in Jimmy's frog knitted.

"Mrs. Brannigan!" yelled Jimmy. "Mrs. Brannigan! Something very scientifically scary is happening over here!"

Jimmy explained as she approached his desk.

"Really?" she said. "How interesting. Perhaps Mister Rawlins could give a demonstration
to the class."

Everyone gathered around Lilly's frog.

"Just take out the pins," said Railway.

As he erased the lines in his notebook, Lilly's frog mended.

Gord hobbled through the crowd on crutches.

"I couldn't see, man" he lied.

In a flash Gord severed the right hind leg of the frog.

"Jeez."

Railway turned the page in his notebook, drew Gord. Head, shoulders, arms, sides, left leg, right leg in a cast, leaning on crutches.

With Lilly's red pencil, he slashed the drawing. Instantly, blood poured from Gord's left leg. He roared in agony and fell backward to the floor. Everyone screamed. Railway erased the red line on his drawing. He erased the cast. Gord stopped crying. He laughed. Everyone laughed. Even Mrs. Brannigan. Rob helped Gord to his feet, and he walked hesitantly, but without crutches, away from the broken pieces of his plaster cast on the floor.

"I'm sorry, man," he said. "Thanks a lot, man."

"You're welcome."

As Railway drew Lilly's frog a new leg in his notebook, so it grew on her frog. He drew seventeen frogs whole. He drew them hopping through the air, and he drew them all together in warm water in the blue enamel basin on Mrs. Brannigan's desk.

Railway drew Ted's front teeth that had been punched down his throat by his father. Jane closed her eyes and described her liver. Railway listened and drew and erased the cancer. And
when she showed her baldness he drew her a thick golden mane.

"I've only got bunions, so what," said Mrs. Brannigan. All I want, all I ever truly wanted, was to stand at my easel with paints and brushes in the world of living things as an old lady. To leave a legacy of paintings that would inspire others to seek and record the beauty in the motion of life."

"So why did you get yourself stuck in teaching?" asked Rob.

She started to cry.

"I don't know how to be courageous."

"Mrs. Brannigan," said Railway, "what you just said is courageous."

He drew her in the classroom.

"Look out the window, Mrs. Brannigan," he said. "Tell me about where you want to be."

As she talked, Railway drew her standing beyond the football field, painting at the edge of the ravine. As he drew this picture of her, he erased the other.

"Look! Over there!" the students yelled. "There she is! There she is!"

Railway watched from the window. They all walked with Gord as he carried the basin full of croaking frogs toward the old lady in a purple hat, her paintbrush boogying on canvas.

(Stewart, September 1993)

I gave a copy of this story, as a gift, to Robin, my partner's eldest daughter. She made a film based on "Drawing" while she was attending Ryerson. She gave me a small drum, my first drum, for Christmas, in 1995. When I focus on playing the drum, my joy-in-music-making becomes greater than the pain in my hands, wrists, arms and shoulders. Playing the drum is a healing exercise for me.
Before the snow flew at the loghouse, I coiled up a heaping pickuptruck full of barbwire and took it to the recycling depot. We live in an automotive society. If we don't respect and stay within the lines painted on the road, we're not going to survive.

panic's a flat tire
at eighty miles an hour
you left your rubber
on the road and your
rim furrows the tar
you can't go over
you're going over
no you're over
the line aiming for
the oncoming car
and you got no air
in your lungs but fear
in your eyes to spare

(Stewart, November 7, 1990)

Like block walls, I hate lined paper. I need room to play on the page, and those straight lines look just like bars on my window. I cannot erase them. A poem needs space.

this palm
this womb

this pen
this cord

this ink
this blood

this poem
this being

this page
this world

(Stewart, April 6, 1991)

As a boy, I needed some space to grow. I wanted to feel myself growing. Inside. I wanted to
grow so I could feel that I had a human shape and a human size. I wanted to belong somewhere on the Earth. I wanted to grow big enough to fight my dad in my kind of fight.

The problem: God helped David and Samson but God was not helping me. God was not always on the side of the good guy. Of course I was the good guy. How could I trust their God when He told Abraham to kill his son?

And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of....And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together. And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son. and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do any thing unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou has not withheld thy son from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.

(Genesis 22: 1-13)

Abraham was a hero to my parents and everybody in their church because he was willing to sacrifice his son. To me, Abraham, like my dad, was the bad guy. Isaac was the good guy. God did not help Isaac. He ignored him. Isaac was a pawn in God's game with Abraham. At the last second, God's angel hollered at Abraham. Just because Isaac was spared doesn't mean Isaac should forgive his dad for almost killing him, or God for telling his dad to do kill him in the first place.
Abraham,
Why don’t you untie me,
And lie down here
Instead.
And if I hear your god
Tell me
Not to spread your cowardly innards
Over this cold rock like marmalade,
You can pretend
To be my daddy
Again.

(Stewart, December 2, 1985)

I was like Isaac, being sacrificed on my father’s bed. To whom was I being sacrificed? To my Godlike father? Why didn’t God ever help me? Why didn’t He tell my father not to kill me, not to hurt me? I touched on this story of Abraham and Isaac in my autobiography. Even at school, its parallels transfixed me:

...I withdrew the folded page from my sock. I had torn it out of a dirty old Catholic Bible in the barn. In the picture, Abraham’s hair and beard were blown to one side by a fierce wind. He was looking up and shouting something at the black, swirling clouds. In his right hand, he held the gleaming dagger, with a thick, curved blade, just above his young son Isaac, who was tied up on the altar. I held the paper to a knot-hole for more light. I did not see any fear at all in Isaac’s eyes and I thought the guy who painted the picture was a dummy because he didn’t know how scary it really was.

(Stewart, 1995, 36)

I have been unable to find that picture for you, Gentle Reader. However, I have found one similar (see page 66). The context:

Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valour....And so it was that when the children of Ammon made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead...said unto Jephthah, Come and be our captain....And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, Then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace...shall surely be the Lord’s, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering. So Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against them; and the Lord delivered them into his hands....And Jephthah came to
Mizpeh unto his house, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances; and she was his only child; beside her he had neither son nor daughter. And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed.

(Judges 11:1-39)

I knew why God didn't help me. Like my dad, the New Testament God sacrificed his own son. I was the burnt offering. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son..." (John 3:16). God sent his son Jesus, "the Lamb of God" (John 1:29) into the world to be killed, to die on the cross. Alone. Sometimes God was the bad guy.

Sometimes, God was the good guy in a different way than with David and Samson.

Sometimes He didn't just help the good guys win, He rescued them:

Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury...and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times [sic] more than it was wont to be heated. And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Mesach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of fourth is like the Son of God.

(Daniel 3:19-25)

But why didn't God rescue me from my father's bed-altar-furnace-lion's den? Sometimes God was the good guy then became the bad guy. He rescued the good guys, but then didn't just make the bad guys pay. He made their innocent wives and children get killed like they were bad guys too.

Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said unto Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live forever. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me. Then was the king exceeding glad for him... And the king commanded, and they brought those
men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den.

(Daniel 6:16-24)

Sometimes God was the bad guy and the good guy at the same time. All the people of Nineveh are bad guys? God's the good guy. God's the bad guy because He says he's going to destroy Nineveh. Jonah says He won't, and disobeys God's orders. This makes Jonah the bad guy? Jonah offers his life to save the crew; Jonah's the good guy. God prepares a great fish to swallow Jonah. God's the bad guy until He tells the great fish to release Jonah. Then He's the good guy. But He's going to still destroy Nineveh, so He's still the bad guy. Jonah obeys God, the people of the city repent, and God decides not to destroy the city, just like Jonah predicted. God's the good guy. Jonah is angry with God for making him take this long trip for nothing.

Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah, the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me. And Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish...and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare thereof...But the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken. Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man to his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep.... And they said every one to his fellow, Come, let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah....And he said unto them, Take me up, as cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you; for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you....So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging....Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights....Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God...And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land....So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh...And God saw their works, that they turned away from their evil way; and God repented of the evil that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not. But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. And he prayed to the Lord, and said, I pray thee, O Lord, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my own country? Therefore I fled to Tarshish: for I knew that thou are
a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil. Now, therefore, O Lord, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live....Then said the Lord...should I not spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle? (Jonah 1:1-4:11)

My Defiant Voice

How could I trust this God who was so like my dad? I was alone, and had to trust myself. I defied my parents at every opportunity. Like Jonah, I could not escape. Jonah was one of my Bible heroes for being defiant. He tried to get as far away as possible from God.

Jonah...is described as living at some time when Nineveh was still the capital of the Assyrian empire....He went down (presumably from his home in the mountains of Judah, or Jerusalem) to Joppa, with the intention of sailing across the sea to Tarshish (Spain, Sardinia, or Etruria?). In Biblical times Joppa was one of the principal ports of Palestine. At the end of the second millennium B.C. it came under Philistine control and remained so throughout the period of the Old Testament. After Sennacherib's campaign against Judah in 701 B.C. it passed under Assyrian control; the Phoenician elements amongst its populations now became so numerous that, in the Persian period, it was considered a Tyrian city. The presence of these Phoenician sea-farers at Joppa explains why Jonah could expect to find a ship there to take him to one of the distant shores of the Mediterranean. The vessel on which Jonah embarked was no doubt one of the large type which, in Biblical times, ventured out into the open seas. Ships of this kind, usually manned by Phoenician crews, were propelled by sails, with as many as sixty rowers in reserve in case of need. In their voyages across the length and breadth of the Mediterranean the Phoenicians hugged the shores wherever possible...the ships had nothing to steer by on cloudy nights. In a sudden storm the crew would hurriedly furl their sails and row with all their might for the nearest point of land.

(Avi-Yonah & Kraeling, 1962, 230-232)

A synchronicity: Avi-Yonah researching the story of Jonah. Jonah bravely offered himself to save the crew. (See also Wright & Filson, 1945, 22.) I admired that. I practiced that at home. I cared for my brothers and sisters:
"...Whoever did it, step forward, like a man, and take what's coming to you! Otherwise, everybody gets it!" I didn't break it. On both sides of me everybody started crying and pissing and shitting themselves but I just told my don't muscles to not let go. I didn't want Dad to beat up everybody, so I took one two three steps forward.

(Stewart, 1995, 27)

Jonah was more brave than all my other Bible heroes—he stayed alive inside the great fish. He prayed to God from the great fish's belly (Jonah 2:1-9), but God didn't help him while he was in there. He ignored him. God didn't even talk to him, much less keep him company or send an angel like He did for Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego in the fiery furnace, or Daniel in the lion's den.

They called

Jonah
fishproof

Daniel
lionproof

Abed-nego
fireproof

Peter
waterproof

Jesus
nailproof

once.

(Stewart, December 13, 1985)

God didn't help Jonah get out of the great fish. God spoke only to the great fish. But even Biblical stories can be restored.

The story of Jonah in the Geneva Bible (1560/1969) is almost identical to the King James
Version. Jonah is swallowed, and stays inside the great fish the same amount of time:

Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swalowe vp Ionah: and Ionah was in the belly of the fith thre daies, [sic] and thre nights.

(Geneva Bible, 1560, Ionah 1:17)

Jesus (in the King James Version) compares himself, prior to his crucifixion, to Jonah:

For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the belly of the earth.

(Matthew 12:40)

For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of Man be to this generation.

(Luke 11:30)

The apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Corinthians, reiterates that Jesus was dead for three days before his resurrection:

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.

(I Corinthians 15:4)

Jesus, through his own physical death, sets the example of spiritual death, burial, and re-birth.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

(John 3:3-7)

To be "born of water" is to be baptized. Jesus was himself baptized by John the Baptist in the River Jordan (Mark 1:9). The apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, charges Christians to be Christ-like. The physical ritual of baptism is laden with the spiritual significance of death, burial and re-birth.
Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so also should we walk in the newness of life. For if we be planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

(Romans, 6:4-6)

Just as Jonah's physical baptism in the sea, inside the great fish, is an enactment of his spiritual transformation, so too are Christians transformed by their belief in Jesus. Now that they are re-born, they must share the story of their salvation with non-believers, converting them into Christians. "And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men" (Mark 1:17). My parents prided themselves on belonging to a group of Christian fundamentalists for whom the King James Version was taken to be God's Literal Truth. Ishmael would have been wary of my parents, for they were stupefied by their own inhuman zeal. "Better sleep with a sober cannibal than a drunken Christian" (Melville, 1851/1976, 118). Anyone not adhering to the salvation doctrine of the King James Version was bound for hell. Only through the shedding of blood could humans cleanse themselves and approach God. In the Old Testament, animals were sacrificed to this end. In the New Testament, Jesus' blood, the blood of the son, not of the father, was required.

Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

(Hebrews 9:12-14)

The Christmas story of Jesus' birth, celebrated around the world, includes that of innocent
children, slaughtered by command of the king.

...behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word; for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him....Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had inquired of the wise men.

(Matthew 2:13-16)

Like Jesus, Moses was part of a group of infants sentenced to death by Pharaoh. Moses and Jesus, as saviours, did not come cheaply. The price was paid in other children's blood.

And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive....And the woman conceived, and bare a son...she hid him three months. And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime, and with pitch, and put the child therein, and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink....And the daughter of Pharaoh cam down to wash herself at the river....And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water.

(Exodus 1:22-2:10)

The little boat which cradled baby Moses is a miniature of Noah's huge ark. Only Noah and his immediate family escaped when God drowned all the other inhabitants of the world. Pharaoh, Herod, and God--all kings of death.

Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch....And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die. But with thee I will establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.

(Genesis 6:14-17)

Moses, surrounded with darkness in his little "ark of bulrushes" led the Israelites to the promised land (see Opie's illustration entitled "The Egyptians Drowned In The Red Sea" page 74). Like Noah, from the big ark, who led his family to repopulate the world. Like Jonah, who from the
THE EGYPTIANS DROWNED IN THE RED SEA
belly of the whale, led the people of Nineveh to repentance, saving them from destruction. Like Jesus, who from the sepulchre after his crucifixion, led believers to Heaven.

The significant difference between the King James Version and the Geneva rendering of the story of Jonah is how Jonah leaves the great fish—through which exit. The King James Version clearly states Jonah was "vomited out" (Jonah 2:10), but the Geneva Bible does not:

...And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it cast out Jonah upon the drye land.
(emphasis added, Jonah 2:10)

Three hundred years after the publication of Geneva Bible, Gustave Dore (1832-1883) illustrated the Bible. In his black-and-white illustration entitled "Jonah Cast Forth By The Whale (n.d, np), Jonah watches the whale over his right shoulder from the land (see page 76). Jonah's back faces the sea. His robes blow in the wind. Dark clouds fill the sky. White foam of the waves rolling against the shore almost splashes Jonah's right foot. Jonah sees the length of the huge black whale in the shallow water. Maybe the whale has not already turned. The tip of the whale's tail, not its mouth, is close to Jonah's foot; I see the whale as having defecated Jonah onto the beach.

This is a powerful picture, as powerful now at 42 years old as the illustrations I saw as a boy living in rural Canada—I felt like David facing Goliath, like Samson in chains pushing the pillars apart, like Isaac being sacrificed on the altar. I now feel like Jonah. Jonah has his back to the whale, his mobile underwater grave, yet he must see the whole whale from his new perspective, from this distance, now that he is outside of it, now that he is alive again. The great fish that contained him is itself contained in the vast sea that meets the sky on the horizon. What would Jonah say to the great fish, now, before it departs? What would the great fish say to
Conversation with Great Fish: Matthew and Sorrow

Whale: You are safe here, on this peninsula. I know these waters. This is high tide. Rest. I must go.

Jonah: I thought you were taking my life, but you were giving it back to me.

Whale: Your life always was, is, and always will be your own. You gave your life to me, to hold in safekeeping for you. I must go.

Jonah: Don't.

Whale: I must or I will drown. You drown in water, I drown out of water.

Jonah: Wait. I recognize your voice. Tell me your name.

Whale: My name is Sorrow.

Jonah: I carry you in my heart.

Sorrow: I live to carry you out of danger. You must not try to carry me.

Jonah: My mother, who carried me in her belly, does not care how I live or die. She, who named me, has forgotten my name. I carry this pain in my heart. My name is Matthew. I want you to know my name, to call me by my name.

Sorrow: Oh Matthew, my son. I have never forgotten. I will never forget your name. My body knows you as your body knows me. Still, you must learn how to live again. You must learn how to breathe. I have carried you as far as I can. Now you can carry you.

Matthew: Who carries you, Sorrow?

Sorrow: The breath of sea. Waves rise up to inhale, and dive back down, exhaling into the sea. I hear them. Every plant that dances underwater breathes into the sea. I hear them.
Every swimming child breathes into the sea. I hear them. I have ears for a thousand miles. Every salty tear you shed finds its way home to the sea. Breathe.

Matthew: My father always says, "If you cry a cupful, I'll buy you a goldfish."

Sorrow: His heart is smaller than that of a goldfish. You do not cry alone, Matthew. I hear your voice in your tears. I follow the scent directly to you. I shall always catch you in my mouth whenever you need me, and you shall know that you are home safe with me. Then, when you are strong again, I shall carry you safely back to this shore of life, like always. The tide is moving out. I must go now. I am governed by Mother Moon. With her great breath she moves the tide.

Matthew: Who will help me learn to walk?

Sorrow: My brother, Grizzly. He walks like thunder among trees; he fears no man. Let him take you fishing.

Matthew: Who will help me learn to dance?

Sorrow: My brother, Eagle, who glides on the breath of the sun. Grizzly and Eagle shall carry you further than I. I can only carry you through the darkness of your suffering, to the light. Grizzly and Eagle shall carry you always in the light. We shall never fail you. Trust.

My Mother's You-Deserve-To-Be-Punished Voice

My mother often called me Jonah, as if that were my name. Every time she called me Jonah she used her You-Deserve-To-Be-Punished Voice—she meant I was the bad guy. I left their home as a teenager:

"You're quite determined to run away I see, Jonah. Here. This is your
she share of this month's baby-bonus cheque."
  She laughed.
  "Have a good time, Jonah, and I'll pray that you come to your senses
before you kill yourself."
  (Stewart, 1995, 84)

I returned to their home as a young father:

  "You both think you exist between God, over here, and the Devil, over
here. I don't."
  They laughed.
  "Of course you don't, Jonah, what else is new?"
  "Too b-b-bad. G-g-god doesn't care w-w-what you think."
  (Stewart, 1995, 105)

I strained my father through my own violent self:

...the best sacrifice doesn't get any blood on your hands dad because you didn't
quite kill me you just made sure I want to kill yourself and save you the bother all
in the name of love to protect your Godlike image just ask Jonah.
  (Stewart, 1995, 111)

Finally I confronted my mother about my name:

  "I never ran away like you. Every time dad knocked me down I got back
up. Don't you ever. Ever, call me Jonah again. You hear me?"
  "I hear you."
  (Stewart, 1995, 146)

**My Mother's Dying Voice**

My mother is dying. She has had six or seven strokes, and is very frail and terrified of
dying alone. About two o'clock in the morning on March 29, 1997, I felt and heard a voice deep
in my gut--a voice that I had never heard before.

"Matthew," it called.

It was my mother's Dying Voice, low and quiet.

"Matthew. Come home."
It woke me.

A Prayer for my Mother

I had not seen her for about eight years. Instead of calling her house, I played my own songs for her on the piano. I haven’t learned how to read musical notation yet; I’m learning by ear. But I couldn’t say what I needed to say on the piano, so I played my big cedar drum from Ghana—a gift from Christine on my 40th birthday, 1996.

David's hung
his synthetic supertuned buffalo drum
on the wall of his music
room.
He plays me boxful of wires,
perfect digital
dum dum dum.
I play him tree,
skin,
buffalo hoof buffalo horn buffalo bum.

(Stewart, January 26, 1995)

The more I played for Mum, the slower I played, until I could only beat the drum slowly, softly, with my left hand. I played her my heartbeat drumbeat.

The artist’s voice deepens when it lets go of its egotistical craving for invention and recognition and surrenders to rhythm. As with drumming and trance, variations emerge spontaneously and effortlessly once the artist loses self-consciousness through immersion in rhythmic process. Artists cannot operate in this way without a mastery of technique which allows their souls to become instruments of recurrence.

(McNiff, 1981, 35)

Playing songs for my father is much harder; I cannot find a rhythm yet. In August 1997, two weeks before Kristina-Mae’s wedding, she and I visited Mum near Vancouver, to say goodbye. Kristina-Mae and I arrived on her doorstep, almost to the day, 30 years after I first saw that house. My parents fled Ontario with 5 brothers and me during July of 1967—Canada’s 100th
birthday—when I was 11 years old. I returned as a 41 year old father, and I returned with my 21 year old daughter. Kristina-Mae had asked to accompany me. I made a big picnic lunch for our airplane ride. She brought two bottles of drinking water.

My sister Darlene takes care of Mum full-time now, in the house where my father died in 1983. The house looked and felt smaller; I had actually grown up. Darlene told me in her I'm-The-Boss Voice that she would not allow me to see Mum if I didn't promise to "keep the conversation light." She sat in on our visits to make sure. I had no intention of telling Mum that I'd changed my name, or that my book Playing to lose had been published, or what I was studying in school. The struggle between us is finally over; she no longer has any power to gag me, and now that I am not gagged, I do not hurting her by speaking. I greeted her and spoke consistently in my Visiting-A-Very-Ill-Person-In The-Hospital Voice. She worked to speak through her medication in her wobbly I'm-Too-Tired-To-Talk Voice. Once in a while when I was a boy she used to whistle, warbling loud and clear like a goldfinch, and I wondered where inside her she kept such beautiful music. Mum is too weak to whistle now; her spirit is growing wings. We talked about the weather, my siblings who had come to visit her, my son and daughter. Gently, I held her hands in mine.

"I came to see you, Mum."

She nodded. Gently, I held her eyes in mine.

"Thank you," she said.

Gently, I held her heart in mine.

"Rest now Mum."

For the first time in my life, I left my parents' house without fear in my step, without needing to
look behind me to make sure my father wasn't after me. Healing.

I used to like the smell of Mum's hands. During the summer when I when was thirteen years old, she called me into her bedroom. The bed was already naked.

"Yes Mum?"

Your kingsizeblue mattress looks like a stormy lake.

"Now, you big strongarm Jackson..."

When you make me work hard you always call me that. I have my own name. Whose blood is that and that and that? I know.

You pat the mattress.

"Stand this edge up against the wall to air. Listen how."

No. It's underbelly must be bloody too. I don't want the blood on me. It's too big too heavy.

"Yes Mum."

"Lift that corner of the mattress and crawl underneath it about half way, then push it up with your big strong shoulders."

No.

"Yes Mum."

I crawl under. I can't breathe. It's too dark too big too heavy. Let me out. LET ME OUT.

Conversation with Great Fish: Matthew and Daddywhale

Matthew: Whale, help! I cannot bear this load!

Whale: Be me.
Matthew: How?

Whale: Be shoulders.

Matthew: How?


Matthew: I'm pushing, Daddywhale.

Daddywhale: Grip the sea in your hands. Now push your shoulders up by pushing the sea down while you bring your feet in close. Breathe.

Matthew: I'm on my knees.

Daddywhale: Rise, Matthew. Grip the sea with your feet. Now push up by pushing down with your feet. Breathe. Puuushhh!

Matthew: Zh-zh-zh-zh! I was born in January. Aquarius.

Daddywhale: Breathe, son. Puuushhh.

Matthew: Zh-zh-zh-zh! Water carrier. Take me up, legs.

Daddywhale: Breathe and puuushhh.

Matthew: Zh-zh-zh-zh! Yes, yes, yes! Thank you Daddywhale.

Daddywhale: You're welcome, son. Anytime.

My Mother-in-a-bottle

"Good," Mum says.

Good what good work good thing I did it right without sauce or you'd have called dad that's what.

She points to the closet.

"Get the fan."
No.

"Yes Mum."

Fan's wind. Your fanny's windy under your flowery dress. It's umbilical unbiblical electrical cord'll tickle your bunioney toes.

I turn around and stand with it in my hands. You set the Jergen's bottle back on your dresser. Slowly, gently, you massage the lotion into your palms, staring at them like you've just found them. You smell good. You stroke your own fingers like they're made of spun glass. You smell like a goodkind humanperson. You rub one, two, three rows of your knuckles. You smell like a softinsidefeeling warmtouchgiving mother. You roll your fingers into a fist to defy the breaking. You smell like a friendlysweet stranger. You try to press the lotion into the backs of your hands like they're stone. You smell like I like you. You cradle your wrist in your palm. You smell like you like me. You twist on the black bottlecap.

"Don't just stand there, put it down, and get about your business."

No Mum please. Matthew don't cry. Mum no don't push me away so fast, not again. Please love me just one little minute. Matthew think legs. Get out. Now I don't like you Mum even more you keep yourmotherself in that bottle like a genie. Matthew get out or she'll call dad.

"Yes Mum."

When I returned home from my Vancouver trip, for the first time in my life, I bought Jergen's bath soap. When Mum dies, I shall bathe with Jergen's soap; I shall mourn. On May 8, 1994, after I had signed a publishing contract for my autobiography with Oberon Press, I buried one copy of the manuscript—without any names being changed—in the bottom of my filing cabinet. I intended, upon being notified of my mother's death, to set that copy under her knees in
her casket. On January 19, 1998, Marc Silnicki and I shredded that copy. Releasing it has released me. Great Spirit, I release my mother from the curse I set upon her in my rage. May she be comforted. Amen and blessed be.

Mum sacrificed young Darlene to Dad, offering Darlene like bait to a shark, and now Darlene is nursing Mum. Darlene volunteered for the job no one else would take.

"There's still one thing I cannot do," she told me. "I cannot take the bolt off my bedroom door."

She spoke in her Abused Daughter Voice.

"Do you want my help? I asked.

"No. I need to do it myself. When I can, I'll be able to say 'Screw you, Dad, you're dead.'"

She cried. She needed me to hear her. That's all.

"You're keeping him out," I said, in my Understanding Brother Voice, "keeping your boundaries, keeping yourself safe." Kristina-Mae and I drove to Tofino, for a brief whale-watching excursion. As soon as I spotted the first whale, I lay down on the deck of the boat, and held my hands in the ocean. I wanted to dive in, to be with them. I was not afraid. Inside, with my Meditative Voice, I thanked the great fish for coming to visit me, for being. Now when I meditate, I do not thank my parent's Biblical God, I thank The Great Spirit for Life itself, for whales and rocks and trees and children. Rather than asking for help, I ask "How can I help?" I'm not looking for an answer--I'm not asking a question. I'm offering myself. Offering, not sacrificing. I'm centring myself, keeping my focus.

Jonah survived being swallowed, staying in the guts of the great fish three days and three
nights, and being expelled. Alone. How did he do that? How did I survive?

As I build this thesis, I work at keeping my focus, reminding myself throughout the day that this tremor in my guts is called "excitement," not "fear." When I lose my focus, hope drops runs out of me like diarrhoea. Working at this intensity involves risk. "We may be transformed; we may also be consumed" (Krall, 1988, 472). Every consumer is consumed in the circle of life (see the picture of the whale's jaws of death in the Toronto Star article "Bonding with the undersea behemoths", October 10, 1997, page 87). I do not want to be consumed again, I do not want to traumatize myself. A contradiction: I do not seek transformation but I want to learn how to be a researcher. I want to grow, but I do not want it to hurt. I have come this far already,

Gentle Reader. I bear you in mind, I hear your voice encouraging me to go on.

One's life or world takes on meaning and value not by an active involvement in a transformation of the world but by a transformation of oneself in which one sees the world "sub specie aeternitatis" from outside.

(Cell, 1978, 129)

I can only learn how to conduct this inquiry if I reach beyond my own insecurities and pain that threaten to paralyse and silence me. I am alive today; I must try. But I need help.

Conversation with Great Fish: Matthew and MummyOISE/UTwhale

Matthew: Whale, help! I cannot bear this pain!

Whale: You can bear it. Without experiencing this pain, Matthew, you cannot be free.

Matthew: I am unworthy to be free. What must I do to be worthy?

Whale: Oh my son, you are worthy. Not by what you do, but who you are. Right now, you are being born, and being born is painful. You are worthy to be born into the world.
Wings of the Undersea Behemoth

The IMAX documentary "Wings of the Undersea Behemoth" explores the lives of whales, particularly the humpback whale, which is the largest animal on earth. The film captures the whales' migration patterns, their feeding habits, and their social structures. One of the highlights is the moment when humpback whales form large circles called "humpback_roll" as they travel in their pods. This behavior is thought to be a form of communication among the whales. The IMAX footage is complemented by interviews with experts in marine biology, who provide insights into the whales' behavior and ecology.

The film is directed by Patrick Stewart, Jr., and narrated by Patrick Stewart, III. It offers a unique perspective on these gentle giants, showcasing their beauty and majesty in ways that are rarely seen. For those interested in marine life, this documentary is a must-see, offering both educational value and a visual feast.

By Peter Howell

* * * * *

Reviewed by: David Cork, Wadington

Photo: Christopher Brown

Wings of the Undersea Behemoth
Matthew: How am I worthy, MummyOISE/UTwhale?

MummyOISE/UTwhale: With your being, you offer a gift to the world, and the world needs your gift.

Matthew: But my being, my being born causes you pain!

MummyOISE/UTwhale: No. Pain is one of life's most precious gifts; through pain we all begin life. Through pain, we all find joy. Giving birth to you brings me great pain and great joy. They are inseparable. I must bear down on you, for you have grown too much for me to contain any longer. I have carried you this far, joyfully. Joyfully, I shall soon see your face, and hear your voice resounding. I am joyful that you have chosen OISE/UTme to help push you out into the world. I am joyful that you have chosen OISE/UTme to be your gestating place. It is your responsibility to set yourself free. You must find, outside of OISE/UTme, the source of your own joy, your own laughter. These birthing pains are temporary. Soon you shall be dancing. I must bear down on you, now, to push you through my OISE/UTbirthcanal. Push against me, Matthew. Push hard now.

Puuushhhhh.

Matthew: I'm pushing! Zh-zh-zh-zh!

MummyOISE/UTwhale: Puuushhhhh, Matthew. Puuushhhhh.

Oh! Now I understand, Gentle Reader. I am consumed. The only way to the other side of this inquiry is through it, like the only way to be born is through the pain. This revelation gives me hope; I have just remembered how to be brave again. "To be surprised, to wonder, is to begin to understand" (Gasset, cited in Miller, 1993, 20). I'm afraid, and that's alright; I'm aware of the danger.
'I will have no man in my boat,' said Starbuck [the chief mate], 'who is not afraid of a whale.' By this, he seemed to mean, not only that the most reliable and useful courage was that which arises from the fair estimation of the encountered peril, but that an utterly fearless man is far more dangerous than a coward.

(Melville, 1851/1976, 210)

I am more curious than I am afraid. Give me some elbow room; here I come.

I have learned more than just the story of trauma. Trauma Illness, and Pain, being great teachers, have introduced me to their colleagues Hope, Patience, Truthfulness, Thankfulness, Humour, and Love.

My trauma and survival story is out in the world, mixing with other such stories told by other researchers.
CHAPTER 2

OTHER RESEARCHERS’ STORIES OF TRAUMA AND SURVIVAL

As I confront all the readings I have located, I ask myself, How am I different from a child? All this literature about children and adolescents. Even at 42, I'm just a child, with more responsibility and more choices. This stuff that applies to children applies to me too. Graduate students are similar to kindergartners. We cry, we hope.

I need to write chunks, not chapters. Chapters are too big. Parts of a book, like parts of books of the Bible, just chapter and verse. Let me write chunks. Digestible chunks for the mind, not gut. Here I am trying out my more Scholarly, Detached Voice.

When I started searching the databases for this literature, I asked for help from OISE/UT librarians. I find reading the abstracts and studies of so many child abuse studies just overwhelming. The librarians took turns sitting beside me in front of the computer, day after day, exploring the databases together. I told them straight out that I was afraid I could not do it alone, and they smiled and cheerfully helped me.

Search One

Library staff assisting me: Carol Calder and Marian Press

Databases on CD-ROM used in search:
- Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC)
- Dissertation Abstracts International
- Medline
- PsychLit
- Sociofile
Keywords and phrases cross-referenced in search:

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Search Two

Library staff assisting me: Christine Borowski

Databases on CD-ROM used in search:

- Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC)
- Dissertation Abstracts International
- PsychLit
- Sociofile
After working with the material for a month, I became so fatigued I had to stop working on the project. Literally, I lost my appetite for school; I seriously considered quitting. I had earned A+'s in ten consecutive graduate courses—yet I felt like a failure because I was buckling under the strain. I lost more than 20 pounds. Although I was grateful for all the other research done in this field, I simply could not stomach the hundreds of documents concerning thousands of abused children (see Errante, 1997). My pain was being magnified by the similar suffering of so many.

The new, apparently innocent and non-traumatic place may be a safer place if it enables the child to think about his trauma in manageable digestible portions or what Strachey called 'minimal doses' (1934). ... [Abused children] wish to push into someone else the shock and outrage they were not allowed to express, nor even to feel.... Now there is greater understanding that the child may need that experience contained by someone else who can stand it better than he can. This may have to go on for some time, months or even years perhaps, until the experience is less overwhelming and less indigestible.

(Alvarez, 1992, 154-155)
Gentle Reader, I present the following annotated bibliography in small chunks, which is all I can do at this time. I alphabetize the names of the researchers as on a cenotaph—a litany of grieving. The researchers, proxies of the victims, speak on their behalf. If I seem angry, it is because I wonder who has the right.

Annotated Bibliography

Theme: Survival/Survivors in child abuse literature


I find that I have to engage the unseen researchers in dialogue. The spirit in which the Valley project was carried out is undeniably benevolent, and appreciated. However, more care was needed in recording what actually happened, so the project team and readers can learn how to do it better next time. The problem is that the priority of the project team was to "stay on task," rather than learn how to do what they were doing. Not one false lead or mistake (opportunity for learning) is mentioned in the report. The project had no operating definition of "readiness to learn" or "domestic violence services" rendered. Furthermore, their numbers of "children affected by domestic violence," which increased during the project, are unclear: are they cumulative? This study relies too heavily on the use of bar graphs to illustrate increases in numbers, rather than detailing the effectiveness of the people serving the people needing service. Sadly, the report does not mention any future plans for follow-up to the project. Not one reference cited.

Two salient personality traits, namely hardiness and resilience, are defined and discussed in association with "problem-focused" and/or "emotion-focused" coping strategies. The discussion and conclusions are concerned with two different approaches to therapy with adult clients: focus on the client's childhood trauma or the client's present-day resilience and coping strategies that help them function. Written for counsellors. A dry, overview of literature, starting with Sigmund Freud. Benishek and Morrow are clearly more concerned with how the characteristics of the survivors (listed in point form), may "change over time", and how they might best be "measured" (3) than with how the study of survivor characteristics actually might help clients. Coping is not defined. Healing is never mentioned. Extensive references are cited.


Abused children have a damaged sense of self. They are depressed, and they act depressed; they have no control over their lives, especially their lives at home. I agree.


This summarizes a New Zealand study of violent marriages, and compares the findings to those from similar studies in USA. He concludes, from these studies of marriages, that "it is not the abuse of the child per se which has the most detrimental effects on the development of the child...[but] the abuse of one parent by the other" (60). His conclusion is limited. Is this the price of lack of personal experience? He does not have the "bigger picture." He also states that
"Firstly, teachers have a responsibility to teach all children that violent behaviour is unacceptable in the society outside the home" (61). Who is going to teach the children that violence inside the home, and in society in general, is unacceptable? (See also Russell, 1995; Storrie & Poon, 1991.)

Another disturbing element of this article is the black and white sketch that uses almost two-thirds (from the top) of the page. On the left, a man in suit and tie has his fists clenched and raised against a small girl. He is coming at her, swinging. Her hands are raised, open, as she leans back away from her attacker, defenceless. Her head is not much higher than the window sill, and through the window we see a young boy watching the violence. We see the tree on the front lawn, and the house across the street. This is a depiction of the family home. What I don't understand is why this picture is here. It fills space on the page so the article finishes squarely at the bottom right column four pages later. Even as convenient "filler," the father-against-daughter violence depicted is not congruent with the text concerning spousal abuse. I keep turning this article upside-down and burying it in my pile of research articles to avoid seeing this ugly picture.


These researchers use the term "maltreatment" in recognition of the complexity and the overlap of types of abuse. They propose a dynamic "organizational model" of conceptualizing maltreatment that views parent-child-environment characteristics in transition (36-37). The problem is how they propose to translate this concept into concrete action:

As much as possible, educators and other service personnel should strive to involve parents in the intervention and treatment processes (emphasis in original, 48).

This action plan poses a direct threat to the child survivor of chronic extreme intrafamilial
violence. We need to break that hyphenated word parent-child apart and put lots of space between them to consider the nature of this threat; that is,

Child. Parent.

While I appreciate this approach to understanding the complexities of the problems, I point out that, in cases of chronic extreme intrafamilial violence, the child(ren) must be separated from the parent(s). Any attempt to bring extremely violent parents and their children together, for any reason whatsoever, is highly dangerous. Extremely violent people, who by their behaviour show that they will not be controlled by internal forces, also will not be controlled by external forces like researchers. The only person on earth my father respected was a policeman with a gun on his hip. Therefore, on behalf of the children who have died at the hands of their parents, and on behalf of those of us who survived the onslaught of violence at home, let me say directly to these researchers, "We know who our parents are, and we will not allow you to put our lives in danger again. Keep them away from us." Long after the violent parents die, survivors spend their lives working through the effects of the violence, trying to heal.


Cochrane's article consists of a linear cause-and-effect argument, based on the premise that "if children are abused, they in turn are likely to abuse their own children" (133). He does not substantiate this premise by citing support from the research literature. He assumes that his statement is public knowledge, that it is fact. In the same cause-and-effect manner, he contends that Native children in Australia are no different from European children. While I appreciate the "universality" of child abuse, I am on guard against such sweeping generalizations that disregard
the different cultures in which children are raised:

Clearly, the effects of maltreatment on Aboriginal children are identical to the effects of maltreatment on European children, but because of the widespread alcoholism in Aboriginal society, the risks to Aboriginal children are substantial (133).

This type of reasoning undermines his argument. Nevertheless, he highlights the particular plight of Australian Aboriginal children. They suffer the injustice of being denied "the right to education [which serves] to reinforce [their] sense of hopelessness and helplessness" (136).


Craig's suggestions to help raise the level of an abused child's self esteem and provide the child with skills are important and practical. (I marked 10 paragraphs in this short article.) The teacher is the guarantor of classroom safety, as well as voter with "considerable clout." Craig provides a challenging, direct answer to the question, "but what can we do?"


In less than three-and-a-half pages of type, Craig fills this article with research literature that supports her own strongly voiced argument. Her practical understandings of trauma lead to her conclusion that teachers can handle these children's needs effectively.

Helping these children learn does not involve moral judgment, but rather requires the specification of thinking about the world. It is a response to a cognitive need, not to a behavioural or a psychiatric one (71).

I quote from Craig to respond to Cara Sullivan's teacher questions after I taught her Creative Writing class a number of times in an Oshawa secondary school:

How can we teachers learn to not be afraid of the abused child and his/her story? It feels like we're being abused by the abuse story and the storyteller. We're not
guidance counsellors. Is our society expecting us to be? Where do these kids tell their stories? In my Creative Writing class? In my English class? We can't teach the curriculum when these kids are trying to deal with abuse in our classrooms. Once their abuse stories surface, we refer them to the guidance department, but they have to go on a waiting list for a counsellor. It's horrible for the kid and the teacher. We need a resident social worker at school. Why weren't we trained for this at teacher's college?

(Sullivan, June 30, 1997)

Gentle Reader, hear the difference between "learning to not be afraid" and "not learning to be afraid." Ms. Sullivan has already learned to be afraid, and wants to unlearn this fear. Fear is the focus. In the second case, one learns something else instead of being afraid, and this learned something else is the focus (see Garanzini, 1995, below).

Interlude--Writing and Teachers

Autobiographical writing is one way to learn what we know we know, a way to discover the paradoxical "truths" about of ourselves. It is the self-conscious act of giving ourselves permission to openly engage the mystery of our reasons for being. Writing is an opportunity to ask penetrating questions of the self, questions that may be unanswerable, that lead only to further questions. Inasmuch as it is fundamentally about learning which question to ask, therefore, writing is the art of inquiry and listening. The need to listen to oneself as well as others is as physical as hunger, thirst, warmth, or food. As soon as what is written in private is spoken or read to another it becomes public. The power of the word is paradoxical. The word holds its power by not being spoken—I gag myself by not speaking—and its power is also manifested by being spoken. As long as God held His words "Let there be light" (Genesis 1:3) inside, He created darkness. With these words, He brought the sun into being. Life. The speaker, God, hears himself speak. He speaks to that which is other than light, and it hears Him. Light is
created, born. Light transforms the darkness and the speaker, for the speaker now sees himself in the light he has created. He knows himself differently. Where was the sun hiding? Like the appleseed in the bowel of the deer, like Jonah in the belly of the great fish, like the seed of educative experience in the mis-educative experience of trauma, the sun was hiding in the darkness, waiting for its self to be named. Light. Without the sun, life on Earth is not sustainable.

Darkness is death:

And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at that ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani, which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

(Mark 15:33-34)

The light of day could not reach Jonah for three days and three nights while he was in the belly of the whale—a parallel story to the three hours of darkness when Jesus died. But day and night, life and death, pain and hope are not as separate as they appear. Day moves into night, by degrees, in a neverending circle. Light and shadow define and refine each other. We cannot possibly tell all, therefore we select what we include, what we exclude with our words. With our words, written and spoken, we demonstrate our belief in the power of the word, both to reveal, and to hide our meanings. To speak, to write, is to bring the subject into the light, and bring light into and out of the subject. Creation. Although this imaginative, deeply personal experience of self-revelation cannot be taught per se, a wise teacher will provide the soil, rich with understanding, and a supportive climate for students to cultivate their own bulbs with their own phototropic sensitivities. The subject disciplined-based teacher nurtures student ability with patience; students learn respect for the freedom and responsibility of self-exploration on the page. In this interlude, I alphabetize four different teaching styles.

With fifteen years experience teaching writing in College classrooms, Bishop voices her concern about the lack of psychological, moral and legal support regarding the complexities of teacher-student dynamics inherent in writing classes. According to Bishop, teachers share the personal responsibility for dealing with the difficult issues that students write about, despite most writing teachers' lack of professional psychotherapeutic training:

...considering the teaching relationship in a therapeutic light raises questions about transference (students endowing teachers with inaccurate expectations or characteristics...) or counter-transference (teachers coloring relationships with their own past)...both may have to be dealt with for a therapy or a pedagogy to succeed...How do we respond to journal or essay discussions of suicide, incest, anorexia, and depression...(508)?

Bishop presents an urgent case for ready access to professional counselling services to help writing students and their teachers shoulder these stressful matters. Bishop's direct and immediate involvement with students contrasts with the aloofness of instructors faced with large classes (see Powell, 1985, below):

...it is not surprising that students open up in writing classes since workshops usually enrol twenty to thirty students and aim to develop community feelings. This is a welcome contrast to the many impersonal, large-enrolment classes a student may experience in the university...(508).

Bishop's argument does not include a discussion of her experience of teaching large university classes. She recognizes that teachers, ethically, share some degree of responsibility for their students, but teachers cannot act as therapists or parents. Clear boundaries must be set and respected by both teacher and student. Teachers, parents, and therapists, in their separate roles, can help students to assume full responsibility for their own empowerment, in their process of
becoming mature, healthy, individuated adults.


Lewis teaches writing to 152 grade 7 and 8 students, including 24 diagnosed with learning disabilities. She makes no mention of any difficulties her students might have writing or sharing disturbing real-life content. Her silence on this topic raises the question: why does she not discuss what her students write about? They have human problems.

Anyone who wants to comment about a shared piece may do so. The comments, however, must only be about the content of the writing. Because I model only positive response to students and their works, the comments are also complimentary...(282-283).

The credibility of Lewis' position is undermined because she focuses solely on the positive aspects of how her teaching method enhances the self-esteem of students with learning disabilities:

"...while boosting the writer's concept of the 'writing self,' we are developing the atmosphere writers need to be fluent" (279). Self-esteem, however, is more complex than feeling good about oneself and one's capabilities; it includes acknowledging one's shortcomings. It involves "a realistic evaluation of the self's characteristics and competencies, coupled with an attitude of self-acceptance and self-respect" (Berk, 1994, 441) as lived in the public, academic, social, and physical arenas. The reported positive difference between the answers on the surveys that Lewis' students complete in September and May do not necessarily reflect their enhanced overall self-esteem. This is also heavily influenced by cultural forces and child-rearing practices.


Powell demands full participation from his 250 university students by requiring each of
them to write a "book", 20 to 50 pages in length, integrating sociological theory with their own autobiographical stories, over the 4-month duration of the course. He includes a compelling sample of 30 (the best, no doubt) of these "books", condensed with details disguised to ensure the anonymity of the writer, on a variety of topics including attempted suicide, family violence, fatherhood, bulimia, and drugs, to validate the approach of his course. Powell emphasizes that his most important teaching function is to engage in written dialogue with students via their submissions. He may never actually have a conversation with any of them.

I carefully criticize in writing. Students do not need nor want Tender Love and Care from the instructor; what they desire and deserve is consistent written response to their written work (48).

Students are not required to attend classes. For Powell, writing autobiography is sociology, but he does not run a writing class, he lectures in sociology. Because he is in the position of authority as teacher, he determines that students alone must bear the consequences of his decision to unify these disciplines, despite his knowledge of the danger:

Writing of self if [sic] full of hazard. Autobiography is the hardest and therefore the highest of the arts. To recite the abstractions of sociology is easy; to apply them to your own life is difficult. While analyzing her childhood dyslexia, one student became so emotionally distraught that the disorder temporarily returned...(49).

These 30 stories generally reflect their writers' need for serious editing in order to meet so called publishing quality standards. Powell considers himself an artist and he tries to "coach" his students to achieve literary artistry in only one semester. But art will not be rushed. The "books" represent the work of students under pressure, in a highly transitional stage of their lives, and for a grade. Powell's teaching method serves to shield him from the problems his students face doing their work for his class. Understandably, given the large number of students, he needs to maintain
a professional distance from his students, but it is surprising that he mentions only this one distressed student. He makes no reference to any psychological support the student may have needed. As critical reader, Powell the teacher is more than audience, less than friend:

...just as a therapist activates healing powers within the patient by listening so the instructor can draw out good writing by imaginative reading. Both forms of coaching, teaching and psychotherapy aim at eliciting the best possible performance from the player....the quality of writing is determined by the expectation of the reader...(126).

He does not mention having been in therapy himself. Powell compares only the behaviourist model of psychotherapy to his teaching style, excluding all others whose methods are not focused on the "performance" of the client. Psychotherapy is conducted in one-on-one encounters between therapist and client, and group therapy involves larger, yet still personal dynamics. Yet Powell still compares himself to a therapist for a group of 250 students to whom he is lecturing. Through his written comments on individual student submissions, he equates therapy with anonymity:

Often students said they could write to me because I did not know them—often the best papers come from the anonymous large lecture rather than the intimate small class...(127).

Powell does not discuss any of his experiences conducting small classes, to legitimate this claim. He fails to appreciate the complexities involved in blurring the boundaries between writing sociological essays and autobiographical stories, and of his role of teacher as audience for whom students write. However,

...in writing an essay for a teacher your task is usually to explain what you are still engaged in trying to understand to someone who understands it better. You seldom feel you are writing because you want to tell someone something....If it is a story or poem rather than an essay...it's hard to feel that you are doing what is most natural for someone writing a story or poem, that is, trying to give pleasure...
or enlightenment. It feels as though your task is to satisfy or get criticism from a teacher who must read [it]... You don’t write to teachers, you write for them. (Elbow, 1981, 219-220)

And in this instance for a grade, Powell’s product-oriented approach may be necessitated by large numbers, and the brevity of his course. The “books” submitted by students are their products, proof of their short-term writing/thinking process in his course only. Unfortunately, Powell does not indicate any interest in determining how many of his students continue their "book" after the course is completed, nor does he discuss how their autobiographical writing style may affect their writing in other courses. Literary criticism and psychology, for example, may require very different academic writing styles. We may question the validity and the long-term value of Powell’s approach, given the sheer volume of work involved in critically reading between 5,000 and 12,500 pages in only 4 months along with his other professorial obligations. Neither he nor his students have the time to be patient with their "book" material. Writing and psychotherapy both are serious commitments. Their success is not measurable in the short-term, by number of pages, or by grade. The measure is personal growth promoted by the integration of the meaning of the questions asked. Listening requires patience.


Press conducts creative writing workshops in Michigan psychiatric hospitals, where conventional classroom dynamics, considered "normal" in universities, colleges, or public schools, are greatly modified to accommodate the severe problems of her hospitalized "students," who are not her patients. Press is a poet. She uses her artistic writing talent to help patients express themselves on paper to complement their ongoing therapy: "I envision the poetry sessions I run as
going hand in hand with treatment, but I am by no means a therapist. I offer no cures..." (4). The dynamics in her workshops foster a caring relationship between herself and the patients. Through their writing, they share their secrets, expose their vulnerabilities, and in the process, Press vicariously becomes their most trusted confidant:

People of all ages are able to express worries and feelings that they would be unable to discuss face to face with their therapist or anyone else... (4).

Press does not explain why or how this happens. She does not take any credit for inspiring the patients to trust themselves enough to trust her with their written secrets. She does not call herself a healer, yet she alludes to writing as a healing exercise: "It is possible that the reading of literature can help soothe troubled minds, and the writing of it can help heal them" (3). Press does not demand written submissions, nor does she grade them. Unlike the teacher or therapist, the blank page has no power; it cannot lie, it cannot provoke fear. One gives oneself authority through writing upon it. Unlike the teacher or therapist, the full page passes no judgement; it can be torn up, it can be totally trusted.

It has been my experience that creative artistic expression...has led to such therapeutic gains as increased self-awareness and insight, improved self-esteem and a better ability to communicate...it is significant the gains that can take place when the discipline is art and not therapy... (5).

Inasmuch as the primary responsibility of the teacher is to ask questions that encourage students to ask, to define and to refine their own questions, teaching then becomes listening. (See also Ackerman, 1993; Elbow, 1973; Gallagher, 1987; Holly, 1989.)

So ends this interlude. I continue with the remaining bibliomantric entries on the cenotaph.

Crittenden discusses the social, cognitive, and language development problems of preschool aged children who have been abused, neglected, or abused and neglected. She does not offer definitions of abuse or neglect. She uses the word "maltreated" as an umbrella term for all types of abuse and/or neglect, without saying so, or why. Despite the list of references, in which the author lists seven of her own published studies, her failure to clarify which type(s) of abuse she is addressing leave the reader doubting the validity of her approach. Too much literature exists for her to not know of the different types of abuse. The borders between the different types of abuse become fuzzy, as do the borders between abuse, neglect, and abuse and neglect. These states exist on a continuum. Crittenden offers four valuable hierarchical concepts "for managing maltreated children in the classroom."


Distad refers to research by LeDuc (1984) regarding links between child abuse and speech deficits and distorted perceptions. Words helped save me so I'm curious, so I'll have a look.

Distad poses a serious challenge to researchers/educators:

Children who have been abused need...researchers [who] will study the elusive relationships of cognitive processes, emotional trauma, and the learning environment; and who will then develop useful educational remedies...The search for solutions must include...those educators still comfortably settled into their socially acceptable silence (745).

Silence, when it comes to child abuse, is lethal. So here I am, doing my research, making some noise, using my voices.

Adolescents who have been abused short-term (beginning in adolescence) have a greater degree of internal locus of control than those abused long-term (from childhood through adolescence). I am still struggling with ways to regain control and a voice.


Allowing an abused person, especially a child, to talk may be critical to saving his/her life, and is essential for his/her healing. "The educator, like the counselor, can help a great deal by simply allowing the child to talk..." (248). The difficulties that educators face in hearing and being totally compassionately present with the child during this talk are touched on in this book. Sometimes, listening to the survivor's story is hard work, and can "make us [educators] feel powerless—*or even abused*" (emphasis added, 249). This feeling of being abused by abused students is what teachers fear. No one can learn to not be afraid. We can, however, learn to trust, no matter how harsh our experience, or how threatened we feel. Good teachers help us learn to trust ourselves. Listening to an abused student's story is not as hard as telling it. Not as hard as living it.


This article, discusses the magical, revealing qualities of play therapy:

For the child the technique requires no skill, is familiar, nonthreatening, and provides a symbolic language, which is easily understood (89).

Harper's subjects "were divided into three groups: sexually abused (SA), physically abused, (PA), and physically and sexually abused (PSA)" (98). It is one thing to discuss cars and
trucks using letters, such as BMW and GMC. But it is quite another to refer to groups of people this way. The researchers show their insensitivity by diminishing the humanity of their charges to the inhumanity of "subjects" in this fashion. These are abused children they are writing about. An abused child is not "PA" and "PSA" (95). Acronyms dehumanize the very research "subjects" that have already been dehumanized by their parents/guardians. These abused children deserve to be treated and written about with more compassion and humanity. How will these "subjects" feel when they read this and similar articles as adults (see Zimrin, 1986, below)?


This female teacher acknowledges being abused herself as a child in the third paragraph. "If you teach students about abuse, students who've been abused will approach you" (78). She teaches special education at high school and a graduate class in child abuse at Portland State University. She suggests a bodily openness to children that I find heartening:

If you decide to talk to a child you think is being abused, remember that he may feel hurt or afraid. Select a quiet, private place to talk, and help him feel as comfortable as possible. Sit with the child, not behind a desk or table (78).

Being with someone means holding their space, honouring them and their struggle. Showing your own compassionate humanity and vulnerability. A compassionate teacher does not need to act this way just when the subject is abuse, but operates from this place as a way of being, inspiring trust in others.


The second study (time II) is a follow-up to the first (time I). In Time I and II, 6-12 months apart, the researchers used 8 measures for 139 school children between the ages of 8 and 16 to determine their "performance, emotional development, and adaptive behaviour." Maltreated children were divided into two categories: physically abused and neglected. Other types of abuse are not mentioned in either paper. These researchers do not acknowledge that different "types" of abuse overlap and interweave through each other. This undermines their credibility. They ignore the complexity of this problem. Acknowledging the "bigger picture," is an important step—it provides context. I find their conclusion that "it is extremely difficult for these [physically abused] children to learn, regardless of how good the education program" (587) disheartening because it is pessimistic. I agree that "it is extremely difficult." However, I have experienced here at OISE/UT an "education program" that significantly eases the degree of difficulty in learning. Therefore, if the children are having extreme difficulty, the education program must change to meet their needs. These researchers need to learn that it is their responsibility, not just to interpret their findings, but to present their interpretations to readers in such a way as to offer us hope, especially when what they are reporting is bleak. Researchers are responsible for demonstrating their conviction, that through their research, they contribute to improving the human condition. Pessimism improves nothing.

These researchers draw on a depth of references to mount the solid argument that, although "one might presume that abuse and neglect adversely impact school performance...past research, however, does not lead decisively to this conclusion" (156). They explore different types of maltreatment with the singular focus of determining their effects on school outcomes. These researchers seem not to recognize that, although outcomes themselves may be "measured" by test scores and academic achievement, the processes involved in overcoming the obstacles that abuse presents in order to achieve those outcomes, and which are critical to survival, cannot be so simply measured. It takes a survivor many years after the abuse has stopped just to learn how to articulate these processes. The critical reader appreciates the exactitude of this study, while simultaneously questioning its validity. The researchers themselves acknowledge that they ignore crucial elements of the larger picture that affect their results and interpretations:

Undoubtedly, learning, participation, and integration are related in reciprocal, cumulative, and self-reinforcing patterns...and [we] do not analyze these important relationships (169-170).

The researchers catch themselves in a three-way bind of which they are unaware. Let's look at the 3 parts:

(a)

...the less likely a maltreatment event is to be reported, the more serious it must be reported, hence, the more likely it is to have an effect on school outcomes (159).

(b)

At the extreme...it must reach a relatively high threshold to come to the attention of physicians, educators...and be reported (162).
and (c)

The bias in our analysis may tend to overstate the consequences of maltreatment if we assume that reported cases are generally more serious than unreported ones...(165-166).

The missing component, which resolves this dilemma, and makes research regarding child abuse so imperative, is that most cases of maltreatment—in my experience, the most serious cases—are never reported. I am one of a very large family; I was not even a reported statistic (Stewart, 1995). As Mouzakitis (1984, 149) points out,

The focus of attention in child abuse has been largely on abused young children and their families. Abused adolescents have not received a great deal of special consideration....[The] figure, however, is only a fraction of the actual occurrence of adolescent abuse since many of these cases are rarely identified as abuse if they go through the juvenile services system [Fisher and Berdie 1978: 178-179; Lourie 1977: 268; Ziefert 1981].

The Canadian government strongly links child murder with family membership:

Over three-quarters of the 542 children under the age of 12 murdered between 1980 and 1989 were killed by a family member: two-thirds were killed by a parent....


The Canadian government links child abuse with murder:

Perpetrators of homicides involving children were parents in two-thirds of cases, and many incidents seemed to be an extension of child abuse.


The Canadian government also acknowledges and gives reasons for the discrepancy between reported child abuse statistics and the reality:
...a substantial number of all crimes are never reported to the police....Precise estimates of the prevalence of child abuse in Canada are unavailable largely because of the nature of these events—the secrecy and privacy in which they occur, the dependency of the victim on the perpetrators who are often family members or guardians, a lack of knowledge about the help that is available or even about the wrongfulness of the act, and a fear of repercussions for reporting the incident. In addition, cases of abuse are often not readily detected because the injuries may be concealed.


Ironically, these statistical measures attest to the desperate need for inquiries like mine. (See also Statistics Canada, 1992)


The two chapters regarding convalescing and abused children are easily linked:

convalescence (recovering one's health) from the injuries sustained during chronic, extreme intrafamilial violence is a life-time task. I am still learning "to learn to feel safe in [my] own skin" (74), still working through my "anxiety...linked to the fear of pain as well as the fear of separation" (76). Physical survival is hard work. Learning how to play is critical for healing (see chapter 6).


The statistics in this study regarding incidence of family violence, for three non-regular school populations, when compared to regular schools, are staggering. Students report that "they have been hit by an adult in their household so hard or so often that 'you had marks on you or were afraid of that person'" (34). The following are percentages of students reporting physical
abuse (defined above) as victim or witness, at home:

- 18% to 21% of regular school students (depending on "matched sample" with the following populations...)
- 35% of students in Alternative Schools or Area Learning Centres
- 41% in Corrections/Detention Centres
- 54% in Residential Treatment Centres

Figures for suicides, attempted suicides, sexual abuse are all alarmingly high. I find this material very difficult to deal with—these aren't just numbers to me; they're real people. I focus on the cenotaph. The students have names.


This research (1976, 1977) links abuse dwarfism to academic underachievement. Once the abused child is taken from the abusive home and nurtured, "secretion of the growth hormone (somatotropin) from the pituitary gland resumes, as does somatic, mental, and behavioural growth" (581).

Money also makes a forceful argument against what he calls the professional "bastard science" of victimology. Because the criminalization of child abuse results in the offenders being taken away from "impartial" scientific research (through the justice system), Money concludes that we are prevented from fully understanding and, therefore, from preventing child abuse. He does not, however, propose to decriminalize child abuse, nor does he suggest an alternative to the present "criminal" status of the offence or the offender. We are left wondering if these violent offenders are not somehow restrained somewhere, and held accountable for their behaviour, how
will the survivor ever learn s/he is actually safe, and how will the offenders ever have the opportunity to learn to accept responsibility for their own violence? How can we ensure that the fundamental human rights of children are protected without a system whereby we actively enforce justice? Whether or not we "criminalize" child abuse is hardly the issue. Violence against children is wrong, and therefore, unacceptable. Wrong-doers must face the consequences of their choice to hurt another human being.


A "plea" must be written artfully. This paper is actually propaganda. In the final three pages, Morris-Bilotti uses 28 ellipses, 10 phrases or sentences in italics, four sentences completely in uppercase, and one sentence in uppercase bold type. The message she is trying to convey—the desperate urgency of the need to act now to save American children—is lost in the loudness of itself. As readers, we must be wary of this type of writer's need to try to instil panic. She needs to learn that writers are responsible for engaging their readers' empathy and only then inspiring their positive action.


Mouzakitis refers to relevant studies that link chronic physical abuse with chronic depression, poor self-concept, and troubled interpersonal relationships. He concludes that chronically physically abused adolescents should be removed from the family home. They do not get along in foster-families, and should, therefore, be nurtured in a "treatment-oriented group setting." I agree. (Read: I wish I had the chance.) Non-chronically abused adolescents and the abusive families need immediate, intense, "crisis-oriented" treatment to help prevent the
adolescent from being alienated from the family. I cannot agree. (Read: When a parent beats up their adolescent, they forfeit their parenthood. Should the victim give the perpetrator another chance to do it again?) A slap across the face constitutes physical abuse, and that act is on the same continuum as extreme violence that ends in murder. For the sake of clarity, Mouzakitis needs to include a working definition of physical abuse in his paper, so the reader can see the range of the violence that he is addressing.


The single most important factor in their list of "personal characteristics and skills that may foster resilience in maltreated children" (359) is stated last. It is "12. Optimism and Hope" (362). As a youngster, I learned not to trust hope or the other two parts of the Biblical trinity in the New Testament.

And now abideth faith, hope, and charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

(I Corinthians 13:13)

How could I trust in a loving God or loving parents when that love meant only punishment and cruelty? But I cannot say I did not hope. My hope as a child and adolescent was inseparable from my willingness to stand up and fight my tyrannical father to the death. Like Isaac, like Samson, like Jonah, I knew I could not win my fight against my father, hence the title of my autobiography, Playing to lose, but I had to fight him. Mrazek and Mrazek would undoubtedly link my hope with item number 7 on their list: "Decisive Risk Taking" (360), because my attitude and behaviour consistently demonstrated "the opposite of learned helplessness" (360). As I matured, I transformed my battle from fighting against my father to fighting for my children. I
had to fight myself, and I was willing to die to protect them. They've made it. I'm still fighting, hoping I can help other children and their teachers through my inquiry.

An Interlude for Voices

Resilient Ball Voice

The word "resilient" always brings to mind for me the image of a red soccer ball. One without stripes. In slow motion, I see the ball, after being kicked, being compressed against the concrete block wall. Part of it is being damaged, flattened. But it will not surrender to the wall and fall down dead like Humpty-Dumpty. It has something inside its interior black emptiness that nobody can see, that makes it spring back—a Resilient Ball Voice:

"I will be squished only this much and no more."

This voice is stronger, more determined than the kicker who keeps hammering the ball against the wall.

My Healing Body Voice

The word "resilient" helps me focus, in slow motion, on the small moment in time immediately after my father's strap or two-by-four bounces off my chest; I can hear my Healing Body Voice:

"Right now, my body is healing. Focus. Fluid is coming to the rescue. Swelling protects me. Focus. I am still alive. I am safe. Focus. I am safe. No harm will come to me. Focus."

Gagged Orange Voice

The word "impact," however, brings to mind the image of an orange-as-baseball. I see Roger Clemens, the pitcher for the Toronto Blue Jays, hurling an orange instead of a baseball, at 90 miles per hour toward home plate. The orange has been gagged, but still it would cry out, if it
could, in its Gagged Orange Voice:

"No! No! No! I want to live!"

The orange sees itself entering in the strike zone. It has no interior power other than to be itself; it cannot \textbf{choose} to change its course.

\textbf{Disintegrating Orange Voice}

The batter, Jose Conseco, swings. At the moment, in slow motion, that his bat connects with the orange, its Gagged Orange Voice changes to its Disintegrating Orange Voice:

"This is how I must die."

The orange feels itself becoming juice. It has no interior power other than to be itself.

"How I die."

Its Disintegrating Orange Voice breaks into pieces.

"I...................die......................."

Both the orange and its voice, separated by the unbearable force of the blow, scatter in the wind. "Impact" to me means the slow motion flattening of my chest by the strap or two-by-four in my father's hands. When I focus on that impact, I am without hope, for I am focusing on being destroyed. I needed to focus on that disintegrating moment while I was writing \textit{Playing to lose} in order to learn how to choose to focus on the healing moment. The healing moment, which is this present inquiry, transcends both "resilience" and "impact." By choice, I \textit{look back} to view my progress, no longer a victim of instantaneous \textit{flashback} and panic. This healing moment is like playing catch. Like playing catch, Gentle Reader, you and I are communicating. I hold you in mind right now as I type these words, as you hold me in mind as you read them. The objective is not so much to throw the ball \textbf{to} one another, to stop the ball each time. The objective of
catching the ball is to change its direction, to keep the ball and ourselves in joyous motion. The ball links us; we stand and run and jump at either ends of its arc, its invisible rainbow.

Now that I have my Lecturing Voice, I begin my presentations in schools and universities with my Popbottle People (see chapter 7) in the healing moment—Baseball Bud and Hector playing catch—before I explain the need for Bud's healing.


A brief list of the topics covered at the conference, the names of the panellists, with photographs of people at tables (apparently listening to a speaker), and resources for teachers. Not even a short summary of each speakers' paper.


Twenty-four abused young children were enrolled in a therapeutic classroom—a physically and psychologically safe and nurturing place—for 3 years, with successful results. Every classroom should be like this one. The therapeutic classroom is human. It is just. It is also restorative medicine. The cost, in terms of dollars, for this type of education should be compared to health care costs for the children who suffer, are not helped, and become abusers themselves.


This refreshing paper is grounded equally in theory and practice. Pearl lists seven "characteristics of students with a "History of Maltreatment" and then immediately illustrates nine concrete "teaching techniques" that work. She has a keen sense of helping to anchor her students with pleasure-filled smells of nurturing food, freshness, and cleanliness. She takes pride in being
the role model to those who "have an urgent need to see the adult who can laugh..." (73). In her conclusion, she acknowledges she is a "guide" rather than a "therapist." The abused student perpetually wrestles with the formation and maintenance of boundaries. Pearl sets her boundaries, and keeps them clearly defined, enabling the students to learn this critical lesson by her example.  


Clinical evaluations of children's "behaviour disturbances" do not necessarily point out their "educational" learning problems (260). The bottom line: maltreated children generally have less "creativity, enthusiasm, and readiness to learn" (259) than non-maltreated children. Can I modestly refute this claim in part?  


Some survivors' only defence was being as passive as possible, even to the point of motionlessness and invisibility. They tried not to be noticed for so long as children that they have great difficulty as adults mobilizing energy. Rosenthal writes, "many abused individuals convince themselves that they are 'survivors'"(508). Aren't they? Not to Rosenthal, even though a live person is sitting on the chair in his office. (See Zimrin, 1986, below.)  


The "measurement [emphasis added] of the individual's present subjective perception of the degree of stress or trauma present in his/her childhood" (317) does not impress me, or help me value this study. Some things cannot be measured. What does impress me is the researchers' underlying premise that is based on the work of Newberger and DeVos (1988) and Newberger
(1991): children make meaning of the abuse they endure and, although they may be physically healed, this meaning is the real (psychological) wound, and if left to fester, is responsible for the devastation of spirits and bodies and lives. We can heal the wound by helping the wounded write and talk about the wounding.


Schneider teaches "emotionally disturbed" children, who are often abused and neglected. "Emotionally disturbed" is not defined in this article, nor does it need to be, for the focus is on healing. He shares how he uses humour to create a safe classroom. His caring, his convictions ring true:

If there were a diagnosis and prescription for every emotionally disturbed child that walked through a classroom door, along with love, security, warmth and safety, the use of humor would be etched in stone (7).

In the penultimate paragraph of the article, he "envision[s] the classroom as a team or, in the more holistic educational sense, a family" (7). I have so much resistance to the word "family." It is important, in my own healing, to read/see/hear that teachers invite abused students to be part of a healthier, happier community than the one they had. In violent families, children are captives. I am happy that the children in Schneider's class have someone who truly cares about and for them.

Children who are survivors of family violence may or may not be identified as "emotionally disturbed." I think it impossible that any child survivor of family violence would not be disturbed emotionally—bodily synthesizing terror qualifies as emotional disturbance, although "disturbance" is hardly a strong enough word.

In less than five pages of type, Stevens and Price claim to help educators "meet the challenge of educating" on the "at-risk" populations of: (a) newborns who were exposed prenatally to drugs; (b) homeless children; (c) children exposed to lead poisoning; (d) paediatric cases of HIV; (e) abused children; and (f) children who were premature babies. How can the critical reader take this article seriously? No room for risky voices.


This collection of seven papers contains "What Can I do for the Abused Child?" by Kay Stevens. Stevens is identified as a "Professional Foster Parent" but doesn't tell us what that is. Is foster-parenting a profession now, like doctoring or lawyering? Her suggestions on how to help are very general, and include no references (read: the article is not written for a professional audience), but they are supported in the literature. Even though this paper is brief, we must be thankful for the spirit of her work, and the contribution her voice makes to the cause of child protection.


A more specific title would be "Reporting Child Abuse: The Role of the School" because the dilemma of reporting is exactly what this thesis is all about, as stated unequivocally in its last paragraph:

The findings from this study draw attention to the central contradiction of requiring teachers to report abuse while they are still expected to use punitive strategies, including physical punishment, if necessary, for maintaining classroom control. What needs to be explored in more detail is how these contradictory demands affect teachers' perspectives of abuse and their willingness to report
cases. Related to this is the need to examine school discipline policies...(295).

Tite's research is important; it casts the complexities of this particular dilemma into bright sunlight.


This article has merit. Zimrin isolates 10 variables that distinguish between those persons that have been, and those persons that have not been psychologically overwhelmed by abuse. Zimrin's "subjects," 28 children who "had required medical treatment and hospitalization as a result of injury deliberately caused by a parent" (emphasis added, 341), were under 5 years of age when this 14-year longitudinal study began. From this study, 9 of the 28 were identified as "survivors" and 19 as "non-survivors" (p.342). Until I read those words, I had understood that a survivor was someone that (had) lived, and a non-survivor was someone that (had) died. The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1990, 1229) confirmed my understanding. Can a researcher refer to a living person as a "non-survivor," especially one that has lived through the torment of being so violently treated by their parent(s) as to require hospitalization? Can research diminish the life-and-death struggle of children under 5 years of age? How can a living human be a "non-survivor?" How would the "subjects" feel if they read this article and found out that they are labelled "non-survivors?" Why doesn't Zimrin presume that some of these overwhelmed persons might come to a turning point in their lives that would help them alter their view of themselves and their world and begin to transcend their pain? How can we withhold treatment from abused children who desperately need it, just so research can go on?

During the research period, the two groups received the usual services provided universally to the entire population, or, when needed, protective measures were
taken by the state's child protection service workers. No special treatment programs were given either to the children or the parents. Because of the ethical aspects involved, the decision to refrain from offering treatment needs explanation. The research was originally designed and sample was chosen with the intention that treatment would also be offered. Unfortunately, this plan was publicized in a local newspaper and the families subsequently refused to cooperate. There was no choice but to limit use of this sample to research which did not require active and direct cooperation, a decision which made the follow-up study possible. Thus the children were protected from further abuse, but treatment which required the families' consent was not given (341).

Zimrin's use of the passive voice throughout this study is telling as an attempt to justify inhumane treatment of research "subjects." When does a researcher have "no choice?" How will the "subjects" feel when they read this article, other than abused, again, knowing Zimrin chose to withhold treatment from them? Zimrin accepts no responsibility for the mistake of having the study published in a newspaper. (It didn't just happen; somebody did it.) Can Zimrin expect critical readers to be surprised that abusive parents wouldn't cooperate? An abused child is not an "S" or an "NS" (344)!

It is heartening that other researchers protest this dehumanizing practice prevalent in research literature. I am not alone in my protest; I am not simply over-reacting.

...in the Myers-Briggs approach (Lawrence, 1982) persons became four letters, such as ISTJ (which stands for Introverted-Sensing-Thinking-Judgement) and ENFP (for Extroverted-Intuitive-Feeling-Perceptual)...Practitioners are attracted to such schemes....What bothers me most about these schemes is that a person becomes a type, and only a type—whether I am a converger, an ENFP, or a CR (Concrete Random), I am diminished to a dot, a point on a graph. This is demeaning to the complexity of the human condition.

(Hunt, 1987, 49)

Assigning dehumanizing numbers and letters to research subjects prevents them from participating as whole persons. Their voices are effectively gagged as they become quantified data. "But I was Number 119,104..." (Frankl, 1962, 5). This practice desensitizes and dehumanizes the researcher.
too—s/he loses touch with his/her compassionate self. Abused children, prisoners of war, and researchers cannot be free without their names.
CHAPTER 3

MY NARRATIVE INQUIRY OF WRITING TO HEAL

My Writer Voice

I began this research with myself in order to establish myself in my own eyes as a credible witness of my own lived life, and to forge a human connection with you, Gentle Reader. I need to have a sense that both you and I respect the struggle which is this qualitative inquiry. It is my sincere hope that you will allow the voices expressing themselves herein to mix with your own voices, creating the experience of a rainbow of voice within yourself. This is my Writer Voice, carefully crafting my material before offering it as my gift to you—sometimes painful and shocking, always authentic. Let me assure you, Gentle Reader, that neither my therapist-teacher nor any other teachers have ever made suggestions about the source of my trauma.

False memories are constructed by combining actual memories with the content of suggestions received from others. During the process, individuals may forget the source of the information. This is a classic example of source confusion, in which the content and the source become dissociated. Although experimental work on the creation of false memories may raise doubt about the validity of long-buried memories, such as repeated trauma, it in no way disproves them.

(emphasis added, Loftus, 1997, 75)

I weave the Voices of Other Scholars, who bring their brilliant shades and subtle nuances of colour, depth, clarity, and wonder, into this inquiry. But sometimes, their distant abstraction (see Chapter 2) alienates me. Detachment is a luxury I hope to learn to entertain as I inquire further into my developing selves. I am my own participant.

If applied research is to be authentic and relevant, researchers must first accept their own personhood, their co-participation in the human venture they seek to understand....A good rule for researchers is "Become the first participant in your study."

(Hunt, 1992, 116)
I am more than Writer, here. I am also the Written, for this thesis, with each re-written line, assumes a life of its own, and it tells me how and what to write. As Writer, therefore, I primarily listen to and transcribe voices—those within me, and those that come to and through me—to create this rainbow that is inseparable from the thunderstorms and the sunshine that compose my life. Thus I reflect on my life "...by recalling [my] experience not so much as a researcher, but as someone being researched..." (Hunt, 1992, 122). I am the researching researched.

This inquiry is of value to me and others only as long as I can honestly nurture myself with questions that lead me to deeper questions. When I arrive at these deeper questions, I feel surprised by them. I like watching how I grow, and how my growth, one word at a time, propels this exploration forward to a conclusion I cannot possibly predetermine.

...we live our lives, tell and write our lives, retell and rewrite our lives, and attempt to live those retold stories....it is through the rewriting and retelling, that we begin to transform ourselves and see new possibilities.
(Connelly & Clandinin, 1994, 152)

I am very curious about what is happening here. Curiosity is better than revenge. Revenge never satisfies; it disconnects me from myself and others, and brings me great unhappiness. Curiosity enables me to utilize my just anger to create something meaningful and enduring, a legacy for my children that they and I value. Connection. Happiness.

Research should lead to some action or stand that addresses the good, and in the field of education I think this would ultimately have something to do with the good of children....Written well, the biographical descriptions constantly call the writers to their own and place them within their action. They cannot hedge and must own the values and prejudices that influence their perspectives.
(Krall, 1988, 475)

Unjust anger merely destroys. Since my teens, when I started writing poetry, I have embraced writing essentially as an exercise of my personal freedom. I will not be bulldozed. No one tells
me how to write, what to write, where or when to write, although I do consider editorial suggestions seriously. This is my work and my play. This is my art. This is my life.

...self-understanding, when pursued reflectively, rather than leading to a constricted and egocentric view, is the primary link with the world....We move toward mature adulthood by accepting responsibility for our part in our circumstances, but more so for accepting the social consequences of our autonomous acts. Acceptance of this responsibility as it influences our actions seems to me to be the ethical question underlying education and its research.

(Krall, 1988, 468)

In the writing and reliving of the stories in Playing to lose, I had to focus on my rearview mirror--who I had been--in order to find out who I was. Through my writing/healing process, I keep rediscovering that my windshield--who I am becoming--is much bigger than my rearview mirror. I like it that my rearview mirror is attached to my windshield. I like that I can adjust it to any angle I wish, that I can see squarely behind me during the daytime and have that same view reflected off the ceiling at night.

Dangling from my rearview mirror, on a strip of blue leather, is the small Eagle feather given to me on December 19, 1994, by an Ojibwa elder. I keep it there to remind me that "the truest power is gentleness" (cummings, 1953/1981, 30). Feathers, not muscles, lift Eagle. He also gave me a large Eagle feather. The tapered body of the blue and gold fountain pen I painted by hand fits snugly into the hollow shaft of this feather. I value this pen more than the gold-filled Cross executive pen I use professionally. Unlike the act of typing or writing with pencil or a ballpoint pen, which I have not yet learned to do without fear, when I write with my Eaglefeather pen in either hand, the fear loosens inside, and I move into a zone of play. I feel like Santiago.

The old man had seen many great fish. He had seen many that weighed more than a thousand pounds and he had caught two of that size in his life, but never alone. Now alone, and out of sight of land, he was fast to the biggest fish that he had ever
seen and bigger than he had ever heard of, and his left hand was still [cramped] as tight as the gripped claws of an eagle.

(Hemingway, 1995, 63)

I give myself permission to go slow. Words look funny when I write—print—lefthanded. (When I use my right hand, they are merely illegible.) During my three years in the bush, when I was writing Playing to Lose, I kept a daily journal of remembered dreams, which I wrote only with my left hand, in order to teach myself how to write lefthanded. I began to use my left hand instead of my right in as many ways as I could. Daily tasks such as washing dishes, stacking wood, carrying drinking water from the well, bathing, brushing my teeth, cooking, all felt like new experiences to me. "I just want to wash a goddam plate without fear" (Stewart, 1995, 158). Each task required me to learn slowly; I could feel my bodily fear loosen as I let myself be happy with my small, significant gains. Sharing this research story with you, Gentle Reader, helps anchor me in the knowledge that I am living and revising my traumatic stories into healing stories.

Because life is not a substance, because it is made up of actions that bring into actuality what was once potential, the story about life is open to editing and revision. It can be changed....The consistency of one's life story is created by one's promises to be constant in one's future actions. The commitments to others to act toward them in a certain way and the contracts one makes with partners and groups presupposes the maintenance of some continuity of actions and the narrative description formed by them....

(Polkinghorne, 1988, 154)

I even learned how to eat with chopsticks with my left hand. When I wash a plate with my right hand, I do so by scrubbing it counter-clockwise. Now, with my left hand, I go clockwise—it feels more comfortable. To me, learning lefthandedness is like learning a new language, an interior body language, a new way of being. A new world. A world without my father in it. My world. I am opening a part of myself that I could not access as a boy.
One Saturday, mum set the big green bedspread, freshly ironed, on my arms and told me to put it on dad's bed. His bedroom door was already ajar. How could I knock with my arms full? I pushed the door open. Dad was pissing into a bucket.

(Stewart, 1995, 10)

His bedroom door was hinged on my left. I pushed the door open with my left hand. From the doorway, my father sat on the right side of his bed (from his position, the left side).

He tossed me onto his bed. I landed face down. Down came the strap on the back of my head and ears. Down on my neck. Down and down, he measured the length of my back by the width of that strap even to the soles of my feet.

(Stewart, 1995, 11)

I curled my shoulders as much as I could, tucked my elbows together under my ribs and clasped my hands to protect my heart.

"Roll over!"
And down from my chin to my hands on my privates.
"Hands at your sides!"
And my privates. And my privates. And...
"For good measure!"
Down to the tips of my toes I watched myself turn from white to red to purple. And I learned.

That was the first time he tanned me that way.

(Stewart, 1995, 10)

My father was right-handed. When I was wide open like this, or standing in front of him, the left side of my body bore the brunt of his attack. He always blackened and closed my left eye before my right. My left eye is the stronger of the two. He always broke bones in my left side of my body before my right. I have not yet learned how to feel safe enough to sit on a couch so someone can sit on my left. I like to sit on the left side of the classroom. I am 42 years old and I have not yet learned how to feel safe enough to allow my partner to sleep on my left. I am wide open. I have not yet learned how to feel safe enough to sit in an OISE/UT classroom with a classmate within three feet of my left side. All but one of my professors have allowed me to sit
where I feel least threatened. For every class, I arrived about 20 minutes early to pick a seat with the door or the window to my left. In one classroom, students were so close to one another that we often bumped elbows.

"Move in with the rest of us, Matthew. Don't try to gain status by sitting outside the circle," I was told (class notes, January 13, 1996).

I was supposed to ignore the insult, and do as I was told? I sandwiched myself between two others, and I chose, rather than confront the teacher in anger, to record the event on my unlined notepad. I have more than one way of saying no.

When we turn to personal learning, we turn to the heart of educational purpose. Skills and knowledge are but the veneer. At bottom what counts is what a person is: his character, his values, the way his mind works, his personal style....It is ironic that schools, dedicated in principle to personal learning as their highest goal, have no evidence to show for their efforts....They are simply not geared to the job....Is it possible that personal learning could be induced in any deliberate fashion? Can the forces of the home environment be overridden?

(Eisner, 1974, 32-33)

I need space and time to continue healing. Writing helps me create this space and time within my Healing self. It helps me to slow down. I have not yet learned how to "relax." I don't understand what the word means bodily, but I am learning to slow down inside. Gentle Reader, while we are revisiting this horrific scene again, I am gaining a new understanding of the word "impact" paradoxically, from the perspective of being "resilient." By physically breaking this scene apart, I slow it down. I bring myself to it today by choice, as a survivor, not as a victim.

Much more qualitative research is needed to capture the processes by which persons make sense of the traumas in their lives and re-establish a sense of personal integrity, meaning, and worth....future research should attend to constructions of survivors themselves, rather than exclusively measuring them on externally imposed dimensions.

(Harter & Neimeyer, 1995, 257)
I am working here. I need to be careful, to keep my survivor perspective. By choice, moment-to-moment as I type these words, I keep my healthier Survivor Voice more dominant than my Victim Voice. We must respect each other's research stories. Survivors are one with their story, cannot be separated from it. Often the story overwhelms the survivor from the inside, without warning.

Writing enables the transformation of knowledge structures, because it involves exactly that active effort to find connections that is central to learning. By writing we can discover what we know and adopt it into our frame of reference. Sometimes it requires that the perspective itself be adapted.

(Diamond, 1991, 45)

With my Survivor Voice I write/say that Writing Playing to lose was a traumatic experience; writing this research inquiry is stressful. The difference between "traumatic" and "stressful" is significant. I am careful to use the appropriate word; "stressful" gives me more breathing room. I can do things to ease the "stress." I work with language to free myself, not to trap myself, and I encourage others to take the same risk.

Language is how social organization and power are defined and contested and the place where our sense of selves, our subjectivity, is constructed.

(Richardson, 1994, 518)

I am not willing to traumatize myself as I write/say these words by speaking with my Victim Voice. When I'm traumatized--self-induced or otherwise--I physically go into shock, and my recovery takes days. I must be careful when I get a massage to ease my stress; when too much of my stored bodily pain surfaces too quickly for me to process, I go into shock. I cry, coldsweat and shake uncontrollably, like a giant tap is open inside me and my energy drains away. I become too weak to walk or sit or eat. Breathing is hard work. My voice almost disappears. Often, in the process of writing this inquiry, I hang my head at my wordprocessor, and cry. I must. Crying is a way of creating space--tears flow out to make room inside for joy to flow in--so I don't hold
all the tears back now. Sometimes, I'm so furious I can't even roar, all I can do is cry. Writing, like crying, creates space—this research story flows out to make room inside for the next story. Still, I cannot talk about how I survived, how I am now living, without telling what I survived. I did not intentionally set out hours ago to revisit this horrific childhood scene. It came to me. The organic nature of writing thrills me; I never know what to expect, except that I'm going to learn something new, exciting, and rejuvenating. That's why I do it.

I sometimes define research as placing oneself in a position to be surprised. In fact, if you are not in a position to contradict your expectations, you are probably not engaging in research. In research, cumulative understanding comes from accommodating contradictions....It may be possible to grasp the importance of contradiction by noting that it is how we deal with contradictions that counts...it does not mean that life is completely contradictory, with no pattern, no unity, and no continuity. Rather it means that continuity and contradiction exist side by side, and each needs to be respected.

(Hunt, 1992, 97)

I find myself through this medium. Through writing, my Healing Self learns how to integrate all my other selves. Sooner or later I write myself to healing laughter. The shape of some words make me laugh out loud. I like to see, to hear what happens when words dance close. I enjoy learning how to say something serious—like being devoured—in a playful way.

lonely's the word
when you feel your
self fly

fast

like a little black
bug into the big yellow
beak of the bird

(Stewart, May 12, 1991)

Words are Creatures. They are alive. They're so bold just after I've dipped the nib of my pen into
the inkwell, then they get thinner and thinner until they're invisible, so I dip again. I play with
them, they play with me. Writing is exciting; it brings my guts to life.

There were times when you had to write. Not conscience. Just peristaltic action. Then you felt sometimes like you could never write but after a while you knew sooner or later you would write another good story. It was really more fun than anything....It had more bite to it than anything else.

(Hemingway, 1973, 218)

The empty page is more than a mirror, it's space. Time. The opportunity to create my own being.

Freedom. Michelangelo, in 1504, sculpted David "completely naked, just as unprotected as when he faced [Goliath] trusting only on God and in his own strength" (Keutner, 1969, 19). (See also Pelletti, 1989, 20-21.) Like Michelangelo's David, who holds his sling in his left hand, I have brought my father down with my pen.

The pen, expressing the soul's passion is mightier than the sword because the imagination can change the life of a people at their very roots.

(Moore, 1994, 135)

When I'm hauling a full load in my truck, the rearview mirror is virtually useless as a mirror; I use my side mirrors. I have large side mirrors bolted to my doors for seeing around my trailer, as well as convex mirrors to eliminate my "blind spots." This collection of mirrors, like qualitative research, offers me many different, simultaneous perspectives and ways of accessing and presenting material that I cannot do otherwise.

...qualitative research is often the most "adequate" and "efficient" way to obtain the type of information required...to provide [researchers] with a set of categories for writing their theories within a rhetoric of generation, to balance out that of verification.

(Glaser & Strauss, 1967, 18)

Through narrative inquiry, these voices, these mirrors allow others to see me as they approach me from their different perspectives. When others can see themselves in my mirrors, they know I can
The moral of the story is that one should deliberately cultivate such reflections on personal experiences. Generally we suppress them...rather than looking at them as springboards to systematic theorizing.

(Glaser & Strauss, 1967, 253)

I signal my intention and watch for their acknowledgment of my intention. Without my mirrors, I cannot move forward without endangering myself and others.

Narrative allows teachers and researchers to declare that they themselves are the subject of their own inquiry. By partaking more fully of their experience, they can transform it.

(Diamond, 1992, 69)

The hardest part of learning to drive a big truck, for me, was learning to trust my mirrors.

The hardest part of being a graduate student and researcher is that I'm still afraid that my teachers or my readers will turn away from my stories.

WHY IS IT SO DIFFICULT to describe the real, the factual, the true situation of a small child? Whenever I try to do this I am confronted with arguments that all serve the same purpose: that of not having to acknowledge the situation, of rendering it invisible, or, at best, describing it as purely "subjective." The victim is always subjective, I am told: He knows only the wrong done to him, not why it was done to him, especially when that victim is a child, for how much can a child really understand? How should he be able to assess the overall situation—for instance, understand the plight of his parents and realize how greatly he has provoked their violence? Again and again the child's share of the blame is looked for and found, with the result that only in extremely brutal cases is the term "child abuse" mentioned, and even then with reservations, while the broad spectrum of psychic mistreatment is disputed or totally denied. In this way the victim's voices are silenced almost before they are raised, and the truth, the whole objective truth, of the facts remains in obscurity.

(Miller, 1990, 96-97)

Everyone who works with me works hard. Gentle Reader, I know that reading this inquiry is hard work. You are brave; these autobiographical stories are hard stories to hear. On November 9, 1994, Professor E, returned my manuscript of Playing to lose to me just before the class
"It's not relevant to Personality Psychology," he said. "It cannot be empirically validated."

...researchers whose work is guided by the principle of what we might be, open themselves to the possibility of learning about human potential. Ironically, when their prophecies are fulfilled, they unveil a past of human potential. In short they may learn about human potential and development, while traditional researchers can never learn about it.

(Hunt, 1992, 119)

He dropped the package on the tabletop. I had been dismissed. Not just me, my story too. Professor E, like my supervisor's "Professor C. was an expert at..."personless" psychology"
(Diamond & Mullen, in preparation). Gagged again. I was shocked. How could I fight back?

Professor E liked factor analysis. I answered not one mathematical question on his tests, not even the final exam, in protest. When he was being considered for tenure, his department sent me a form requesting my comments about his teaching. Whoever typed the envelope spelled my name wrong; I responded with silence.

My stories are hard stories to tell. They are hard stories to live.

Autobiography's reply to the traditional empirical paradigm is a return to the experience of individuals by respecting all the qualities that disqualify us for consideration in the behavioral sciences: our idiosyncratic histories, our preconceptual foundations, our contextual dependencies, our innate freedom expressed in choice and self-direction.

(Grumet, 1992, 41)

When I'm driving my truck, and I'm in a tight spot, I ask someone to guide me. Somebody who can see my vehicle as part of the big picture including the landscape, all things that move within range of my vehicle, and my intended destination. I need to trust my guide's eyes and ears. I need to trust my guide's voice.

Narrative scholars are guides who provide important viewpoints that help me steer my
way carefully through this inquiry. The story in Playing to lose—my story—has changed dramatically since the telling of it. During the telling, I had to focus on the telling, hoping I could survive the telling. I told that story alone in a loghouse in the bush and told only a few souls that I was doing it or that I had done it. Now that it is told, and I have survived, that story has become part of a bigger story, namely this research story.

The central task is evident when it is grasped that people are both living their stories in an ongoing experiential text and telling their stories in words as they reflect upon life and explain themselves to others. For the researcher, this is a portion of the complexity of narrative, because a life is also a matter of growth toward an imagined future and therefore, involves retelling stories and attempts at reliving stories. A person is at once engaged in living, telling, retelling, and reliving stories.

(Connelly and Clandinin, 1990, 4)

I build this inquiry with the support of my grown children, my partner, my friends, colleagues, teachers and fellow researchers. Based on my experience with Playing to lose, I expect to survive telling this research story, in the hope that this story will become part of the bigger story of education, and help children all over the world.

Narrative provides autobiographical opportunities for us each to gain a distinctively thoughtful presence or series of registers within which we can explore the bipolarity of our first and third person voices, that is, of our private and public, fictitious and factual selves. Presence is established when thoughts and feelings are called for by and in community—not in isolation.

(Diamond, 1993, 512)

I could not write Playing to lose today as I wrote it; I am not the same man. Telling that story changed my life and the lives of my children. It has affected everyone who knows me. It is my story, or, more correctly, it is one of my stories, told from a particular narrative perspective and, although it is corroborated by my daughter and brother-in-law, neither I nor anyone else can
prove it to be "the truth." I cannot claim to know, much less speak "the truth," and I steer clear of anyone who makes such a claim. Through this inquiry, I build on Playing to lose—both are testaments to my right to tell my truths.

Stories about the past are told from the present, from a situation which may have changed over the years and defines a new relationship to the past. It is this relationship which underlies the whole story, defines the meaning which it is supposed to convey: for one never tells a story in itself, but in order to convey some meaning. Telling a story about the past is a way of expressing indirectly a meaning about the present; in most cases this—often unconscious—goal of meaning-construction prevails over the faithful reconstruction of the past. (Bertaux, 1981, cited in Barman, 1994, 56)

In order to tell truths, we need freedom to explore our lives from different perspectives. Respecting our own truths enables us to respect the truths of others. Through the telling of our research stories, we claim the right to ask authentic questions.

You are so young, you have not even begun, and I would like to beg you, dear Sir, as well as I can, to have patience with everything that is unsolved in your heart and to try to cherish the questions themselves, like closed rooms and like books in a very strange tongue. Do not search now for the answers which cannot be given you because you could not live them now. It is a matter of living everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, one distant day live right into the answer.... (Rilke, 1945, 21)

In the act of choosing the words, and their arrangement on the page, we give voice to the struggles of our lives. Through autobiographical research, we connect aspects of our selves in an intricate, paradoxical process of being at once participant and witness, observer and observed, storyteller and audience.

A wide range of life-history approaches to self-narrative are available....Narrative helps us to consider the different versions of reality, including which is more 'real,' what we think we are, what we want to be, what we are afraid of, what we pretend to be or what we think others think we are. (Diamond, 1991, 100)
The value of autobiography lies in its inherent capability to allow readers to live vicariously the situation the writer describes.

The qualitative description allows the reader to envision and experience what he or she has not experienced directly. Poetry and literature are linguistic paradigms of such description....

(Eisner, 1994, 235)

Through Frankl’s act of autobiography, he has helped me to compassionately connect with and appreciate the tragedy of inarticulable human suffering and the miracle of his survival. His writing arouses empathy in me. “Empathy is the ability to don the shoes of another human being....Good writers put you there....”(Eisner, 1991, 37). I am grateful for Frankl’s survival and for how his autobiography enriches my life; through my deep respect for his valiant struggle, I make a valuable human connection—we both struggled to survive and transcend ourselves and our different but similar war situations.

Through my act of autobiography, I came to understand that my father’s life was not in the least explicable by asking why, and neither was mine. Asking why helped me learn to accept a painful truth about my father: sadistic cruelty brought him sexual pleasure.

...I was smaller than my son the first time I was gagged and beaten from head to foot on my Dad’s bed much smaller how could my Dad do it why I know how I know why for the pleasure.

(Stewart, 1995, 170)

I theorized that life is learning which questions to ask. This theory was grounded, grew out of my research.

Generating a theory from data means that most hypotheses and concepts not only come from the data, but are systematically worked out in relation to the data during the course of the research. Generating a theory involves a process of research.

(Glaser & Strauss, 1967, 6)
Its value to me lay in my own personal growth and understanding. I understood "**Why?**" and "**Why me?**" as victim's questions. It would have been easy and dishonest to answer "because" to my why questions, avoiding personal responsibility with linear cause-and-effect scenarios. In the act of surviving extreme intrafamilial violence, like surviving war, one learns important lessons about life.

For the most part, personal knowledge is not developed through formal instruction. It is a consequence of the basic fact of human association, beginning with the family. The quality of personal meanings therefore depends upon the nature of the common life, particularly upon the earliest and most intimate associations in the family, between parents and children.

(Phenix, 1964, 196)

One of those lessons is to ask meaningful questions: "...I want to learn to live instead of just trying to survive how do I unlearn fear and panic and rage how do I handle my rage..." (Stewart, 1995, 134). "How to live" questions are addressed in later thesis chapters. My question why has always been linked to my "God-fearing" father. **Why** he chose to seek sexual pleasure in sadism could not, and never will, be answered. Through writing my autobiography, I came to accept that.

...I'd ask him if he ever thought what I would be like as a man. I'd ask him why he tried to destroy me, so I could hear it in his own words. But I know if he told me the reason....No reason's good enough.

(Stewart, 1995, 151)

My identity as a son and a brother was deeply and powerfully connected with my father's brutality. Through writing my autobiography, I gained the space and time to articulate that connection clearly. Perpetrators of domestic violence isolate and silence their prey, lest they be held accountable. "Now I understand I was sacrificed to maintain the silence..." (Stewart, 1995, 165). Paradoxically, and thankfully, making this connection was crucial to allowing me break it.

Although Frankl seeks **answers**, I concur with his underlying premise that it is our
individual responsibility to actively seek what Life is teaching us.

...it did not really matter what we expected from life, but rather what life expected from us. Life ultimately means taking the responsibility to find the right answer to its problems and to fulfill the tasks which it constantly sets for each individual...."Life" [means] something very real and concrete, just as life's tasks are also very real and concrete.

(Frankl, 1962, 77)

Choosing to maintain a victim stance in the world was not an acceptable alternative to me. I needed and wanted to give voice to my part in the creation of my own life, rather than blame someone else. The question why would have kept me locked into looking for an answer to an unanswerable question. Like Frankl, I stubbornly refused to relinquish my freedom to choose.

...everything can be taken from a man but one thing; the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.

(Frankl, 1962, 65)

When I became a father, I needed to ask why to learn that it was an incomplete question. Why led me to the question that works for me, and that question is how. "Why dad why do you rape your little girl how could you how could I...." (Stewart, 1995, 114). The relevance of my self-narrative or single case study of self for others lies in its explicit depiction of how difficult it is for survivors of domestic war to prevent themselves from re-creating another similar war situation with their own children, and how the situation of extreme domestic violence is similar to that of international war (see also Di Nardo, 1983; Eichler, 1988; Fox & Luxton, 1993; Freyd, 1996; Garbarino, 1992; Hutchison, 1996; Olson, 1994; Skolnick & Skolnick, 1994). I hope that you, Gentle Reader, will learn from my experience, for "...such insights need not come from one's own experience, but can be taken from others" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, 253). Every how question contains a myriad of possibilities, and no answer. Every how question leads me deeper into the
exploration of myself, my situation, and my world-with-others. That is research.

The adherence to the methodology, the obligation to stay within that realm, forecloses openness to what is, and focuses our attention on beings rather than Being, on answers rather than questioning.

(Worsham, 1987, 205)

In the actual writing of my autobiography, I learned how to give voice to my grappling with honest questions: "...how can I choose to pretend to lie to myself how can I choose to be honest..." (Stewart, 1995, 118). I continue to be my questioning self, exploring rather than answering this thesis question. This is research, for indeed,

Writing from our Selves should strengthen the community of qualitative researchers and individual voices within it, because we will be more fully present in our work, more honest, more engaged.

(Richardson, 1994, 516)

Only during my exploration of this question have I come to see that my perspective on the question why has always been death-oriented. Frankl's life-oriented way of looking at the question helps me see it anew.

A man who becomes conscious of the responsibility he bears toward a human being who affectionately waits for him, or to an unfinished work, will never be able to throw away his life. He knows the "why" for his existence, and will be able to bear almost any "how."

(Frankl, 1962, 80)

The relevance of Frankl's research beyond his situation is that it is still working, thirty-five years later, enabling me and others to learn things significant to our lives. Through the first sixteen years of my life, I had no why of my existence, nobody and nothing to live for after-war. Life behind barbwire. Now that I see my why question from Frankl's perspective, I see that I had, in fact, developed my own active and concrete why of existence that I have never articulated before. Only as an adult, and only through my act of autobiography did I come to a why for my existence:
I could not bear to make my children suffer my abandoning them altogether. Throughout the writing of my autobiography, and the reliving of my intense trauma, I kept my son's framed note on my desk to remind me to persevere:

you're always going to be There for me,
like you're not going to skip out on me
--someone who loves me!

(Wilton, 1993)

My book is not dedicated to my children. It is "For my children" (Stewart, 1995, np). It graphically shows how I struggled to learn how to be their loving dad, and how they, "...my kids my teachers" (Stewart, 1995, 157), valiantly struggled to teach me. My daughter highly values the record of my struggle to protect her from my warring self, how I failed, and how I succeeded.

Dear Dad, Thank you for your effort and honesty...
Thank you for fighting for Wilton and I and Not giving in even when it was hard. Thank you for winning. You are a good man....

(Kristina-Mae, November, 1995)

...I was glad [uncle] Julius was able to tell me his point of view about what my father had experienced as a child...it made me feel more grounded having the stories confirmed by an adult living outside the situation....I read Playing to lose...I am particularly glad that the incidents I remember are portrayed accurately. (Examples; Page 132 when my father threatened my mother and she asked me to call the police. Page 160 when my father sent my brother outside to give them both time to cool off.)

(Kristina-Mae, October 26, 1997)

They both attended my seminar with over 100 Concurrent Education students at a University in February of this year. Playing to lose is one of the many tools I use in conducting seminars about the violence-learning connection with university students in Education and Psychology, as well as mental health professionals.

As individuals, we contain all our selves within us. Each of us is like a big old tree full of
concentric rings—it contains all its younger years, its history, in each moment of its life. The accomplishment of the integration of our plural selves helps us to connect with others in the community; sharing brings healing and joy.

The salient concepts of the self that the person can access comprise what has been called the working self-concept (Markus & Nurius, 1986), which includes ever-changing combinations of past selves and current selves as well as the imagined possible selves that we hope to become or are afraid of becoming...

(Mischel, 1993, 422)

Simultaneous selves require existence in simultaneous times. Breathing room. I exist as numerous stories, in layers of and in time, in my own lives. I perpetually create and recreate my selves, and my understanding of (their) experience. Each articulation of each of my selves shifts through time as I mature.

We are followed through life by ghosts...ghost selves, the lives we have chosen not to lead coming back to haunt us....We have unlived lives in the realm of our personal and intimate existence, but also in our professional lives...We also live in memory and expectation, and both of these things are, in some ways, imagination. I can imagine those I love as they were or as they may come to be. Absent, they are present....The singer I did not become, the athlete or dancer or actor you did not become, have an existence of some sort. Lost possibilities taunt us, amuse us, challenge us. The single life we are given is both too much and not enough. Even the most singular of us is plural, haunted by the ghost beings we own and are.

(Helwig, October 19, 1992)

My various selves are reflected back to me in relationships with others, especially those close to me. But however distant one of my selves may be from another of my selves, they are closer to me than to anyone else; nobody knows me better than me. Nobody knows better than me that my survival experiences cannot be measured.

Perhaps the largest problem we have encountered in this entire book was that of gaining access to the life-world of individuals. It was this project that we claimed at the outset was somewhat better realized by qualitative than by quantitative methods....can one human being inhabit the life-world of another to any reasonable
degree?...a first-person method...would seem to offer enormous practical benefits. After all, you are the constant companion of yourself....In short, each person has unprecedented and literally awesome access to his own life-world, both its "inner" and "outer" events, in a way that could never be approached by another.  
(Shwartz & Jacobs, 1979, 361-362)

When one of my selves is moved, my other selves take heed. In order to make sense or meaning of this research story, Gentle Reader, you need to compare it to the story of at least one of your own selves' lives, and choose if and how you will allow this story to move or affect you. In the conscious act of nurturing our own movement toward integrity, we preserve the individual voices of our composite selves intact. Paradoxically, our selves dialogue with one another, and help each other grow. Each person is a community of one, a choir of voices.

I am interested in following previously hidden paths that take the thesis in the direction of narrative or the novel, reflexive genres in which self can be interrogated as the composing author. We ask of each thesis chapter: "Who is (are) doing the talking?" and "How did this happen?"  
(Diamond, 1994, 59)

As a choir is composed of many people with names, so too we name our internal selves. We recognize them by their distinct voices. As you read this, Gentle Reader, you are hearing my Third-person Researcher Voice as part of a choir of Other Scholarly Researcher Voices. Each of these individual Researcher Voices are composed of an internal choir of voices.

...we are well advised to keep on nodding terms with the people we used to be, whether we find them attractive company or not. Otherwise they run up unannounced and surprise us, come hammering on the mind's door at 4 a.m. of a bad night and demand to know who deserted them, who betrayed them, who is going to make amends. We forget all too soon the things we thought we could never forget. We forget the loves and the betrayals alike, forget what we whispered and what we screamed, forget who we were. I have already lost touch with a couple of people I used to be; one of them, a seventeen-year-old, presents little threat...The other one, a twenty-three-year-old, bothers me more. She was
always a good deal of trouble, and I suspect she will reappear when I least want to see her... an apparition all the more insistent for being so long banished.

(Didion, 1990, 10)

**Baseball: Game of Selves and Names**

Baseball is a game where the plurality of selves mix wonderfully. The catcher throws the ball to the pitcher. That's the name of the ball in play: "The Ball." The pitcher winds up. The moment it leaves the pitcher's hand, "The Ball" gets a new name "Sinker." "Slider." "Change-up." "Forkball." "Rising fastball." "Curveball." "Knuckleball." "Fastball." "Split-finger fastball." "Screwball." We recognize the distinct baseball selves by how the baseball dances through the air toward home plate at 90 miles per hour. Recognized selves, recognized voices.

The concept of sub-personalities implies that we have many parts of ourselves, like my Little Professor and Little Optimist. Some are strongly in evidence and others are dormant and undeveloped.... What stirred my inner being was that I was immediately able to recognize part of my personal cast of sub-personalities and, equally important, saw that some seemed to be missing, causing me to try to coax them out on stage.

(Hunt, 1987, 34)

If "Sinker" dances outside the strike zone, it's name instantly changes to "Ball 1," "Ball 2," "Ball 3," or "Ball 4." The pitcher may intentionally throw a "Ball" instead of a pitch that challenges the batter.

Each of us has a part which judges, evaluates, sets standards, and criticizes. Spend a little time becoming aware of your "Critic," perhaps giving your sub-personality a name so that it will remain under control.... Send your Critic off on a trip.... Try to develop your "Fair Witness" to help keep you honest.

(Hunt, 1987, 82)

If the bat in the arms of the batter connects with "Sinker," however, "Sinker's" name instantly changes again. "Fairball." "Foulball." "Flyball." "Groundball." That's the game. It is a game of perpetual transformation. Like a baseball in play, each of us contain a host of selves and voices.
Some named.

I became aware of five subpersonalities who were present at the research sites and might have influenced this study in spite of my awareness of bracketing my biases. I have named and briefly described these subpersonalities....Spiritual Susan runs the risk of distorting this study by concentrating on the spiritual aspect and not seeing what is really there....Successful Susan....I had to accept that I did have a success orientation that I was communicating to my participants. Pro-Reflective Susan....I really prefer reflective people....Salesperson Susan: I have spent years selling visualization as a technique....Miss Thorough sighs with relief, but she is still not certain she didn't lead him into it. And so it goes...In the final analysis if I could become aware of these subpersonalities I would be a better researcher. This was very important for Successful Susan and Miss Thorough.

(Drake, 1989, 49-51)

This choir of researchers is one of my communities; we respect each other. My Third-person Researcher Voice enables me to gain distance from my own other stories told in other voices--now you are hearing my First-person Researcher Voice--so I can view my story of trauma and recovery from different perspectives.

We are, in narrative inquiry, constructing narratives at several levels. At one level it is the personal narratives and the jointly shared and constructed narratives that are told in the research writing, but narrative researchers are compelled to move beyond the telling of the lived story to tell the research story. This telling of the research story requires another voice of researcher, another "I." One of the multiple "I's" is that of narrative critic...the empirical narrativist helps his or her reader by self-consciously discussing the selections made, the possible alternative stories, and other limitations see from the vantage point of "I the critic."

(Connelly and Clandinin, 1990, 10)

Narrative research is a way of creating space for our internal selves, of honouring them. Self-acceptance. Antidote for fear.

So if telling a story requires giving oneself away, then we are obligated to devise a method that mediates the space between the self that tells, the self that told, and the self that listens; a method that returns a story to the teller that is both hers and not hers, that contains her self in good company.

(Grumet, 1991, 70)
Only by knowing where I am in relation to others in the world can I move. Only by joining the choir of researchers can I hear their Researcher Voices. Only by allowing others to hear my Researcher Voices can I hear how my voices harmonize with theirs and theirs with mine. We value each other; we need each other. Acceptance. The more I try to change who I am, the less I am able to accept who I am. I cannot change; my resistance to change is equal to my need to change. Changing a habit is hard work and takes time. Changing my warrior personality is harder work and takes more time. Only through acceptance of who I am can I change. Self-acceptance is change.

So it is at this point that I must begin to peel away the layers of hidden knowledge that I have acquired in my journey of life. This process of uncovering and bringing to the surface one’s own personal theories relating to a phenomenon entails a great deal of risk that at the onset seems to outweigh any possible benefits. Those of us who decide to involve ourselves in this process and forge ahead to confront the hurdles of our own inner selves will take the largest leaps forward.

(Brathwaite, 1988, 26)

In the enchanting children’s book *The Nutmeg Princess* (Keens-Douglas, 1992), horses have three heads, trees have eyes, and Spirits rise. The joy of nurturing Earth is sharing the bounty of her gifts. Every creature, plant and thing is illustrated with colour and lines that flow—showing us their plural selves.

**Palimpsest of Voices**

Gentle Reader, you have heard many of my voices already, each one distinct while connected to each other. I have no singular, dominant, linear voice, no boss voice which all the others obey.
Multiple accounts splinter the dogmatism of a single tale. If they undermine the authority of the teller, they also free her from being captured by the reflection provided in single narrative.

(Grumet, 1991, 72)

Each voice springs onto the page unpredictably. This unpredictableness ensures that each voice is authentic. This sentence, Gentle Reader, this word is a surprise to me, revealing itself in the writing moment. I constantly say/write, backup, erase, say/write it again differently until I'm sure that I have listened and recorded the voice accurately. Yet, like a favourite song that brings us a new meaning each time we hear it, this sentence will change for me each time I listen to it more deeply.

We present a textured re-accounting in the form of a palimpsest (palimpsest, again; psest, rubbed soft) both to clean the slate and to "come clean," as we tell and comment on research stories.

(Diamond & Mullen, in preparation)

I say/write the same way I play the piano or the drum. By ear. Addressing you directly, Gentle Reader, brings you into this multi-layered conversation. Similarly, Diamond & Mullen (in preparation) "invite [their] readers to join [their] collective "we," filling out the spaces in the margins..." (np). I like that my recorded/printed voices are stacked atop one another in the pages you are reading like songs in a stack of longplay records lying flat on a shelf. This palimpsest inquiry is grounded in the "conceptualization of knowledge as constructed, contested, incessantly perspectival and polyphonic...I do not much subscribe to theories of the invisible writer..." (Lather, 1991, xx). Lather (1991) demonstrates her plural voices by offering 4 different endings to Getting smart: "Postscript" (153-156); "Epilogue" (157-158); "Afterword" (159-161) and; "Coda: Seductions and Resistances" (162-164). Diamond & Mullen's (in preparation) "different voices slide over each other" and can be heard/seen simultaneously on the page. My voices, and
the voices of other researchers in this inquiry into the day-to-day realities of intrafamilial trauma grow into and out of each other, tweaking the automatic, organic, rhizomatic impulse to send this inquiry growing in another new, unpredictable direction (see also Lather 1993, 680-681).

...not only must theory illuminate the lived experience of progressive social groups; it must also be illuminated by their struggles. Theory adequate to the task of changing the world must be open-ended, nondogmatic, speaking to and grounded in the circumstances of everyday life [and death]. It must, moreover, be premised on a deep respect for the intellectual and political capacities of the dispossessed.

(Lather, 1991, 55)

In the brilliant children's book Something from nothing (Gilman, 1992), a continuous second story runs through the book in illustrations only—the mice under the floor—unseen and unheard by those over them. Like silenced survivors.

My interest in inenarrability, the impossibility of telling some stories, lies in an acceptance of those moments in life when we must say something but a full story is not possible. We may have to speak in incomplete sentences, telling a story that trails off unfinished or moves in many directions at once....Besides, there are modes of expression that speak well for the fragments of experience: journal entries, songs, poems, notes, letters, dream logs, diaries. A good story...can be honest in conveying the provisional and fragmentary nature of experience.

(Moore, 1996, 244-245)

Clifford (1988) calls his book "...a spliced ethnographic object, an incomplete collection" (13). One of his chapters contains 9 poignant written "postcards," dated, and addressed to persons whose names are single capitalized letters of the alphabet (182-185). Like Lather's (1991) 4 different endings, Clifford offers 3 different and compelling versions of "History" (294-333).

Further studies, Gentle Reader, that explore qualitative research, narrative, autobiography, plural selves, plural voices, and palimpsest: Bannister, 1985; Barone, 1992; Beattie, 1995a, 1995b; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Booth, 1994;
Arts-based narrative inquiry creates space for juxtaposing selves, perspectives, voices, and truths that come to light only when researchers explore the darkness and can relay the story of their exploration to us in practical, digestible chunks.
CHAPTER 4

THE HEALING OF STORIES

A healing story is a digestible chunk.

Our bodies are collectors and containers of stories. We are living three-dimensional books that we perpetually revise. The stories of our lives are like those acetate pages in an encyclopaedia illustrating the human body, that overlay each other. We see how all our bodily systems are connected and dependent on each other. I live the story of my life in my body. Others live their version of my story of my life in their bodies as I live my version of the stories of their lives in mine—I live with/in/within others, as they live in/with/within me. Even when they're dead. Now when others who inhabit my body (with me) and my life are not healthy, life-affirming people, do I revise my story of the other, or the story of myself? I am not willing to lie, to re-story my father as an honourable man. Wait. Is there not one good thing he did on Earth for me? No, not in my memory. Search beyond memory, Matthew. Just one thing. Yes, I know of one thing. Through my father's sexual union with my mother, I came out of the blackness of death, where I was waiting, into the light. My parents called my name. Without them, I could not be here, conducting this inquiry into trauma to help other survivors and teachers. In my desperate, suicidal hours, I often found comfort in reading and re-reading what learned scholars had to say about how my suffering was part of the cosmic picture.

People often bring up the idea of "karma": that as far as lifetime experiences and circumstances go, what we sow in one lifetime is what we reap in the next. This is not always strictly true. I believe that experiences like [abuse] are not necessarily punishments from past lives. By choosing to come into a particular family or constellation of circumstances you have not agreed to submit to abuse. However, you have agreed to participate in a certain lesson or type of drama. You still have free will about how a particular lesson or teaching is carried out and so do the
other individuals who have chosen to share the lifetime with you. Just because you agreed to play a role in this family, abuse is not the invariable result. Part of the learning process is learning not to choose the more harmful or destructive paths. Growth can occur easily and joyfully as well as through struggle, and there are many gradations between the two....When we understand reasons, patterns, and causes, we experience what many call grace....We absolve ourselves of the need to repeat them, the need to experience pain....Finally, victims of abuse need to remember that even in these challenging circumstances, the soul is never harmed. The spirit is indestructible and immortal.

(Weiss, 1993, 113-114)

I hope that in the act of sharing this benediction with you, Gentle Reader, I learn how to synthesize this healing message with my body. Is this process of re-storying my own life as an honourable man a simultaneous de-storying of my father within me? As long as I focus on de-storying him within me, my focus is destructive. (See how close the words destory and destroy?) Perhaps un-story is healthier. How to do it? I cannot forget him, erase him or his-and-mine (our) thousands of trauma stories from my body. This chronic pain is a perpetual reminder. At least I am

...no longer compelled to follow the former pattern of disappointment, suppression of pain, and depression, since [I] now [have] another possibility of dealing with disappointment, namely, that of experiencing pain. In this way, [I] at least [gain] access to [my] earlier experiences—the parts of [myself] and [my] fate that were previously hidden from [me].

(Miller, 1981, 54-55)

Pain is one of my teachers. I am listening. I am recording the voices and the teachings of Pain through this inquiry that I have been otherwise unable to hear. This inquiry is an opportunity, a space to grow. When my focus is on re-storying myself, my focus is creative. I focus on the healing story of my life as I live it in/with/within my son, and he in/with/within me. Together, we create life-stories that my father cannot share, cannot revise or destroy. These healthy, life-affirming stories with my son re-store/re-story both of us and what we value. The word "our"
changes meaning from the context of me-and-my-father to me-with-my-son. More truthfully, "our" in the survival context of my childhood, meant me-or-my-father, and in my rebellion (which I am not sure I will ever outgrow) meant me-versus-my-father. Today, me-with-my-son also means him-with-me. We now share the same living quarters, we are physically together. While we lived apart, we were still together via our valuable connection that we chose to maintain. We gave each other tokens of that connection—a new baseball to him from me, a brass letter-opener from him to me. We called each other on the telephone to arrange a visit in Toronto and to plan sharing living quarters again in the future. This was the opposite of my trying to purge my father from my life. I see now (again) how futile that struggle.

For precisely in this momentary present which embraces my whole experience, the past remembered is fixed, a chronicle that I can radically reinterpret but cannot reverse or displace: what is done cannot be undone! And within this same present the future, is, on the contrary, still fluid, awaiting determination...

(Crites, 1971, 304-305)

Can I unlearn the powerful lessons that Trauma has taught me? No. When we try to unlearn something, we focus on that very thing learned that we are trying to undo. When Hoffman (1988) says "whatever is learned can be unlearned" (40), he offers hope, but does not take into account the complexity of bodily learning in extremely violent situations. He means that we do not have to condemn and jail ourselves with what we have learned as children (see also Foucault, 1980, and Mullen, 1994).

It is precisely because a child's feelings are so strong that they cannot be repressed without serious consequences. The stronger a prisoner is, the thicker the prison walls have to be, which impede or completely prevent later emotional growth.

(Miller, 1981, 54)

I cannot unlearn the trauma in my body. The body heals; it does not forget. Something new,
something other than trauma is learned. Healing is the integration of trauma story of being swallowed by the great fish of death into the other stories that compose my life. My whale story is not my whole story, not my only story. I am honoured to be father to my son, and thankful that he chooses to share his life-story with me. As long as I am focussed on being thankful for our connection, I am not afraid of losing it, nor do I focus on grieving my losses. My thankfulness helps me understand that our problems in life are opportunities for learning, and need not overwhelm us. We must slow down, and practice patience, rather than try to solve problems instantly. Patience allows me time to see and create alternative ways of dealing with problems. In this sense, thankfulness for the problem itself aids creativity. I struggle to learn how to balance patience with intense work. Unlike my father, I welcome my son's being, and his re-visions of my life-story. (My son, reading the above sentence as I wrote it, suggested a replacement word for "allow," which I revised to "welcome"—he says I did not "allow" my father to be brutal, nor can my son not "allow" me to change the course of the life-story that we share/live.)

Sometimes I neither want to tell any story nor hear any story. I feel so angry, hurt, and hateful that I must go off and be alone, where I can honour how I feel. Without a physical audience. I am not seeking to isolate myself from Life. On the contrary, I am giving myself time and space to heal. Sometimes I must withhold writing altogether—even in my diary, or doodling; I am not willing to accommodate an imaginary audience. Healing will not be rushed. I cannot (nor am I willing to learn how to) force my body to not be in pain, for the body cannot do a not. I need to listen to the guidance from my bodily voices to help me take care of myself. Seeing as I have no conscious, internal benchmark of painlessness, I must respect my need to listen in silence. I am learning that, when I welcome my loneliness instead of fighting it, it is not so intense. As
long as I am being (with) myself, I am not running away from the world. People who care about me are as close as the telephone, so I need not feel utterly disconnected. I believe, at long last, that depth of understanding is not equal to intensity. Intensity demands great amounts of energy to sustain itself. Pain and illness require that bodily energy be used more efficiently. Quietly. Slowly. We can read the whole book of Job in less than an hour, but a person stricken with illness takes much longer to say as much as he does:

And now my soul is poured out upon me; the days of affliction have taken hold upon me. My bones are pierced in me in the night season: and my sinews take no rest. By the great force of my disease is my garment changed: it bindeth me about as the collar of my coat.

(Job 30:16-19)

I value Job as another of my biblical heroes. I have learned from experience how difficult it is to endure suffering and still tell a story well. Is it possible that the author(s) of the book of Job had never experienced serious illness? Possible, yes. Probable? No. More about this later.

A surfeit of telling and hearing stories is like driving too fast. The faster I go, the more input I have to deal with, the less chance I have to witness, to give thanks for, to be part of, and create more beauty around me. I have no time to be where I am. My attention, which must be focussed for my survival, switches back and forth from out the windshield into the future I am about to run over, to the rearview mirror of the past that others chase me through. Slowing down is dangerous. I experience the pace as physical pressure in my chest. I need space and time to breathe now. I must get off this highway.

Stories move through our bodies like food.

"Stories that mean something to us, that touch us in some way," my son says, "stay with us whether we want them to or not."
I've been force-fed trauma stories, and like poison, they take time to work their way through (out of) my system. They cannot be simply flushed out, or erased, anymore than the joy that strawberries bring me through their exquisite beauty, aroma and taste can be extracted from my soul. I am strawberryed. Wait. The leaves on these strawberry plants look familiar. Like leaves on rosebushes. When Wilton was three years old, just to be silly, I ate some roses that were starting to wilt in the vase on the kitchen table. They were a gift to his mother on her birthday; Wilton got quite upset with me. According to Angier (1974, 214), Strawberry is part of the Rose family. So are many other edible plants. In my old family photographs, Gentle Reader, my siblings and I all stood in rows, oldest to youngest. Let the other members of this Rose family sit where they feel most comfortable in the sentence. This is a banquet. You are invited to dig in with Angier (1974): Raspberry and Blackberry (182); Rum Cherry (190); Wild Apple (230); Pin Cherry (164); Chokecherry (52); Mountain Ash (144); Hawthorn (96); Wild Plum (244); Serviceberry (201) and; Silverweed (204). All edible. When I am strawberryed, I am related to the rest of Strawberry's Family. My appreciation for roses and strawberries extends outward to include more connections in the world. Strawberries are the only red thing I love, the only red thing I can stomach. Red is too loud for me. I cannot abide red lipstick. I do not keep anything red in my field of vision when I am writing.

As our kidneys and liver act as filters within our bodies, our bodies are filters of stories. We must respect the function and capacity of our filtering mechanisms. Do we select, filter, collect, and contain healing stories in the same manner as we do wounding stories? Or is the difference between these types of stories the perspective from which we interpret them?

Survivors bear the responsibility to find the appropriate teachers who can hear them, and
Finding the right person to work with can be compared to finding the right midwife. In both cases, the job can only be done by someone who "wants the child." If such a person cannot be found, it is essential that we create a therapist within ourselves....it is almost unbearable to have to face how [the unloved child] was constantly unloved; how, instead, it was abused, exploited, and threatened; beaten, frightened, and rejected when it wanted one thing only: to be loved....The unloved child cannot fathom that, instead of being loved by those on whom its life depended, it was hated. Its system will be programmed to, above all, avoid danger. In so doing, it avoids life itself. The joy of being alive is drowned in a bitter sea of silence. Is all that remains a zombielike existence in the ranks of the living dead? The answer is no. With the help of [education] we can free ourselves from the dead hand of the past. But we have to take that step ourselves.

(Stettbacher, 1991, 42-43)

To a large extent, as adults, we are equally responsible for the stories we choose (allow ourselves) to hear, and tell.

Does my body move through a story? Do stories somehow "process" me? It seems to me, now that I've asked, that the Mystery of Life is the Great Story that lives me. Life lives me as much as I live Life. The Great Story is circular—it spins like a top, dancing across the tabletop—from the time of my conception to the time of my death, the story of my Life includes the birth and death of others, who cannot control their place and time in the Great Story, or unravel its Mystery. How each person who connects with me during my life-time is moved by my lifestory is unique to each individual.

Healing stories, like a handful of fresh wild strawberries, nurture the body. First, they flow to us. The strawberries, alas, must change, they must flow through us, and in the process become compost within us, and then flow from us so that we become hungry again for more nutrition. The first day I met Christine, over five years ago, she came to my place to say she couldn't stay for dinner (I did not have a telephone), so I fed her dessert—strawberries soaked in
Creme De Grand Marnier. Hooked. We need to keep healing stories flowing through us. This despite the truth that we attract wounding stories in the form of what we are afraid of—that fear knocking on the front door of our consciousness because we need to learn what it would teach us:

For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me. I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came.

(Job 3:25-26)

Job mourns his helplessness and isolation:

He hath put my brethren far from me, and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me. My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me. They that dwell in mine house, and my maids, count me for a stranger: I am alien in their sight....My breath is strange to my wife...young children despised me....All my inward friends abhorred me: and they whom I loved are turned against me.

(Job 19:13-19)

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, heal means "to make whole...sound in body, mind and spirit...to cure, repair, amend." (Simpson & Wiener, 1989, 52). Whole(some) is, therefore, balanced. Healing stories offer me a glimpse of how others balance receiving with giving nurturing. Nurturing can take many forms, including telling another a healing story. Is the story of Job a story of wounding or a story of healing? Both. No human being escapes the vicissitudes of life and body. The wheel of fortune turns again in Job's favour, when his focus shifts from counting and mourning his own losses, to when he considers others and helps them, by way of praying for them, to appease the wrath of the Lord against them:

And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.

(Job 42:10)

A narrow viewpoint would be that God rewards Job for his steadfastness. After—and only after—
Job made the offering and prayed for his three friends, not for himself, did Job prosper:

Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, an all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him: every man also gave him piece of money, and every one an earring of gold.

(emphasis added, Job 42:11)

Job finally recognizes that, despite his losses, he still has something of value to offer. His friends need his help. Job needs to want to give, rather than be given to.

Finally, a person who has consciously worked through the whole tragedy of his fate will recognize another's suffering more clearly and quickly, though the other may still have to try to hide it. He will not be scornful of other's feelings, whatever their nature, because he can take his own feelings seriously. He surely will not help to keep the vicious circle of contempt turning.

(Miller, 1981, 112-113)

Empathy. This shift of focus helps Job accept that what he has been mourning will never, can never be restored to him, yet this shift only takes place after his period of mourning. "What do I really need to mourn the loss of my Dad or the loss of myself how long and how do I mourn"

(Stewart, 1995, 130)? Like Job, the archetypal mourner, I could only mourn for so long--while I was immersed in the writing of my autobiography. Then, also like Job, I had to choose whether to live--and risk loss all over again--or roll over and die. I had to choose to channel my energy expansively, into the generation of a new life for myself, rather than continue to shrink toward my own self-destruction. Suffering in the past or present does not condemn us to eternal suffering.

It is as if the "badness" in the parents that caused a person suffering in his childhood and that he had always wanted to shun, has to be discovered in himself, so that reconciliation is possible. Perhaps this also is part of the never-ending work of mourning that this personal stamp must be accepted as part of one's own fate before one can become at least partially free.

(Miller, 1981, 111)

Mourning, wherein we allow ourselves time and space to deeply acknowledge that part of us has
died, is part of the healing process, as surely as Winter is elbowed aside by the zephyrs of Spring.

Mourning is a painful exercise—not one we submit to lightly. During my mourning I felt like Samson, that my whole interior house was collapsing on me. Like Santiago on the third day alone in the vast sea, hooked to the marlin.

Fishing kills me exactly as it keeps me alive...."Ay" he said aloud. There is no translation for this word and perhaps it is just a noise as a man might make, involuntarily, feeling the nail go through his hands into the wood. (Hemingway, 1952/1995, 106-107)

After my mourning, I learned that mourning itself was helping me, paradoxically, to build a new house, a new self within. A teacherself that I could take into classrooms to help children find their own boatselves. Their letters remind me to persevere. They bring me hope.

Job's act of giving returns him to the land of the living. I chose to come out of isolation in the bush, back to the world, and I brought my best and only gift—the manuscript of Playing to lose—with me.

I haven't yet learned who wrote the book of Job, but I can say with a degree of certainty that it was not Job. It may be autobiographical, but an autobiographer cannot write about his own death and die at the same time. The author, who chose his narrative voice and perspective (in participation with the spirit of the work), knows that we, his audience, can only endure so much mourning before we become bored and indifferent to Job's story. I am a firm believer in letting the story speak for itself, so instead of speculating about the author, let's get down to the narrative itself. Job, God, Satan, Job's friends, everyone in the story are characters. Gentle Reader, I am working here, trying to keep my focus on God as a character in the story, but while I'm typing these words, I'm cringing, as if I'm expecting God to reach down through my roof and
punish me by knocking me senseless for writing this, for reducing Him to a "character." Yet these words are a prayer. I am humanizing God, bringing Him into the light by calling (writing) his name. Literally. There is darkness on the screen of my wordprocessor before I type. I have an old IBM black and white monitor. I'm not praying for forgiveness; I do not believe I am doing wrong. I still wrestle, like Jacob, with the God my father beat into me.

And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. (Genesis 32:24-28)

I'm offering these words as a gift to God, offering Him the opportunity to inspire me to say things correctly, and with grace, like the biblical prophets. Sadly, I have not yet learned how to be gracious. I read the definition in the dictionary and I cannot synthesize its meaning. My lack of understanding humbles me.

Now, after reading the story of Jacob again, I feel inspired. Brave. I shall henceforth in this inquiry substitute the name "God" with the name "Great Spirit." Great Spirit, if you have a problem with that, write me a letter. I am not afraid of you. You live within all things as you live within me. You cannot punish me; you are me and I am you. Oh! Now, at 8:45 pm. on Wednesday November 25, 1997, I understand what "I and my father are one" (John 10:30) could mean! I feel it in my body.

In focusing you will often find that some words, which come with a strong sense of rightness at a given moment and give you a body shift, are later superseded by what comes at a later step....When I use the word "body," I mean much more than the physical machine. Not only do you physically live the circumstances around
you, but also those you only think of in your mind. Your physical felt body is in fact part of a gigantic system of here and other places, now and other times, you and other people—in fact, the whole universe. This sense of being bodily alive in a vast system is the body as it is felt from inside. When something goes wrong, the body knows it and immediately sets about the task of repairing itself. 

(Gendlin, 1981, 77)

Heavenly "father" is Great Spirit, not "Dad of Jesus baby-boy-man." Gentle Reader, this is very exciting. John 10:30 is on the author's page of Playing to lose. In the writing of my autobiography, I had to explore the meaning of that single bible verse in my life: how my father and I were the same. That verse was the only piece of writing my father had given me:

Dad wanted it done, so Mr. Georges, an elder of the church, ladled me into the baptism tank in a set of black robes in the name of the big triple play, and I chewed the flesh and swigged the blood of Jesus like a good christian cannibal and almost vomited every time.

I was given a new black King James Version to celebrate the event. Written on the first blank page, signed by dad:

I and my Father are one.

John 10:30

The choir sang:

Amazing grace
How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me...

(Stewart, 1995, 50)

"Your handwriting looks like your father's," said my mother to me when she visited my house about eight years ago.

Her visit is recorded (Stewart, 1995, 143-148). I was furious with her for saying that I was like my father even in this way. It hurt deeply; I was a writer. She looked at the face of our handwriting styles and saw similarities. I said nothing. I was already writing Playing to lose; I was looking at the meanings of the words, and their context in my heart and my life. Listening to their voices. Listening for differences. After her visit,
In my outdoor firepit, I burned every letter from mum, every photograph of her and dad, one at a time. I burned my Johnny Bulloch suit, silk tie, handkerchief, even the wooden hanger. I tore my bible in pieces from back to front and burned it too. Now my house is clean.

(Stewart, 1995, 153)

It was very hard for me to burn that bible, with all my markings by my biblehero stories. I loved that book. I loved the crinkling sound, the voice of the page itself as I turned it. I loved how the wrinkly black cover had softened and faded with the sweat from my hands. I loved the bluesilk bookmark that slithered out from the binding. Burning that book was a way of offering myself hope, defying the curse of that one verse. I tore that book in pieces from right to left. I wanted to believe that I could somehow learn to be different than my father, and I was determined to try.

I missed the loss of that book until

Today I showed Margaret Olson my new huge 1833 King James Version, without page numbers, with big, bold print.

"I never memorized the books of the Bible, so I'm lost without an index," she says. "But Job's just before Psalms, so now I'll remember where to find it."

This Bible itself has a history. It is not contaminated by my father.

(Diary, Stewart, May 23, 1995)

Because I loved my 1833 King James Version (KJV), I gave it to my friends as a wedding gift. Part of their ceremony included a reading from the Song of Solomon. For this inquiry, I bought a used Large Print Children's Edition (1985) KJV; I can read it without my reading glasses. I like the illustration of the two sailboats at anchor on the Sea of Galilee on the back cover.

All the characters in Job's story can only endure so much mourning. Even Job will eventually become bored with his own incessantly sad story. What are the narrator's working parameters? The omniscient narrator is more knowing than Great Spirit! For the narrator to say what Great Spirit said, the narrator had to know in advance what Great Spirit would say. The
narrator, therefore, has the power of editing (correcting) Great Spirit to ensure Great Spirit says the right word at the right time in the story. The narrator has more power than omnipotent Great Spirit! Great Spirit cannot just blast into the story; He does not have the narrator's permission. Is Great Spirit being restrained, or is He happy with his role? Only the narrator knows. Great Spirit cannot wreak havoc in the story any time He feels like it, like He does in Job's life. For the narrator to know that Job lived so long after his ordeal, the narrator must be much older than Job. Let's say two hundred years old. (Narrators need time to get to know their characters.) Remember that the narrator knows when Great Spirit is coming in which whirlwind to talk to Job. The narrator does more than announce Great Spirit's presence at the right time, he brings Great Spirit. How does a narrator control Great Spirit? By subjecting Great Spirit to narrative time. What choice does Great Spirit, Satan, Job, or any other character have, if they want to be in the story? The narrator knows all, therefore, the omnipresent narrator must be older than Great Spirit. The narrator concludes his story sharply:

After this Job lived an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations. So Job died, being old and full of days. (Job 42:16-17)

Why does the narrator not allow us to learn if Job was ever cured of his disease? How can we ever learn whether or not Great Spirit sticks out his tongue at Satan? Job prospered. Does that mean that Satan withdrew from the competition 140 years too soon? Why? Why does the narrator not use Great Spirit or Job to get rid of Satan, in keeping with the plot, instead of just leaving him out of the end of the story? Alas, these questions become irrelevant inasmuch as we can only deal with what is included in the story. Nevertheless, these questions serve to reveal how important, how central the presence of the narrator is, as a character, in the story of Job.
Job's story, Frankl's (1962) war story, and my own story of trauma and recovery in this inquiry, illustrate the human capacity for hope and endurance amid terrible suffering, loss, and sorrow. Job and Frankl, "who against hope believed in hope" (Romans 4:18), survived. At the edge of death, they learned valuable lessons about faith in life. Like Santiago, who "from his pain...knew he was not dead" (Hemingway, 1952/1995, 117). Like his great fish:

Then the fish came alive, with his death in him, and rose high out of the water showing all his great length and width and all his power and his beauty.

(Hemingway, 1952/1995, 93-94)

Job's story and Frankl's story offer us hope; we are not alone in our suffering. Their suffering story is not their only story, it is not just a victim story. Their suffering stories reveal to themselves and to us their own deep inner courage. Transformed by their suffering, they reach out to others with compassion. Through their stories, they show us the seed of hope in despair, the spark of life in death, the seed of educative experience in the mis-educative experience.

...they were worthy of their sufferings; the way they bore their suffering was a genuine inner achievement. It is this spiritual freedom—which cannot be taken away—that makes life meaningful and purposeful...If there is a meaning in life at all, then there must be a meaning in suffering. Suffering is an ineradicable part of life, even as fate and death. Without suffering and death human life cannot be complete.

(Frankl, 1962, 66-67)

The primary function of the narrator is to narrate a credible, trustworthy story, one in which we the audience believe in the consistency of the narrator and the other characters in the story. Note that credible does not mean that the story is subject to empirical validation. Job hears the voice of Great Spirit in the whirlwind, and we accept the mysteriousness of that whirlwind. But should Job also hear the voice of Great Spirit through a rubbery carrot that he sharpens to a point and sticks in his right ear after he bites the head off a live frog and sits thirteen minutes on a nest of
wasps, for example, we, in this culture, would likely question the credibility of the narrator and Job. We must believe that what the characters say and do is what they actually mean to say and do, and there is no discrepancy between their thinking, their behaviour, and their utterances. We must be able to see part of ourselves in each character (and part of each character in ourselves) for the story to add/bring meaning to our experience. Otherwise, the characters become merely caricatures, and we laugh at them and dismiss them as we do a balloon with a fork.

No story, no inquiry, no life can include all. Our focus, as audience, is on what is included, not excluded. That means we appreciate that we are included as audience, as part of the story dynamic. No audience, no story. The storyteller honours us by telling us a story, and we honour the storyteller by listening. The storyteller learns through storytelling experience to honour the story itself, that comes to and through him/her. Storyteller is not in control of story; story is Mystery in process of revelation. Storyteller and audience, through honouring the spirit of the story (and, therefore, honouring each other), participate as co-partners in the creation of the story. This constitutes genuine sharing, which surpasses mere telling or giving, for the crucial element in sharing is openheartedness. The greatest strength of life and story is their paradoxical vulnerability. We all have had to learn how to deal with receiving a "gift" from someone who withheld their self from the giving. We all have heard stories spoken only with the mouth. We live in a supersonic age where the most common way to "give" is also that which is easiest—to buy something for another, rather than create it. Who can buy the healing property, the intangible essence, the soul of a story that resonates with the listener? Where can it be purchased? How much money is it worth? What's the price? I can only buy the paper, not the story. Until I learn to nurture myself and others, and allow others to nurture me with healing stories of hope,
inspiration, encouragement, and empowerment, stories that celebrate human freedom and responsibility, stories that foster connection with each other, the cost of my existence to humanity is my perpetuation, indeed my revised version of the story of suffering, oppression and war.

"The biggest fish I ever caught was a 10-inch trout." That's my (short) story. As the author, I chose a first-person narrator to tell all the details of that story. When you tell my story, have you not made it your own in order to tell it? Are you then not the author/choosing narrator of that story? What happens when you locate that story within different contexts? For example, what prompts you to tell that story on a fishing trip when you have just landed a 53-inch salmon, and what prompts you to tell that story in church to a group of youngsters who want to know how big the two fish were that Jesus fed to the five thousand (John 6:5-13)? Which fish is bigger? Whose fish story was that once I told it? Whose fish story was that before I told it? Did it ever belong to me? What will happen to that story if it is never told again? Will it die? Or will it become part of our unseen collective heritage (like the fish returned to the lake) and transform itself into another story (to be caught again) in the lives of others in the future?

Most of my life I have been looking for healing connections, seeking to replace my parents, hoping I would be adopted and cared for. Who will adopt me? Maat?

Maat... (Egyptian myth.) the goddess of truth, justice, and cosmic order, daughter of Ra. She was the feather (this as a hieroglyphic sign means "true" or "just") against which the heart of the deceased was weighed in the balance at the judgement of the dead. She is depicted as a young and beautiful woman, standing or seated, with a feather on her head.

(Hawkins, 1989, 496)

Who will adopt me? Calliope, "...the Muse of epic poetry. [Gk, = beautiful voiced]" (Hawkins, 1989, 122)? Who will adopt me? Terpsichore, "...the Muse of lyric poetry and dance. [Gk, =
delighting in dance] (Hawkins, 1989, 848)? To some degree, my ancestors, my partner, my children, her children, my teachers, therapist-teachers, doctors, auto mechanic, friends, creatures, rocks, and trees have adopted me. Mostly, I am adopted by my own healthier attitude. I am thankful for the opportunity to keep struggling to learn how to listen, so I may learn how to create love through the sharing of healing stories.

Life is story is prayer. Like Job and Frankl, Gentle Reader, I reach out to you with compassion through the story of this inquiry, in the hope that my story helps you endure and transcend your suffering. I hope that, like Santiago, you allow this story to move you, so that you may feel the centre of your own bodily aliveness:

He started to pull the fish in to have him alongside so that he could pass a line through his gills and out his mouth and make his head fast alongside the bow. I want to see him, he thought, and to touch him. He is my fortune, he thought. But that is not why I wish to feel him. I think I felt his heart, he thought. When I pushed on the harpoon shaft the second time.

(Hemingway, 1952/1995, 95)

I hope, Gentle Reader, that as compassion grows within you, you may enable yourself to extend that compassion to others who are suffering. Amen and blessed be.
CHAPTER 5

FROM DEFENCE TO LAUGHTER: HEALING LAUGHTER

I hate tests. Moment-to-moment survival is a neverending test. I still often forget that I've "passed," that the test is "past," that I have moved from "a time to weep, [to] a time to laugh, [from] a time to mourn [to] a time to dance" (Ecclesiastes 3:3). But I remember more and more, and those who care about me help me remember my laughing voice.

A merry heart doeth good like a medicine; but a broken spirit drieth the bones.

Proverbs 17:22

Wholesome, spontaneous laughter provides powerful healing for the bodymind. The physiology of laughter, including its generation, properties, routes, and influences within the bodymind, connect us joyfully, eternally, to the humanity of our selves, and to others.

The human body is constantly creating itself. Maintaining physical health, by way of preventing illness, is the cardinal task of the immune system. Immunoglobulins (water-soluble proteins acting as antibodies) basically attack foreign, especially toxic, substances (antigens) in the body. Secretory immunoglobulin A (S-IgA) is one particularly important and staunch internal defender:

...S-IgA, one of several gamma globulins that are central to the humoral part of the immune system, is the predominant antibody in saliva, tears, and intestinal secretions, and is the primary defense against viral and bacterial infections in the upper respiratory and gastrointestinal tracts.

(Tomasi 1976, cited in Martin and Dobbin 1988, 94)

Numerous studies have demonstrated the link between increases in adrenal hormone activity, and decreases in secretion of S-IgA (McClelland et al. 1980, 1982, 1985, Rogers et al. 1979, Stone et al. 1987, in Martin and Dobbin 1988). That link is immunosuppressive stress. The popular

...subjects with less of a sense of humor, as compared to those with a stronger sense of humor, appear to experience a greater depression in their immune functioning following stress.

(Martin and Dobbin 1988, 103)

One of the ways that I recover from trauma is to write intelligent nonsense poetry:
mousey you
nibblehurry
ticklefurry
shitnscurry
in the attic
of my holesomemory
& more than any
other lover i
want your holesomebody
between my
crackerswithparsley

(Stewart, May 16, 1991)

Bringing playfulness into the centre of this inquiry helps me balance its "academic" seriousness. I am, at this moment, Gentle Reader, enjoying this work—hoping that you are enjoying this healing laughing moment that I am sharing with you.

Lefcourt, Davidson-Katz, & Kueneman (1990) conducted three experiments to verify this relationship. In each case, subjects' humour was measured with the SHRQ (Martin and Lefcourt 1984) and CHS (Martin and Lefcourt 1983). In the first study, 45 university students submitted saliva samples in the lab during the first session. During the second session, the subjects listened to a 30-minute recorded segment of the humorous skit *The 2000-Year-Old-Man*, rated the funniness of the tape, and submitted another saliva sample. In response to the skit, their concentrations of S-IgA rose significantly. In the second study, incorporating 30 minutes of a film as a more "universal" humour stimulus in the second session, the S-IgA concentrations of 34 undergraduates increased more so than in the first study.
I am walking over
the bridge
two ducks are swimming under.
I am looking down
between the boards
the ducks are looking up.
I am breathing in
the air
the ducks are breathing out.
I am thinking
quack quack
the ducks are laughing.

(Stewart, December 27, 1987)

In the third study, 41 undergraduates in the second session filled out the Profile of Mood States
(POMS—McNair et al. 1971) directly before and after being exposed to the humourous material.
POMS specifically measures tension, depression, fatigue, anger, confusion, and vigour. Their
"mood disturbance" dropped noticeably after all the subjects listened to The 2000-Year-Old-Man
together, instead of the smaller groups of 2 or 3 as in the previous two studies. Their salivary
concentrations of S-IgA, this time analysed with the enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay
(ELISA—Stone et al. 1987) increased, most significantly in this study, for those with a better
sense of humour than others. In the control study, saliva collected from 12 subjects before and
after a 60-minute lecture on social psychology showed no difference. The researchers concluded

...humor plays a significant role in moderating the effects of stress and helps to
determine certain immune-system activity....

(Lefcourt et al. 1990, 319)

No significant differences were found between male and female S-IgA levels or their sense of
humour (see also Chapman & Foot, 1976; Crile, 1970; Frank & Ekman, 1993; Holland, 1982;
Lefcourt & Martin, 1986; McGhee & Goldstein, 1983; Morreall, 1983; Pfeifer, 1994; Podilchak,
1992; White & Winzelberg, 1992). All attempts to measure one's sense of humour or mood are
arbitrary at best, inasmuch as they are subject to rapid change. A measured decrease in
depression, for example, does not necessarily mean an increase in humour. Humour cannot be
isolated from any other facet of one's life experience. One cannot "have" more of it than another.
One's sense of humour resides within one's total constitution, and generally speaking, may be
considered "better" than another's if, by laughing more easily, one copes better, or integrates
humour with life stress efficaciously. Yet to accurately measure S-IgA, it must be isolated—from
the body, the humorous event, and the physical laboratory environment in which the experience
happened. What becomes of all the good S-IgA-laden spit once it has been analysed? It would be
a shame to waste it! The generation of laughingspit in my body brings me and holds me in the
present moment, with others; the memorymoments of being gagged and tortured recede. Like
Santiago, I have tasted enough of my own blood.

The old man could hardly breathe now and he felt a strange taste in his mouth. It
was coppery and sweet and he was afraid of it for a moment. But there was not
much of it. He spat into the ocean and said, "Eat that, galanos. And make a dream
you've killed a man."

(Hemingway, 1952/1995, 119)

Unfortunately, the researchers in the above studies do not capitalize on the opportunity afforded
them by their studies to educate their subjects, especially the higher-stressed individuals whose
health could directly benefit from more humour in their lives—those with lower S-IgA levels.

lovesthebug
swimminin
my wine
wait
in
to
get
drunken

(Stewart, June 3, 1991)
In this situation, information (humour measurement scores, saliva) was not collected anonymously; the researchers bear some ethical responsibility for the health and well-being of the participants. Providing educative material(s) at the close of these studies serves as neither reward nor compensation to the subjects, rather it is a gesture that recognizes and appreciates their value as human beings first (instead of "subjects") without whom the research (which furthers the careers of the researchers) would have been impossible.

How come
When I meet
A hungry grizzly
Or a lady
With a bare bum
I look dead
In their eyes?

(Stewart, September 11, 1985)

Humour also boosts the manufacture and distribution of the important immune material catecholamine, a chemical that aids in the creation of endorphins—the body's own pain-reducing enzyme (Berk, Tan, Fry, Napier, Lee, Hubbard, Lewis, & Eby, 1989, in Nevo, Keinan, & Teshimovsky-Arditi, 1993), while simultaneously reducing the production of the neuroendocrine hormones—dopac, epinephrine, growth hormone, and serum levels of cortisol, all of which are employed in response to stress (Fry 1971, 1977 in Nevo et al. 1993).

I went to my Medicine Man today
I said "I got this pain
In my body, it looks like it's here to stay."
He said, "Uh-huh, it's gonna rain."

"The problem is the look of the pain,"
He said, looking into my eyes.
"Uh-huh, it's gonna rain,
Then there'll be sunny skies."
I said "Please gimme the cure,"
He said "Here it is: You got no reason
I can see, no reason whatever
To believe in the cause of the pain."

"Laughter," he said, "is stronger
Than any cause of any pain,
To see yourself in a beautiful picture,
You gotta learn to see again."

"Just gimme a prescription to stop the pain,"
I said. "I have a garden," said he,
From his pocket he took an onion.
"Perhaps you could weed it for me."

He peeled that onion slowly,
And we cried together, laughing.
"Take your medicine" said he,
"Every noon, every night, every morning."

"This is powerful good Medicine"
I said, looking into his eyes,
"Uh-huh, it's gonna rain,
Then there'll be sunny skies."

It's powerful good medicine
To laugh high and low.
I see the rain, uh-huh, I see the sun,
uh-huh, I see the rainbow
uh-huh, I see the rainbow.

(Stewart, March 1, 1996)

The result is "increased vitality of the white blood cells" (Berk et al. 1992 in Fry 1994). Indeed, lymphocytes (a form of white blood cell) and antibodies are more than body messengers—they are integral parts of the body's message-sorting centre:

The immune system, with its $10^{12}$ lymphocytes and $10^{20}$ antibody molecules can be compared only to the brain in its degree of subtlety...at the cell level, lymphocytes employ similar mechanisms to those of nerve cells and may even contain receptor sites for brain transmitter molecules.
The immune system therefore acts as a pattern recognition system which communicates information across the body and stores it as a memory. (Peat 1988, 61-62)

The brain and the immune system more than co-exist similarly, they weave, inseparably, through each other. Immunoenhancement, therefore, through humour, likewise enhances the brain, for

...the brain and the immune system are not like each other—they are each other, because they operate within the same chemical network.

(Chopra 1990, 93)

Neither the primitive nor the advanced neural structures of our tripartite brain are as vital to our health as the second structure that binds all three together. The limbic system, which connects us to our evolutionary history as well as our future, translates our emotions, noble or ignoble, from mere demands for self-preservation into paradoxical choices.

O flam(ing)ingo
  if you bingo your necks o
  if you bongo your legs o
  if you bango your wings o
  you'll be a fl(i)ng)mango.

(Stewart, July 9, 1992)

It enables us to select alternative ways of initiating-with and responding-to the world without our skin from the intelligence of the world within. Such choices are fundamental to learning, growing, and healing:

...Nestled above [our reptilian brain] is our..."old-mammalian" brain. This structure, with help from the temporal lobes and possibly other parts of the newest cortex, is called our emotional brain or limbic system...an intuitive intelligence to move for the well-being of the self, offspring, and species...[it] maintains all relationships such as our immune system and our body's capacity for healing itself.

(Pearce 1992, 44)

The most important source of humour in my life, critical in promoting my own sense of well-being and healing, is my creative artwork. The more I create, the more I enjoy sharing the built-in
laughter of my art with others, whose laughter encourages me to create more art. With playful, humorous art, I directly enhance the physiology of my own immune system, brain, and limbic system:

Our emotional brain acts with our neocortex in all internal imagery and creative vision... The dreamlike emotional-limbic system also gives body and substance to creative thinking.

(Pearce, 1992, 47)

Through my art (sculpture, drawings, prose, poetry, song) I have found a wholesome, holistic way of being, learning, and teaching. Sharing my art with others, laughing with them, also enhances their immune systems.

**A Healing Teacher-student Laughingmoment**

One singular, magical laughingmoment represents the healthiest benchmark of my professional teacher-student relationship with Professors Margaret Olson and Deborah Berrill—indeed of my whole student career—and inspired this chapter section. On February 6, 1996, I presented four of my Popbottle People (Bud, Janet, Bud-wiser, and Sprout) to Professors Olson and Berrill—a trial run in preparation for my lecture February 26, 1996. They had met only Bud previously (December 20, 1995), and during that meeting Professor Berrill had invited me as guest lecturer to her first-year teacher education class. I kept all four (the rest were waiting to be created) hidden from view, and revealed them one at a time. After discussing Janet, the very moment I introduced Bud-wiser, Professors Olson and Berrill laughed together loudly. This laughingmoment is integral to my experience of my Popbottle People. The instant their laughter erupted from them, I felt joy, and laughed with them. Physiologically, my joy spread throughout my entire body, creating S-IgA, for
At the very instant that you think, "I am happy," a chemical messenger translates your emotion, which has no solid existence whatever in the material world, into a bit of matter so perfectly attuned to your desire that literally every cell in your body learns of your happiness and joins in...you can instantly talk to 50 trillion cells in their own language....

(Chopra 1990, 127)

I immediately recognized that I had achieved a spontaneous, inarticulate, yet "voiced" something.

The stress of my "work" suddenly evaporated, as I felt my bodily nervousness and tightness loosen. This laughing moment, this kernel of the story, is the whole story. As Casey points out, erotic body memories

... are often fully satisfying precisely in a fragmentary format. In fact, the content of much such remembering consists in fragments....Each of these suffices in itself, indeed is the memory in question.

(Casey 1987, 162)

When I'm in a stressful situation, I tend to narrowly focus my energy on coping with that stress, inhibiting myself from enjoying the panorama of life. The greater I perceive the stress to be, the more energy I mobilize to defend myself. That I consider defence at all illustrates my lack of trust in self and others. Yet that irresistible happy sound drew us together. They could not have planned that laughter-response. They were not acting; I trust them. My stress response is only part of the scene that I am creating. "The immune system knows all our secrets, all our sorrows...it turns those moments into the body's physical reality" (Chopra, 1990, 267). I experience stress as mounting pressure inside my body, requiring more and more energy to keep it restrained. I try to hold myself together by holding my breath in my body, as I learned when I was gagged in my father's bedroom, trying to survive like Isaac on the altar, like David before Goliath, like Samson surrounded by Philistines, like Shadrach, Meschach and Abed-nego in the fiery furnace, like Daniel in the lion's den, like Jonah in the belly of the great fish. I feel afraid and
alone, that I'm being watched. I forget that I'm sharing with others who are sharing with me. I forget that I am free. Despite my attempts to hide my stress, my hands shake visibly, and I weep.

The laughing person is open to the world...it is not a matter of chance that the outbreak of laughter begins immediately, more or less "apoplectically," and, as if to express the openness of laughter, rings out into the world, as he exhales. Crying, on the other hand, begins gradually, because it is mediated, and, as the expression of estrangement from the world and of isolation, develops in the movement of inhalation.

(Plessner 1970, 115)

In that laughing moment, Professors Olson and Berrill reflected me and my "work" back to me in a new, healthy, way—by breathing joyously and freely they reminded me, bodily, that I am free to breathe and I must breathe to be free.

During laughter we connect our "old mammalian brain" with "the first world," the mythical underworld of our bodies, literally bouncing our guts, and our means of locomotion and reproduction.

...The first world; the source of visceral proprioception or "feeling," also of proprioceptions of the sympathetic and parasympathetic systems; the body below the nostrils...

(Sansonese 1994, 69)

The closest we can come to laughter, while breathing through our nostrils, is a chuckle.

Chucking Letters

I like to exchange chuckles through the mail with my friends. My friend Lesley, a gradeschool teacher, bet that I could not write a boring letter.

Dear Lesley,
It was an interesting day. It got cloudy and it got rainy. It was interesting how it got everything wet. It got to be laundry time. It was interesting how it got wet on the line. It got rained on. It was interesting how it got there. It got there from the wind. It was interesting how it flapped. It flapped back and forth. It was interesting how it got done. It got washed.
M. I. Boring.
(Stewart, May 13, 1995)

Her reply:

Dear Mr. Stewart,
This is to inform you that your latest epistle, although written in the boring style, was indeed so boring as to make it ridiculous. This in turn was but a short jaunt to amusing, and, verily, I do say, funny (I myself found myself—I wish it was so easy) indeed chuckling as I perused the contents. Therefore your letter cannot be classified as boring and thus, in my humble regard, I win the bet....
Boringly yours....
(Malloy, May 27, 1995)

Gentle Reader, as I typed these two letters, I needed to take breaks away from my wordprocessor to laugh. Mailing a smile to a friend helps me hope in the future. Each letter I write, like each poem, like each essay, has a different narrator's voice. I send humorous letters as gifts; I feel as generous inside as Santa Claus. The act of waiting for a response, the voice of my friend, brings me hope. Every letter I receive is a gift. Some of these gifts are designed to help heat the house rather than be read a second time. The above letter exchange helped me cope with the stress of having Playing to Lose published.

A Prayer for my Brothers and Sisters

I told none of my siblings, save Darlene, that my autobiography existed until July 15, 1997. Now they all know. O Great Spirit, let the story be a healing story for each one of them. Let each of them rejoice for the rare laughing moments we created while in captivity. Let their rejoicing bring them hope. Let them find their own voices, and let their stories be heard. Amen and blessed be.

A loudspeaker hung from the ceiling in the middle of the huge room [in the basement]. Dad shouted through it every morning to wake us up. He also listened.

The previous night, when all was still, Thomas was posted as sentry at the top of the stairs. We stuffed our heaviest black and blue blankets into the window
frames. Then we replaced the sixty-watt bulb with one of dad's one-hundred-fifty-watters Wayne had stolen from dad's barn. Slowly, noiselessly, we folded our own clothes in the banana boxes with our names on them, and set the boxes back on the industrial shelving that lined the whole south wall. We stripped the three youngest brothers' beds and made them perfectly. We shined all our shoes. If we had to talk, we went into the other room, and whispered.

Wayne stood under the intercom, and faked a big snore. He pulled down his pants, and pointed to his hairy bum. He mouthed the words: KISS. MY. ASS. We all plugged our noses and swallowed our laughter. RIGHT NOW. Burt and Don and Gary danced around and stuck out their tongues and cocked snooks. Wayne picked his nose and offered the greeny to the intercom. I brought my bible over, and pretended to rip out a page and wipe my bum with it. Michael sat down and bit his toenails. We buried our faces in our pillows and laughed. One funny face when we came up for air and it started all over again.

(Stewart, 1995, 24)

In laughter—we are more in it than it is in us—we must open our mouths to allow the volume of breath-sound-energy to burst forth. Not that we have much choice, for control over our breath and our bodies in the laughing moment is greatly reduced. Although it originates within, genuine spontaneous laughter simply cannot be contained—it moves through us, rather than comes from us.

In Greek mythology, Hephaestus generally represents the mechanics of breath in the lower world, and specifically that of laughing breath from the gut. Having been thrown from Olympus by his mother Hera for being ugly, and again by his father Zeus for siding with Hera during an altercation, he becomes a blacksmith. When he finds his wife Aphrodite in bed with Ares, he "captures them in a net and calls the other gods to laugh at them" (Homer in Sansonese, 1994, 82). Hephaestus uses laughter maliciously, for revenge and control. No one appreciates being laughed at (scorned) by another. We must, however, laugh at ourselves, a sign that we accept our mistakes and are willing to move on, lest we become sombre and curmudgeonly. For the purposes of this inquiry, wholesome laughter means laughing with, not at another, and involves
allowing it to use us to engender health and peace with our selves and others. Take a deep breath. Say (to say, you must exhale through your mouth) "Hephaestus" really fast three times.

You sound like you're laughing:

Hephaestus...describes the breath of the first world: respiration from the abdomen, up through the chest, and into the throat, reaching no higher than the sinuses before descending to the diaphragm....During exhalation air leaves the lungs (the bellows), passes through the throat...breath[ing] only through the mouth, the sound produced by the air in the throat is approximated by Hephaestus' name...

(Sansonese, 1994, 74)

Unlike yoga and meditation, wherein the aim is internal control of our breath, the breath of a laughing person is not out of control, rather it is not being controlled. Whereas in yoga and meditation one seeks to immerse oneself in inner quiet despite the loudness and busyness of the exterior world, in laughter we experience internal release precisely by engaging and celebrating life in the external world with others.

Yesterday, the letter arrived from Oberon Press in Ottawa about Playing to Lose.

"Dear Matthew....What we've decided is that we'd like to publish the manuscript..." [Engineer, February 2, 1994].

Yes!

Today I take the whole gang out to Pizza Hut to celebrate. Sara reminds me to put my napkin on my head (like I do at home) to keep the crumbs out of my hair. I ask for balloons. We all inhale helium from the balloons and squawk with little voices. We laugh, and the sound of our squaky little laughter makes us laugh even more! I sound like Donald Duck.

(Diary, Stewart, February 8, 1994)

Because we exhale more than we inhale during laughter, we compensate by "gulping" air between the hee's and the haw's. This sweeps out the residual air that lingers about in the lungs during normal breathing, taking excess carbon dioxide and water vapour with it. Thus, the red blood cells can pick up more oxygen (Fry 1977b in Fry 1994). This is called pulmonary
ventilation. Furthermore, although laughing significantly increases both systolic (moment of heart contraction) and diastolic (moment between heart contractions) blood pressure, after laughter has subsided, blood pressure drops below the prelaughter level before returning gradually to baseline (Fry & Savin, 1988). During laughter, increased heart rate (Berlyne 1969 in Fry 1994) and blood pressure enhance circulation, boosting transport of blood nutrients throughout the body "in response to both metabolic and immune protection requirements" (Fry & Savin, 1988, 60).

**Laughingmoments With My Family**

Another of the ways I recover from trauma is to practice playing with my food to take the stress out of being at the table, especially at my partner's house. I cut my toast into thin strips, and add a different kind of marmalade or jam to each piece. Then I put them end-to-end like a train winding through others' table territory. I sit on the table and eat off my chair. I butter-and-jam my fingers. I fasten food to my earlobes with spring clothespegs. I build towers of Babylon with cereal boxes or whatever is handy. Being silly at the breakfast table is one of my ways of sending Wilton and my partner's teenage children Sara and Ram Das off to school with a smile. The opposite of my highschool experience. Let there be peace in the morning. The first time I dribbled a spoonful of soup onto Christine's hardwood floor like a child in a highchair, she didn't find it funny at all. I remember being in a highchair in the back porch of the first house I lived in. The back door is on my left, the back of my highchair is against the wall, and my head almost touches the ceiling. Let me out. I am put here to be kept out of the way, not to be fed. I smell stacked wood. Ice-cream comes off your spoon so much easier if you turn the spoon upsidedown on the way to your mouth, and sweet potatoes and peas are more fun if you squish them through your fingers first. Instead of putting lettuce in your sandwich, put your sandwich in the leaf of
lettuce. Serve soup on the underside of the bowl. Flat, circular, soup. Make a bowl out of your mashed potatoes, then add beets. Pink potatoes. Throw spaghetti onto the window to see if it's cooked. Keep throwing, keep cooking. I do not call my partner's children my "step-children." I hate the stepword. They are fortunate to have Ravi Inder for a wise and loving father, and Jovanna for their nurturing, playful step-mum.

"Jovanna, do you like being called their "step-mum?" I asked.

"Yes, definitely," she said. "They are only one walking-step away from being my children. That's really how I feel" (Jovanna, December 4, 1997). They call me their "paternal pal," and I treat them as I do Kristina-Mae and Wilton. I love to hear them laugh.

Literally, wholehearted gusts of healthy laughter sweep through body chambers, dramatically changing body chemistry, behaviour, and sense of well-being, mobilizing the body's innate healing energies. Modern medical science, determining the physiology of humour, underscores the wisdom of the ancient Vedic Upanisad texts, dating from the sixth century B.C.:

Here in this body, made up of five elements, what is hard is earth, what is liquid is water, what is hot is fire, what moves is wind, what is hollow is space...the wind distributes substances and the space provides room.

(emphasis added, Kapani, 1989, 177)

Sometimes, however, spontaneous laughter leads one to tears, or one cries instead of laughing. Anatomically, the Tenth Cranial or Pnuemogastric Nerve (nervus vagus) is partially responsible. Briefly, it originates in the fourth ventricle of the brain, runs vertically down the neck between the carotid artery and the jugular vein to the thyroid cartilage, where it divides down both sides of the body. It has ten branches, some of which reach around the larynx, heart, lungs, and stomach (see Gray, 1994). The neural pathway of laughter with or without tears, or tears
instead of laughter, is the same:

...lacrimation, physiologically, is an efferent parasympathetic event which originates in the same motor vagal nucleus from which the laryngeal nerves are derived....the laughing reflex or the laughing response coincide[s] with the lacrimation reflex...in infrequent instances, the lacrimation reflex prevails. (Stearns, 1972, 19-20)

During times of high stress, we are easily confused, not knowing what or how or why the body is teaching us. Do we laugh or cry or both at the same time? The body itself cannot lie; we often simply misinterpret its signals, its truths. Still, the more we respect the body's inherent capacity for healing, the more likely we are to let ourselves laugh. During times of high stress, if we shorten our breath, we shorten our life. Retreating thusly from our selves and the world, we cannot generate the laughter whose essence is the healing sound of joy. Crying drains. Inasmuch as laughter fills the body, the neighbours' bodies, the room, and the house, it is one of those sounds "that have the power to evoke higher states of consciousness....Whatever the sound may be, it is called mantra...expansive like love..." (Satprem, 1982, 139-140). Laughter, like a wild song, shifts our bodily reality from heavyheartedness to lightheartedness. The unforgettable laughing moment is, in itself, a whole story, a wholesome story of the body, a story of bodily wholeness. We create laughing moments within self, self-with-other, and within other. Opening our selves to those in distress, embracing them with our laughter, is a nurturing act of love.

Authentic spiritual growth is possible only through the persistent exercise of universal love that flows through the heart chakra...the opening of the compassionate heart that is receptive to the suffering of the world, is feminine. (Nelson, 1994, 22-23)

Laughing moments enrich our lives with pleasure each time they are remembered, inspiring us to create more such moments. I need to cherish the medicinal properties of laughter, as well as
the freedom, joy, and peace it brings. I need to cultivate a hearty sense of humour in my selves, and share it generously.

**Healing Circle of Humour: Family Letters**

I like to cultivate a circle of fun—of giving and receiving—in our family in the knowledge that laughter nurtures the bodymindsouls of us all. The teenagers love to hear me laugh. I take good care of their humorous written gifts—snippets of their healthy voices. When I forget that my war is over, when I forget that I've "passed" my trauma-survival test, eventually I go looking for comfort amongst my papers. I clear my desk completely, and I spread these gifts out before me like prayerflags. I read each one aloud, over and over. I carry their voices inside my heart. I give thanks for them; I remember.

With joy, therefore, Gentle Reader, I share; my nonsense letters to "Seewa," my loving pet name for Sara, and to Gobinde, Caleb and Eli, signed by "Murfu," Sara’s loving pet name for me; her response; a birthday card/poem from Ram Das, and; Wilton’s "Xmas Wishing List" (see pages 187 to 190).

Other creative things I do to help myself recover from trauma through laughter include: writing children’s storybooks and short stories; drawing healing stories with coloured markers; drawing pictorial learning logs; writing poems as gifts for my friends' birthdays, housewarmings, weddings and; writing nonsense stories which I send as letters via the post or electronic mail.
janyuware sevin nintenninefiv
Hulo Der Gobinde & Caleb & Eli hi giz I her yr metin awkinza nufrenz in Viktorya so im sendinya mi sekret pi resipe first getyrselfs a gud ovin gaswunz kukbr kuz th temprachurz naut goin wild first getyrselfs a koldber an thro a sede ith sedemashen mabe th dorz an dans arowndth hows first kudontpik redjuse rubarb n pikdontkut abibolfuła jusered strawbreez wawshemgud first maka bigsin sayin welcumfrenz anpudit inyer windos noberdez krashinta yer kichinwindoz first prehet th ovin first bilyrselfs a bighows bi th oshin uz ok fer thflorz pinz tusawft pinzgud ferth walz th yudont want sumdumas drungkparte gi putiinhis handthru yerwal jiprok semzta invit that lidltest anfalzevretim kors yuwant bigwindoz withnobarzinem let th pi kul abowt 45 minits bfor servin amen luv Murfu

awgist thrd nintenninefiv
helo Der Smilin Seewa th gy hoo onz this plas iz buzin arownd mi hows on his lawncutinmowr my hows iz vibratin zhiga-zhiga-zhiga-zhiga yer luke yu gotno stoopid lawncutinmowrs on yer ilind mabe only a bugrttoo il sendyu sumor wen i kan anewa i gotta waspsting on mi lefangkl th uthr day wen i wuz lawncutinmowring th gras atyer mumzofis cors i dint se th bughoobitme tilitwuztolat he tukabit bigaza toylitbolouta mi leg Seewa then he toldalhizfrenz ha this gy tastes rel gud cum ovr her an givim a chomp fer disterbin us in r hows with that stoopid lawncutinmowr wuzzamatr with thatgy so tha al cam ovr an tukabit to i ranawa frum that plas fer a wil noli an wen i went bak i pusht that lawncutinmowr pridefast lemmetelya anewa her i am fresh hom frum th docterz ofis he wuz to bize t se me so hizwif selz me thez lidl wit pilz sed mixeminwatr an sipitdown yul felfetr an i did but stil mi gorjus legzalred an so itche i wanaskrachit anskrachit if thozbugz kudsemenow thad be lafinthargutswot an i wudnt blam them thatl tech me yesitwil im nevr guna dothatagin nowa idontlik my gorjuslegz al splawche il jus mindmi on bizniz tobad i kant go sa im sorebugz lemmehelpya fixup yerhows an wud Yapılez unbit me lif sherizafune techr izznt it Seewa kepfer iz opin swethart se how evin th fishinhlak r jumpinferjoy amen luv Murfu
der hare Murfu.
How u duen? I can't do that it's too hard. Sorry, I'm having a great time but I miss having you around to make me laugh. Not that I'm not laughing a lot because I am but not the way you make me. I want to thank you for writing me since none of my friends are. I haven't gotten very many letters at all except the ones you wrote and two from mom and two from my dad. I think I'm getting homesick. I really miss you all and a month is a long time. How your bee sting? I hope it's better because it sounded like it hurt. I want to know what is going on with everybody. Well my rest hour is just about over and I have to get into my bathing suit. Sooo see you soon.

luv your latin seeewa

P.s. Your letters are so much fun to read.
Thank you for being a friend; an acquaintance, when I talk to you you listen, and have patience,

On your birthday you deserve the best, so listen to me a moment and not the rest. My care for you is very deep, if you are ever lonely or hurting let my love sleep, and cure your hurt and troubles, because without love your troubles only double.

Happy Birthday,

Mathew 😊

I love you,
thanks for being there,

From Ran Das

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November 15, 1997

Dear Dad,

I would like to butter you up, but the words escape me. *Hears My X-mas Wishing List.*

- my five roles of film developed
- turtles (to add to collection)
- incense
- xoxoxo
- a gold brush, silver watch, diamond ring, tattoo of Elvis on my back
- collection of songs on tape
- a red bike light
- 3 turtle-neck shirts (two black, one white)
- some fleece shirts

*Wilton*
Letter to Elizabeth

Elizabeth is an artist. I met her at a writing workshop in 1990. She loaned me her loghouse in the bush for 3 years.

I am Portrait.
Step back.

Further.

Move left.

Move right.

Stop.
While my paint is still warm and wet
(like you)
I need a hint, no,
a splash of blue.
Step up.

I am Portrait.
I breathe you in
a thousand midnight mercies,
yes,
this exact blue. Now splash
into my left eyebrow.

(Stewart, August, 29, 1996)

In one of Elizabeth's best paintings, the colour blue quietly blazes in the eyebrow of her Irish mother. It works. Elizabeth writes:

Dear Soogie,
I like colour spelt with a "u." Like my drawing of the nude with strokes of blue I promised [you] on the completion of your thesis.
This carrot is to overcome all doubts, excuses, and the bread of pain you've been forced to feed upon too long.
Your large drinking glass we'll fill with celebratory nectar to drink not to a candidate but to an accomplished PhD. Keep that glass polished and at the ready.

(Elizabeth, November 23, 1997)
I hope. I hear her hoping me through this inquiry. "Soogie" is Elizabeth's pet name for me. She smiles whenever she calls me "Soogie." My heart remembers joy. Elizabeth refers to the goblet she gave me 5 years ago. After I trimmed some trees in her backyard, I said I was thirsty; she brought me a glass salad bowl on a stem. Big enough to float a pair of ducks. She has two sons over 50 years old. She is not my mother. Better. She is my friend. She cooks a couple chickens and invites me for a picnic. We read poetry to each other at the table. I gave her a cassette audiotape of me reading my children's books; she phoned me laughing. She is the oldest happiest child I know. Bless her.

**Healing Circle of Humour: Electronic Letters**

For your enjoyment, Gentle Reader, I include the 4-part miniature Jonah story I sent to a number of my friends—teachers, fellow students, and researchers. In this story, the Jonah is "spidr." In part 1, the narrator talks about a "berdy" to his friends. In part 2, the narrator and "spidr" have a conversation. In part 3, "spidr" is transformed as he travels through the guts of the narrator's computer (a whale), transforming it and himself. The narrator threatens to have him devoured by a vacuum cleaner (a different whale). But "spidr" cannot go home to his mother—he does not know what to say. Then "spidr" reveals his name. In part 4, the narrator threatens to have "spidr" devoured by "berdy" (a different whale). See pages 194 to 197.

The employment of humour is a healing way of bringing my selves and other people's selves together. When we laugh, we are defenceless, and our bodies are healing. For the traumatized student, being defenceless in laughter is highly educational in a bodily sense. S/he does not know how, and cannot learn how to let go of fears that helped saved his/her life. Through healthy laughter with others, fears let go of the one who is afraid. Laughter is concrete

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proof of acceptance of our humanity. To the student who has been denied his/her humanity by being gagged by trauma, the sound of his/her own cheerful voice erupting and mixing with others is a gift of breath wrapped in gold ribbons of happiness.
Date: Tue, 13 May 1997 15:11:23 EDT
From: mwgstewart@TRENTU.CA
To: Dave Neelin <exovedat@echo-on.net>, Jeff Edmonds <jeff@cs.yorku.ca>,
    Mary Cousens <mcousens@mmhonline.com>,
    Mary Catherine Downey <mcdowney@trentu.ca>,
    Margaret Eirene Edwards
    Sandy Greer <sgreer@oise.utoronto.ca>,
    Bernice Lever Farrar <bfarrar@learn.senecac.on.ca>

Subject: hulo

a yelo berdy landid in mi tre

it sed hulo

in yelo berdy lang-gwij

i sen it

an i herd it

then it flewd down inta th bulrushiz an now im lonle agin

heeeeeeereee berdy

heeeeeeerreeerreeerreeerreeeerreee berdy

i hop ya kumbak berdy yer byutiful

cerpcherp twettwet flapflap

i thot ya shud no
Date: Wed, 14 May 1997 12:15:39 EDT
From: mwgstewart@TRENTU.CA
To: Jeff Edmonds <jeffl@cs.yorku.ca>, Dave Neelin <exovedat@echo-on.net>,
    Mary Cousens <mcousens@mmhonline.com>,
    Mary Catherine Downey <mcdowney@trentu.ca>,
    Margaret Eirene Edwards
    Sandy Greer <sgreer@oise.utoronto.ca>,
    Bernice Lever Farrar <bfarrar@learn.senecac.on.ca>

Subject: berdy

wel i wuz missin mi yelo berdy
wen frum th ruf!

kumz a lidl spidr hulo wutsamatr he sez
mi yelo berdy tukd off i krid anit wontkumbak
didya ask th yelo berdylz nam he sez
no i wuz tu overfeelingd by his byute ta thingk strat
wel ya gotta kom down ya gotta opinup an let yerself b withberdy
not jus luk at him wi not praktis with me
ok i sez lidl spidr hulo wutz yernam
im not telin ya he sez yr a stranj
yr in mi hows an i kud skwishyaflat i sez
yr in mi hows an i kud wok arownd insid yr komputr an googoojibb it then
ya wunt b abl ta tok ta yr frenz so ferstthing ya gotta lem wen ya met
sumbude nu iz ta b kul now im tird frum tawkin so much bibi
an he wokt ———————— inta mi komputr hoo noz wutz guna hapin
i thot ya shud no
Date: Thu, 15 May 1997 15:35:06 EDT
From: mwgstewart@TRENTU.CA
To: Mary Cousens <mcousens@mhonline.com>, Mary Catherine Downey <mcdowney@trentu.ca>, Marc Silnicki <silnicki@hotmail.com>, Margaret Eirene Edwards, Sandy Greer <sgreer@oise.utoronto.ca>, Bernice Lever Farrar <bfarrar@learn.senecac.on.ca>, Dave Neelin <exovedat@echo-on.net>, Jeff Edmonds <jeff@cs.yorku.ca>
Subject: spidr

hez stil in my kowputer
stop that spidr! yu leemme spil no spel thingzz rit!
git owta mi kwawmpewter rit now!
yr nwt bein vere kul wi shud i?
kuz mi frenz wont ummnnmmnerstan wut im triin ta sa (stopppppp that!)
no i lik mukkinthingggzzzup it maks melaf i nevr hadso muchfun
ha didyano tharz agrenwir stikinowtuva dooey wundr wutl hapin ifi
*****!!????9898***** ono -&...@"""mnm96756""" ono nowyadidit
^^9hublwyb 000
hulo owt thar can ya her me?
can i her ya spidr kors i kan wut didya du?
bernd off 3legz thatswut now i gotta s'ver limp
im getin mi vakum klenner owt spidr.
justaminit man im kumin her tak mi pikcher
wi spidr mi frenz wont rekonz ya ya dontevin luk lika spidr now
wel iyam jus difrint takmi pikcher wilya

#

thatz wut i luk lik now?? im skwar spidrz arnt skwar oshit
i toldy tagit owtathar
oshudup im triin tathingk wutamiguna tel mi muthr
yr muthr? eze ya jus sa himum a wuz bein a todl jrk an now im skwar
duya stil luvme mum?
i jus kant gohom lik this man kan i uz yr telifon? yu mind ifi jus sit her
an luk owt th windo til my legz grobak?
lik how long?
o mabe did i evr telya ni nam itz Ribkaj wut yorz?
yu pika gud tim ta git frenle spidr im not sher im althat frenle yet
Subject: yu wont belev it but

haman luk exklimashinmark yelz Ribkaj thar tha r the skiz al witnlfufe
lik th bigist upsideown pi ya evrsen wen ploop tu kownt withmeher wuntu
yeloberdyz yeloazleminz ploop owta th merang an now thar singin an
dansin inyrtre exklimashinmark wudya supoz thar guna et an i star Ribkaj
in th i an sa lidl unfrenle spidrs an grabim bi thnek an runowt thdor sain
heeeeeeere berdyz heeeeeeereheeeeeeheeeeeeheeeeeeere berdyz
CHAPTER 6

HEALING READING AND WRITING

During the summer of 1996, I took two courses at OISE/UT—Professor Miller's "Holistic Curriculum" and Professor L's "Canadian Children's Literature and Child Development."

For my summer project, for fun, I wanted to share a children's storybook that I had written with children. I was curious what they might draw in response to hearing me read the story to them. I wanted to practice being part of an outdoor classroom. In many ways, I brought my drawing "Outdoor Classroom II" (see page 322), to life. I kept a Learning Log of Professor L's course and my workplay with the children.

July 8, 1996

This OISE/UT class is so large; I need more elbow room than I had today. Disease. This summer, I really want to focus on picture-books. How does the story Rusty's adventure (Stewart, in preparation) which I wrote for Kristina-Mae and Wilton in 1986 compare to other Canadian children's stories?

Rusty's adventure is another form of the Jonah story. Water and creatures have names and voices. One of the themes is loss of voice and loss of name. Moonbeam, the butterfly, is the miniature Jonah. She is injured alone, and is transported into the darkness of a hollow log (a type of whale) where she is healed by the jaws of death.

Interlude: My Children's Storybook--Rusty's adventure

One sunny morning, Rusty the chipmunk left his old log home in the forest to go exploring. He came to a creek. The water made musical sounds as it flowed over the rocks. Diddly-dee-doo, diddly-dee-doo. Rusty jumped the rocks into the middle of the creek. Two water striders were
having a loudest contest.

"I bet I can yell louder than you."

"Bet you can't."

"What do you want to bet?"

"I bet my name. If you yell louder than me, I'll call you Bip, and you call me Bop."

"Okay," said Bop, "get ready."

Bop took a big breath. He pulled his shoulders up, and closed his eyes and let out his biggest yell.

"Hellooo!"

"Maybe you cheated," said Bip.

"No I didn't," said Bop. "Because if you yell your loudest more than five times, your whole voice goes up into the trees, and then you have to wait until the rain washes it off the leaves and down onto you again."

"That's dumb," said Bip.

"It is not."

"Is so. I'm going to yell as loud as I can. Seven times. If my voice is still inside me, you have to call me Big Bip. If my voice goes up into the trees, then I'll call you Big Bip."

"But," said Bop, "you won't even have a voice, so how will you call me anything and how will I hear you?"

"If you're right, I'll make a smart salute each time I see you until the rain washes my voice out of the trees onto me.

Bip took his biggest breath.
"Hellooo hellooo hellooo hellooo hellooo hellooo!"

"That's six times," said Bop.

Bip took another big breath. He opened his mouth wide but no yell. Not even a squeak.

"I tried to tell you," said Bop. Now you're Bop, and I'm Big Bip."

Bop gave Big Bip a smart salute.

"Don't worry Bop, it will probably rain by next week."

Bop nodded and stuck out his bottom lip.

A flat piece of wood about the size of a telephone book floated downstream. Rusty hopped on. He looked over the edge, into the water. He could see the bottom. A crayfish walked backward in the sand. A school of minnows darted away as soon as the shadow of his raft touched their tails.

The little creek joined a bigger one. It sounded in a hurry. Chuppa-chuppa-choop, chuppa-chuppa-choop. Rusty bumped through the rapids. He saw a bend in the river, just ahead. A big pointy rock with sharp edges stuck up out of the water. Rusty couldn't swim. He paddled hard but the side of his raft hit the rock. Crash! Half of it broke into bits. Rusty almost fell off. His head went under, into a thousand white bubbles, and the river pulled him backwards. The water sounded angry. Gargoosha, gargoosha. The river yanked him into the whirlpool.

"Helllp!" he yelled.

Rusty's shouting woke Moonbeam, a white butterfly in a blue spruce tree nearby. She flew to the big rock in the river and landed on the very tip of it. Rusty spun round and round.

"Helllp!" he cried. "Helllp me somebody!"

Moonbeam flew in a circle over him.
"Hold on!" she yelled. "I'm going to get help!"

As fast as she could go, Moonbeam flew downriver. Sliver the beaver was busy cutting down a tree when she spotted him. She landed on the swaying blackeyed Suzy.

"There's no time to lose, Sliver. Somebody's caught in the whirlpool by Nasty Rock, and he's much smaller than you. I don't know how much longer he can hold on."

"I can't leave my tree like this; it could fall and hurt somebody."

Sliver had chewed almost all the way through his tree.

"I'll stay by your tree until you get back," said Moonbeam. "I'll warn anybody who comes close of the danger."

"I won't be long," said Sliver.

He dove off the bank into a deep part of the river, and swam right to Rusty. He gripped the edged of the raft between his strong front teeth, and pushed it up onto the sandy bank.

"Are you alright?" he asked.

Rusty shivered all over, and his teeth chattered. He nodded.

"Th-th-thankyou..."

Steamer and Lolly, two crows, flew side by side over the treetops. Moonbeam heard them talking as they got closer.

"We always go this way," said Steamer.

"It's the short cut," said Lolly.

"I know, but it's boring. I could fly to Uncle Blitz's house with my eyes shut."

"Alright Steamer, let me see if you can."
"No problem."

Steamer closed his eyes. He thought that he'd just listen to Lolly, and follow the sound of her voice to Uncle Blitz's house. But Lolly wasn't talking. Instead, she was flying higher and higher above Steamer. He felt lost.

Moonbeam watched Steamer fly lower and lower.

"Look out for the tree!" she shouted.

Steamer kept his eyes shut. He smiled.

"Cute trick, Lolly," he said.

Steamer crashed right into Sliver's tree. It swayed. His wings and head hurt, and he left some bellyfeathers behind. Sliver's tree creaked and groaned and started to fall. Lolly flew in a circle, watching. Steamer took a big hop up into the air. Moonbeam flew along the ground in front of the falling tree to make sure nobody was in its path.

"Tim-ber!" she shouted.

Sliver's tree came thundering down. The very tip of it caught Moonbeam, tearing her right wing, and knocking her into the moss. She crawled onto a rock. A butterfly who cannot fly is not a butterfly anymore. She cried.

Rusty stopped shivering.

"Did a butterfly ask you to rescue me?" he asked.

"That was Moonbeam," said Sliver.

"Where is she? I would like to thank her."

"Downriver," said Sliver. "Now that you're safe, I must hurry back. I'll come get you after I finish cutting down my tree."
Sliver saw his tree lying on the ground.

"Moonbeam?" he called. "Moonbeam?"

He heard her crying. She told him what had happened. When he saw her torn wing, tears came to his eyes.

"Oh Moonbeam," he said. "I'm so sorry."

"It's not your fault. Did you save him?"

"Yes. He is waiting for me. He wants to thank you himself. Is there any way I can help you?"

"No, Sliver. This is a beautiful day to die."

Sliver could not think of the right thing to say, so he slowly turned and walked away. He told Rusty about Moonbeam.

"I came to say thankyou, Moonbeam," said Rusty. "I'm very sorry you're hurt."

"It is Sliver who saved you, not me. He is very brave."

"Not just me," said Sliver. "We were a team, Moonbeam."

"That's true. We had so many good times--"

"--We will again--"

"--No. No more. I can't survive the cold night. Sliver, in the morning, please bury me by the blackeyed Suzy."

"No Moonbeam!" cried Rusty. "You can't die!"

"Sliver?" she asked. "You will do this one last thing for me?"

"Yes."

Rusty and Sliver could not bear to say goodbye. They turned and walked slowly downriver and sat on a small hill by a patch of wild strawberries.

"There must be something we can do for her," said Rusty.

"I can't take her to my house; she would drown. If you can make the night warm, she'll live. But you can't."

"You're right, I can't do that, but I can do something. The night isn't too cold for me. When I sleep, I curl my tail up to my belly. Moonbeam will be warm there!"

"What if you squish her?" asked Sliver.

"I won't! I'll stay awake all night, to make sure!

They ran to Moonbeam.

"How will I get into the sun?" she asked. "I can't walk that far; my wing drags on the ground."

"You climb onto my shoulders," said Rusty. "I'll take you wherever you want. Stay with me until you're all better."

"Thank you," said Moonbeam. "I will try."

Rusty stretched out on the ground beside Moonbeam. Slowly, she crawled onto his shoulders. He carried her to a warm rock in the sun where she lay both her wings flat.

Sliver went back to work, cutting his tree into pieces.

Rusty needed to find a new home. Inside a hollow log, he met a shiny black spider.

"Hello," he said. "I'm Rusty. I need to share this log with my friend."

"Too bad. As sure as my name is Sheena, I need this log for me and my babies."

"Can we all share it?"
"How long would you be staying?"

"Just until my friend gets better."

"Who's your friend?" asked Sheena.

"Moonbeam."

"Which half do you want?"

"Do you like butterflies?" asked Rusty.

"Delicious."

"I thought so. You build your web in your half. But you can't go after Moonbeam while she's hurt."

"And why not?"

"Because that wouldn't be fair. Like it wouldn't be fair for me to step on your head. Do we have a deal?"

"Some deal. I suppose so," said Sheena.

Rusty told Moonbeam the news. She thought the deal was fair, even though spiders gave her the creeps. Rusty took her home. They were just getting settled when Sheena came knocking.

"I came to introduce myself to Moonbeam," she said, "and to offer my help."

"How can you help?" asked Rusty.

"My web is very strong, and very light too. I can sew Moonbeam's wing together with my web."

Rusty watched closely. Moonbeam quivered with fear, but she didn't make a peep.

Sheena kept licking her lips. Her belly rumbled. Soon the job was done. Moonbeam thanked
her, and Sheena went back to her half of the log. Moonbeam slept between Rusty's tail and his belly, toasty warm all night, while he stayed wide awake watching Sheena build her web.

In the morning, Moonbeam crawled onto Rusty's shoulders. As he walked, Moonbeam lifted her sore wing up and down and up and down. She smiled. She crawled onto a stump in bright sunlight. Then Rusty ran up a nearby tree, curled up on a wide branch, and fell fast asleep. He dreamed that Sheena was as big as a horse, and she had caught him in her web, and she had long pointy teeth and she was biting him in the neck. He whimpered, and woke up.

"Mmmm. You're so warmmm," said Miller the caterpillar as he crawled over Rusty's neck. "Mmmy feet were cold. Mmmm."

"You gave me the willies! Get off of me!"

Rusty walked over to Moonbeam.

"I feel much better," she said. "I want to try to fly."

She held her wings closed on Rusty's shoulders as he walked. She tickled his ribs.

"Faster," she said.

Rusty went faster. Moonbeam moved along his back and opened her wings. She tickled him again.

"Faster, Rusty. Run!"

Moonbeam moved along his back all the way to the tip of his tail.

"Faster, Rusty! Faster, faster!"

"I can really fly again!" she shouted. "I can fly!"

"Let's go visit Sliver!"

"Try to catch me!"
Rusty chased Moonbeam over the rocks and beside the river and through the trees.

"Look Sliver! I can fly!"

Sliver chased her too. She flew in circles. Up and down and round and round. She landed on the swaying blackeyed Suzy and began to sing. Sliver and Rusty did a crazy dance together, holding their bellies, and laughing.

July 9, 1996

I am reading Rusty's adventure to a group of youngsters aged 3 to 11, at "Rollin' Acres," the summer "camp" in Millbrook, Ontario. The number of children varies each day, and I'm keeping an attendance record. The outdoor setting, a huge pond where a mill used to be, many acres of bush, horses and ponies, gardens, playground, and indoor play spaces in the bunkhouse is perfect for this story. The children go fishing, swimming in the creek, catch frogs and minnows, and have outdoor fires. Jan Rowland has run the "camp" with her mother Rhea since 1972. Back then, 108 children came every day. Now the limit is 8. On Tuesday and Thursday afternoons in July, I read a portion of my animal fantasy story, and they provide the illustrations. Even Jan draws.

Playing with children at Rollin' Acres at lunchtime. I arrive at 1:30 as arranged with Jan. She told me at the start to be flexible; her program is child-centred. My chatting with the children while they eat their lunch delays story-time further. Although my schedule is rather hectic, spending their lunchtime with them is not a mistake. They have many stories to tell me, important stories about their families or whatever. We sang the song "there was an old lady who swallowed a spider..." after most of us drank a bug in our juice (I admit that I started it), or ate one on a spoon of blue Jello. Yum. Our motto for the day: "Bugs are best!"
Story-time immediately follows lunch in the bunkhouse. The children take off their shoes once inside, and sit at the picnic tables for me. Because I am the guest storyteller, I sit in Jan's big chair, and she sits on a bed to my right. After I read I ask them what they want to do. Accepting whatever they draw. They are so excited to draw. I feel like we are exchanging gifts. I am too busy having fun to be nervous. Jan Rowland loaned me 50 children's books, and her sister-in-law Joanne loaned me 27. I am touched by their active support. I hope, through stories, I can nurture the child in me.

July 16, 1996

Picnic tables are bad places for children to hear stories—the hard benches are too far away from the tabletop to lean on comfortably, and offer no back support. Furthermore, the wide cracks between the two-by-four table surface make drawing awkward; crayons and markers easily push through the paper. Mistake. I could have asked them to sit on the floor or the beds. I did not think of asking them to spread out on the concrete floor for a smoother work surface and more space. The younger children tend to kneel on the bench of the table and draw their first picture very fast.

July 18, 1996

I meet the children again outdoors by the pond. As soon as I arrive, they all eagerly show me a path through the weeds made by a beaver, and a blackeyed Suzy. They say they have seen a white butterfly too. Chipmunks are all around. One girl dropped her harmonica down a chipmunk hole last week so it's gone forever—for them Rusty's adventure is possible.

Before beginning story-time, I ask all the children to gather in a circle. One of the girls plays with a dried piece of wood about the size of a telephone receiver.
"May I have that?" I ask her.

"Sure."

She gives it to me.

"Thank you. Would you mind if I broke it?"

"No," she says. "It's just a stick. There's lots here."

"Thank you."

I explain how my son partner's eldest son, Gobinde, had broken one bone in his neck in four pieces, diving into shallow water, and I break the stick into four pieces. I lead the group singing and acting a swimming song:

We're going swimming! (clap hands 3 times).
Yeah! yeah! yeah! (reach up 3 times).
We've got to stop. (palms out, fingers spread, in front of chest).
And check the water. (looking down and around slowly through hands as if hands are binoculars.)
And make sure it's safe for everybody. (open arms wide).

We sing this song about 5 times together, then two children sing it alone. When they get stuck, the rest of us help. After I collect their drawings, we form a circle again. Two children sing and act the song all the way through correctly without help.

"Your son is like Moonbeam," says Corey. "They both got hurt."

"You're right," I say.

That's how I learned how Corey synthesized the story, other than his drawing.

Many of the children I see only once or twice. They say they wish they could come back to hear and draw more of Rusty's adventure. I tell them they'll have their own copy of the story, later, and they can draw as many pictures at home as they like. I'm sure, though, that the
environment of the camp, being with other children who respond similarly with sounds and gestures to the different action and characters in the story, my reading style, as well as Jan's responses to the story all contribute to their individual drawings. It wouldn't be fair to say one child is more enthusiastic than another; they're all such different people. Everybody "knows" Calvin is the "best" (most skilled) at drawing. I encourage everyone to give themselves lots of elbow room, to do their own picture and let Calvin do his.

I feel more free, more spontaneous, less nervous than when I did this storytelling-drawing exercise with Doreen's class. The informality helps. Jan used to teach in the public school system, and is respected in the community for her work with children; I'm not more relaxed because there are no rules, or "authority" at hand. My focus is that I am sharing my story with the children, and they are sharing their drawings with me--an exchange. We are each contributing to the other's learning, and having fun in the process.

Conversation with Professor Olson

Matthew: Do you know Tolstoy's story about teaching peasant children?
Margaret: No.
Matthew: This is Tolstoy speaking of one of his students [I read aloud]:

...His soul, now softened and irritated by the sentiment of pity, that is, of love, clothed every image in an artistic form, and denied everything that did not correspond to the idea of eternal beauty and harmony....The chief quality in every art, the feeling of limit, was developed in him to an extraordinary degree....It is impossible and absurd to teach and educate a child, for the simple reason that the child stands nearer than I do, than any grown man does, to that ideal of harmony, truth, beauty, and goodness, to which I, in my pride, wish to raise him. The consciousness of this ideal is more powerful in him than in me. All he needs is the material, in order to develop harmoniously. The moment I gave him full liberty, and stopped teaching him, he wrote a poetical production, the like of which cannot be found in Russian literature....

(cited in Berthoff, 1981, 143-144)
Until I read this story I never imagined being respected like that as a child, by a teacher. Now that I believe such teachers exist, I feel happy about that, so this a healing story for me.

Margaret: That's a good story. I'd like a copy.

Matthew: I'll bring it for you next time.

(Learning Log, Stewart, March 22, 1995)

Jan often comments how pleased she is with how the project is proceeding.

From reading children's books, I learn that my Rusty's adventure needs serious editing. I hadn't paid attention to this matter before; the story was old and I liked it just the way it was. I wrote it for Kristina-Mae and Wilton and they liked it. I've given it away to children for years, and everybody likes it. During this last week I've cut 5 pages.

I'm surprised that Koshinen (1994, 177) lists "prior experience with books" as the most significant motivating reason to read, given by students in grades three and five. My exposure to books as a youngster was severely limited. Experience with a kind adult who reads and encourages reading, including reading in the classroom, and making time and space for children to read on their own in class is critically important. When I was a child, being forced to read the Bible aloud, and being punished for making a mistake, made reading a dreaded activity. I'm just a big child; I want friendly teachers to read to me, tell me a story.

Mrs. Radcliffe was one of my [grade 7] teachers. She read a few pages of A Wrinkle in time [L'Engle, 1962] to the class every day. She read it so carefully, so quietly, like she was inside the book and the book was inside her and I thought it was love.

(Stewart, 1995, 62)

Being called on in class at OISE, or volunteering in class to read, still, sends a shot of fear through me that I counter with adrenaline.
Letter to Professor Diamond

Dear Pat

...[in your class] I shift focus from internal to external. I look and listen to the teacher, the materials.

You are reading the baseball story "You're out!" (von Loewenstein, 1991), to the class. Of all the ways to teach me, this one I cannot resist. You read slowly; time slows down for me. I don't follow along with my text, with my eyes. I listen with my body....

(November 27, 1995)

I want friendly teachers to encourage me to tell, draw, or sculpt a story of my own. From the time I was in grade school, when I wasn't in class, I worked. To read for pleasure, I had to steal time from somewhere else, and could not share my discoveries with anyone. "I borrowed Hardy Boys books from whoever had them and hid them in my scribbler and read them during class" (Stewart, 1995, 62). Children in this kind of environment find it impossible to gain the "prior experience." I'm thankful I was stubborn. I don't blame anyone who collapses under the strain. Hilliard (1995, 728) says it all very clearly in one sentence: "...we must develop a curriculum that focuses on the inclusion of all cultures rather than the selection and promotion of a few." I am touched by Wallace's (1994) degree of involvement with her young students, and thankful for the gift that the author Bouchard gave to her students--reading back to them their own verses (17). This is a healing story about generosity.

July 23, 1996

My last day of my reading to the children. I pull in the driveway in my truck.

"The story-man's here!" shouts Calvin from the swing. "The story-man's here!"

A wonderful greeting. The rest of the children shout and wave, eager for story-time.

While I read, Tyler can't sit still. He keeps bumping another child at the table. He has to go pee,
and out he goes. After a few more times of asking him to sit still, I ask him to come and sit on the floor beside me. He does, without protest, and has to go pee again. Mistake. I could have asked him what he needed, and helped him. I must give each child freedom. I don’t stop reading while he is away, but when he comes back, I summarize what he missed. He draws the big spider quickly with a black marker, then the blue thing, and slowly, very deliberately, he selects a crayon without a paper jacket, and finishes his spider with the broad side of the crayon. He wants to draw only one picture, then literally bounces into bed.

By the end of the day, I have collected, altogether, 85 drawings from these children. Research data. I select 30. I reduce the large drawings, on a colour photocopier, then taped 3 vertically on 8.5 by 14 inch paper.

The children are careful to cap their markers each time, without being reminded, so they can use them again. I am surprised that they wait patiently for each other to finish with whatever marker they want.

Only once during my five sessions do I separate two children. Rather than tell them to share the workspace, I move one, with her permission, to a small table, where she draws happily. When the older ones say what they will draw, before they actually start, the younger ones generally say they want to draw that too.

"I don’t know how to draw a chipmunk!" says one child.

"Me neither!" says another.

"Me neither!" I say. "Watch."

I draw for 3 seconds. My chipmunk looks like a miniature hippo with a sticktail. I show them.
"See? This is my chipmunk. I think he's cute."

They laugh.

"Now you draw your chipmunk, however you like," I say. "Have fun!"

I do not want anyone to copy another, so I put my drawing up on the shelf behind me.

At the end of the day, I already miss these children; I've been so excited to go there and play with them, so curious what they might do and say and draw. Together, we created something magical. They helped me bring Rusty's adventure to life, and it's growing. I am keeping their original drawings in a safe place. Do they belong to me?

July 30, 1996

I deliver 21 copies of Rusty's adventure to Rollin' Acres. The children have just finished swimming lessons when I arrive, and I present a book to each one, with their name in it. They all hug me and smile and turn the pages to see their drawing in their own copy. Jan will keep a record of the parental response to the book. As I mentioned earlier, I have given the story away for years, but this is the first time it really looks like a book. A new type of children's book. My type. I am going to do it again. Better. I like practising what I learn in the indoor classroom at OISE/UT out in the world to learn how it works, as much as I like bringing the outdoor classroom into OISE/UT to change how it works. The more I try, the more I succeed. I make more mistakes than anyone I know, but I only give myself a failing grade if I stop trying to learn.

I am never sure when or how to ask for help in the outdoor or the indoor classroom.

Letter to Professor L

Dear L
...Taking risks in the classroom helps me to gain confidence. The more I practice, the more I learn how to present my material without such a high internal stress
level. I'm actually starting to like working in groups, now that I don't see myself as such a foreigner in the classroom. I don't feel as threatened or threatening as I was last September. A number of classmates tell me they see a positive difference in me. I'm growing. I don't need to fight for control as much as I used to. Asking for help in class really helps me become part of a community.

"I want to show the class my work from my spot," I said to Myra during the break, "rather than from the front of the room, and I don't know how to negotiate more table space. I need more elbow room, but I don't want my neighbour to feel scrunched either."

"Just unpack your work, shuffle it, and mention that you need a little more room—she'll move over no problem."

So I tried that, and it worked....

(Stewart, July 31, 1996)

**Canadian Children's Literature: A Parade**

Reading literature for children helps me regain my balance after suffering through the research literature on child abuse. I do this to nurture my childself. I alphabetize the entries, in this annotated bibliography not as on a cenotaph, but as in a healing parade.

Our talents are gifts bestowed—they may not last. Sharing our gifts with others eases their suffering and brings us happiness.

The illustrations of worried Uncle George, and of Mattie’s face when she scoops up the precious watery mud are so poignant, they capture opposite emotions exactly.


Four paragraphs of text on the left page, illustrations on the right. Each paragraph a different language—top to bottom, English, French, Japanese, Chinese.

Brilliant coloured illustrations—magical use of yellow and creatures in the air. In the back of the book, a full-page map of Stanley Park, and 4 pages—one in each language—of the park’s historic sites.


Caring for a younger sibling is a responsibility not to be taken lightly. Story set in early 1900—a historical perspective on an issue that’s always current. The illustrations of the children show their different racial ancestry.


Hard times can be faced with dignity. A touching look at life’s transitions.


The first-person narrator is a sheep, and all the schoolpeople are animals. Bianchi needed an editor to toss the cliches—the book’s only weakness. The picture of the principal is hilarious.


Even animals must earn their keep.

A trip through the rainforest. The pages are full of colour and animals/birds. Beautiful, yes, but they need more breathing room. This book almost works—it needs bigger pages.


Sharing solves the problem. Bigger pages than Bogart (1993) above, but everything in the pages, except the clever, engaging text, is big too. Over-crowded. The characters and animals in wild situations, the loud colours, and lack of space overwhelm the reader.


Outgrowing one thing, we grow into another. I admire Brenda Clark's ability to illustrate stubbornness, anger, determination, frustration, hope, annoyance and dejection in wee Sarah's face.


A safe place. The faces of the mother and the children quietly convey peace, fun, and security—things the mother learned from her mother, on the last page. Touching. So be it.


A perfect marriage of Bogart's easy-flowing, rhyming text with Reid's fantastic plasticine illustrations, including the exhaust behind the Jeep, the dragon on the teapot, and especially Grandma painting the pyramid.


Everyone's afraid of something. Even the big and powerful animals. And it's okay. A magical "acceptance" story.


The difference between a zoo and a classroom is attitude.
Parents can be supportive of children's ventures, even if they're exhausting. In this book, Dad is definitely the good guy.

All the talking forest animals and birds work together furnishing a rabbit's home with birthday gifts while he is away.

Text in lyrics, abcb. Too cute, too sweet.

Good trees, though.

The words are needlessly printed extra large. They blare at you from the page. They distract, rather than compliment the beauty of Reid's plasticine illustrations.

Farming is a business. Every painting of the barn animals shows them in a Bambi-
like state—even the bull. Hard work in harsh
winter weather is beautiful. Five "chapters."

Totally descriptive. The book would be
enhanced with illustrations of some true-to-
life-and-death realities in the text, which is
small and in present tense.

Davis, V. 1995. **Simply ridiculous.** Toronto:
Kids Can Press.

Story as a joke. Light-hearted.

Cumming, P. 1993. **Out on the ice in the
middle of the bay.** Toronto: Annick
Press.

Humans can live with (other)
threatening animals. The tension in the story
eases the same way it builds—slowly. Soft
pastel illustrations of characters harmonize
with landscapes, seascapes, and skyscapes,
emphasizing that both humans and bears
"belong" here.

Fernandes, E. 1982. **The little boy who
cried himself to sea.** Toronto: Kids
Can Press.

The reluctant napper. Sketches are
so simple-looking, as if a young child drew

**Climo, L.** 1986. **Clyde.** Montreal: Tundra
Books.

Wishing you were someone else isn’t
as rewarding as really being who you are.

Corrigan, K. 1984. **Emily umly.** Toronto:
Annick Press.

Five-year-old Emily says "um" often
when she speaks. Her classmates tease her,
so she refuses to talk. On summer vacation,
her mother takes Emily to a meditation class,
where Emily chants long "ummmmmmm."

When she returns to school, she shows what
she has learned. She accepts her "um’s"; she
laughs at herself, with the others.

Duchesne, C. 1990. **Benjamin’s travels.**
Hull: Media-Sphere.

People live differently, together. The
illustrations are more than bold, colour-wise,
they’re loud. The last line of the book:
"...Benjamin was fast asleep." The text and
the illustrations, however, do not make this a
bedtime story.
them. I like the cat—it always looks like it
just came out of the dryer.

Fox, M. 1985. *Why the beaver has a flat tail.*
Markham: Fitzhenry & Whiteside.

Trickery between animal friends. A
spacious, simple telling of an Ojibwe legend.

Hill: Scholastic-TAB.

Sometimes, we all have to clean up
our own mess. Tetra-meter quatrain verse
(aabb) lyrical, not poetical.

Richmond Hill: Scholastic-TAB.

Other people's greed can cause you
trouble, even trap you. Patience helps
restore you, and bring about justice. Lots of
pictures of the blue sea. All the pictures are
framed; easy to appreciate.

elect our government.* Toronto: Kids
Can Press.

A valuable book; this one makes
history fun. Easy-read text in columns, with
19 chapters, and black and white pencil

Fernandes, E. 1983. *A difficult day.*
Toronto: Kids Can Press.

Melinda is grumpy. Her mother
nurtures her anyway.

Richmond Hill: Scholastic.

As in Fox (1985), above, the
illustrations are rich in colour and texture. I
can almost feel the colour.

Gilman, P. 1988. *The wonderful pigs of
Jillian Jiggs.* Richmond Hill: North
Winds Press.

The story of Jillian Jiggs continues,
with same verse style in Gilman (1987),
above. Jillian is transformed from Mess-
maker to Creatrix. The last 2 pages of the
book contain 19 mini illustrations—how to
sew pigs. How thoughtful of the author.

Godkin, C. 1989. *Wolf island.* Markham:
Fitzhenry & Whiteside.

Predators are needed to help maintain
the balance of nature.
sketches.


Shunned for being different, a mouse shows his bravery and earns the respect of others. Text in the illustrations. A serious book.


Taking turns being caged and being free. Predictable.


Friends come and go—signs of friendship endure. The first children's book I've read with a protagonist in a wheelchair, which is introduced at page 5.


Forty-eight pages of bad verse—does not assume that kids are intelligent, and can grasp an idea faster than it takes to endure


Over 40 different string-things, each one explicitly illustrated in black and white sketches of hands doing it right, with tips. Lots of white space around text and drawings makes the instructions friendly. The photos of the girl on the outside front cover, and of Gryski and children on the outside back cover, smiling, doing their string-thing demonstrate that string games are for the individual and the group.


Twenty chapters of easy step-by-step instructions with colour illustrations of the lace being twisted by hand.


Mom and Dad and 3 kids go for a winter picnic. They ski and pull a sled.

This little book is a list—of things in and out
hearing the whole repetitious verse. This book is redeemed by Karen Patkau's colourful, zany illustrations.


A book is a world you can get into or out of, literally. Cleverly done.


Parental patience when the youngster has trouble sleeping.


Out of May's tantrum comes inventiveness.


It's exciting to go places—it's good to come home. Simple, elegant illustrations especially of falling snow and buildings. They remind me of those toys full of water that you shake and the snow settles on the scene.

of backpacks, things to wear, packing the truck, the neighbourhood, warm and cold body parts. Not a story at all. The narrator, the youngest boy, (perhaps 2 or 3 years old) smiles even when he's cold and hungry.

Such a youngster does not exist; every youngster knows that. Sadly, nobody has names. How can characters live without names? This book is dead; let it receive a decent cremation. Let it heat the house.


Grandma loves to win; she teaches her grand-daughter that love is the only real prize. A good book for a sore heart.


Sometimes, the way to help strangers feel at home here is to give them something that reminds them of the home they left.

My favourite picture in the book spreads across two pages—from inside the basement of the narrator's house "into the land of cowboys..." The clothesline becomes a lasso. The floor streaks into sand. And under the aquarium beside the stairs, waits the rollerskate from Khalsa (1987), above.


Twenty single-page mini-chapters, with paintings about work and play during the harsh winter. The written details give the book its authoritative, gentle, non-fiction tone. We do not question, therefore, the experiences of the protagonist, who has the same first name as the author.

**Lee, D. 1983.** *Jelly Belly.* Toronto: Macmillan.

The only Jelly Belly rhyme—not to be confused with poetry—is on page 6, and for


A dog settles down and becomes a caring member of the family.

**King, B. 1991.** *Sitting on the farm.* Toronto: Kids Can Press.

Even "natural" enemies can sometimes get along. The text is an eight-line lyric repeated 7 times, each time modified to fit the bigger predator. The musical notation for the lyric is on the last page of the book. Despite the repetition, this book is fun; the story builds and all the farm animals are having so much fun. Telephone in a tree, on a fence, hanging from the neck of a cow, under a chicken, growing out of a corn stalk!


Sixty-four of the dumbest rhymes ever. They don't come close to delivering the fun the illustration on the cover offers. A waste of good paper.
ten pages the illustrations show that we're in Jelly Belly's neighbourhood. He shows up again, surprisingly, on pages 60 and 64, the last page. Continuity would be maintained if he were spread more consistently throughout the book.


Kids at a picnic make sure their dad tells the fairytale the right way. No plot. Not even a story. All illustrations by Phoebe Gilman framed and surrounded with greenery. Very lively characters.


A Native call to dance, to cherish Earth, and share it wisely. Rich, almost tactile 4-colour bleeds of paintings or photographs of sacred objects on every page.

Beautifully done.


We let go of, and preserve,


Written in the third person, about Johnnie's family and traditions. Tone is serious, to preserve the memories. Simple, spacious illustrations. Sadly, completely narrative—not one word of dialogue in entire book. Lim needed an editor to delete his passive verbs.


If it's yours, you might get it back, but not in the same condition as when it was taken from you.


A boy helps a Bald Eagle with a broken wing recover and return to the wild. The illustrations, especially the faces are so clear, so vivid, they approach photography.


Role reversal—the school boy acts responsible, the dad acts like a child.
something of what we create.


Bureaucracy gets its comeuppance.


Steadfast human love forms a circle.

The scene of the old mother being rocked by her grown son makes my friend cry. It doesn’t work for me; I don’t wonder why.


A new boy, David, moves into Julie’s neighbourhood. David’s father is a giant who scares everybody with his size and his loud voice. But he is gentle with Julie.

David does not think his dad is scary—compared to his grandmother.


To pee is human. Good story.

Conventional, didactic. Ho hum, yawn.


A friendly home, from far away, looks more appealing than when you were there last.


Humbled Princess Elizabeth rescues Prince Ronald, her betrothed, by outsmarting the dragon that carried him off. But Ronald is ungrateful; he is more interested in appearances. Elizabeth decides he’s not worth marrying.


Too much bedlam; not fun.


Five-year-old Robin finds a baby in her back yard. She tries to find a grown-up to care for it, but nobody needs (the operative word of the story) the baby. After she stops looking, a man comes along who

Sneaky mud puddles hide in appletrees, on the roof, and behind sandboxes, then throw themselves on Jule Ann. Her mother always scrubs her clean. Jule Ann becomes afraid to go outside. The mud puddles hate soap; she chases them away with it.


"Good works" can have negative consequences. Great Spirit isn't to be blamed--we must try to get along despite our differences.

Oppenhein, J. & Reid, B. 1986. *Have you seen birds?* Richmond Hill: Scholastic-TAB.

The use of plasticine for depth, detail, colour is amazing. The birds seem to be alive. It helps that the verse throughout is in the present tense--giving the reader a sense of immediacy. We see birds from so many

listeners to the baby. The baby says one word. The man needs the baby, and takes it away.

He gives a present to Robin.


Breaking promises leads to trouble.

An Eskimo legend brought to life to teach children to heed parental warnings of danger.

The story and the illustrations work together in a powerful yet gentle performance.


Animals are not so dumb. Another book as a gift to the child who requested it.


"I hate" are the first two words of the book, and indeed the theme. Six-year-old Lucy lists all the reasons she hates going her aunt Rose's house for dinner--she is expected to obey Mum's rules and be polite to and with adults. Her last sentence, about loving her family, does not redeem the negative
perspectives. This award-winning book is highly imaginative, fun, inspiring. Even the bird-poop on the statue is lifelike, I mean pooplike.


Mum sits in the bathroom sink playing tuba, Dad sits on the toilet playing harp, while Benjamin, a full-grown man, is in the bath! They all have faces of cherubs!

The magic is quiet and sure. Delightful.


Seventy pages of inferior pencil sketches and bad verses. Boring. Helps me appreciate better ones even more. The book wouldn't be a write-off had Simmie had a demanding editor—some of the ideas are original and could, with a little work, sparkle.


Some cats are just impossible to get story. How did this book get published—what good will it serve?


Animals doing totally un-natural, silly things. What fun!


A mother cat struggles to protect, transport, and feed her own, and her adopted litter. Humans finally show mercy.


Becky's grandmother, who has Alzheimer's, comes to live with the family of five for a few weeks, on her way to a nursing home. She is a hard person to like because of her illness. Neither the language in the book, nor the behaviour of the narrator (agewise), are congruent with the drawings of the narrator. Such a young person does not say "another figure entered the scene" or "pleadingly" or "annoyed" or "perplexed" or
This illustrated version of the popular Oak Street Music song clearly and cleverly shows that Cat owns the place, while the human is the tolerated guest.


A classic gullible immigrant-pioneer story, where we laugh with the cheater, rather than the sympathize with the cheated.

Most of the illustrations, especially of horses, are fun just to behold!


The nameless little boy narrator feels big or small by how independent he is. He compares himself to adults; big means he is like them, little means he is not.


Home is a packaged jungle-zoo-farm-aquarium. The illustrations make the message exciting, every page a treat.

"rummaged." This language contrasts sharply with how such a young person actually does talk: "This is going to be an awful visit...".


Love is magic, transforming death into a spiritual union. The illustrations are full, rich, intoxicating pastels. The text needs simplifying, chronologically, to allow it to breathe as freely as the visual art.


A mud-brown book—not fun.


Toddler don’t need reasons to like their favourite colour.


A little girl lives in an apartment in the city with her Mum and brother. Dad
Suzuki, D. 1994. *If we could see the air*. Toronto: Stoddart.

Air is alive, and has history. Not as much fun as Suzuki (1994), above, despite the opportunity. On page 23, the little girl exhales a "cloud" in a frozen lake scene—but flowers bloom in the foreground and she is wearing a summer, sleeveless top. The "beachy" setting of the book needs to be modified appropriately for this page.


Love comforts and cheers the child and the parent.


An enduring Native legend—simply, quietly told.


The magical fairytale of music.

Notes are people too. Gentle prose, with alliteration, in lines like verse.

lives in the country. She misses them all being together—she wishes they could be.

Dad has a girlfriend named Paula who is the only person with a name in the book other than Santa Claus. The girl knows she can't bring her Mum and Dad together again. She loves them, and knows they love her, "just not together."


This Native legend unites three beginnings: the first fire, the first corn, and the first community. The painting of Two-Feather dragging the Spirit-woman by the hair, as she commanded, her body becoming corn stalks, is enchanting.


Some things are best left how you find them—or home is where the lily-pad is.

Seeing beauty in something trapped can help us to set it free.


Nature cannot be tamed. It must be respected, not feared. Three illustrations captivate: the close-up of the trapped wolf; the view of the protagonist as seen close-up by the wolf—the picture is round, like the eye, set on the upper left page and; the looker, the wolf, looks from the bottom right page—also a round picture


A sequel to Wynne-Jones (1983), above. *Zoom* finds his Uncle’s shipwreck.

So ends this parade. I’m thankful for all the work that these authors-illustrators-publishers have undertaken to make these wonderful books available to me. I’m touched by their deceptive simplicity, each one I enjoy is like a treasure I’ve just found. I think it must be happiness—accessing the innocent child in me. I’m glad that so many adults believe in the magic of storytelling, and that countless children, even old ones like me, are being nourished this way. I


When you help somebody, you help yourself. The illustration of young Chin Chiang and old Pu Yee dancing on the rooftop is worth the price of the book ($12.95).


Sharing the world is better than owning it—less chaos.


*Zoom* the cat loves sailing on the sea in Maria’s house!
return now, Gentle Reader, to my Learning Log.

August 7, 1996

I've been waking up early, before my alarm, to revise my own children's books. I am so excited to be creating these works, and being created by them. I am having so much fun I don't believe I can contain it—it's so good I must share it. I'm so happy to record weird and wonderful creatures doing what they do. I feel like I've opened another door inside myself, allowing more healing energy to flow through me, to others. I'm becoming more confident, taking more risks, instead of allowing my fears to censor my writing. I have given myself permission to play in a wholesome way. As a direct result of this summer's workplay, I have gained more critical distance from my trauma story in Playing to Lose, as well as embraced another healing vehicle—children's books.

My voice is part of the choir, the community of authors of children's stories too. Three of these children said they did not know how to draw a chipmunk, and were "stuck" until I showed them by example that they could not do it "wrong." Many of my OISE/UT classmates in Professor Miller's "Holistic Curriculum" course said to the group that they liked the adventure of making music with my humble "waterdrums" because they "could not fail." My zany storybooks for children synthesize my understanding of how critical it is for children and adults to be able to engage in playful imaginative exercises where they can only succeed; it is their own story. With these nonsense storybooks, a word is worth a thousand pictures.

...a word is precious when it makes no sense, when its power flows from its sound, its letters, and its physical presence. This potent magic may appear strange to us, who treat words as encoded meanings and use them freely for our own purposes. We grab a word as though it were a tool rather than an object having its own personality and life, but the magician shows that a word doesn't have to make.
sense and doesn't have to be used for expression but, as a precious thing in itself, can serve as a vehicle of enchantment.

(Moore, 1996, 258)

These books are vehicles for creating laughingmoments for my childself and others. Through them, I am forging healthy connections with my friends and students. My trauma recedes. Each line below is a separate page, the words printed extralarge in different fonts and colours. The reader has the whole page to play, without confining lines.

My Nonsense Jonah Storybook for Children: A Little More

Bynerkrix is a little gwitter.

He smunjiz around in Wunkum's breakfast bowl...

But Wunkum won't eat him...

She fimjimbles with him...

Until his mroogs and hofrees are all rakkilfroy...

Then she shmams Bynerkrix out the window.

He lands on his ener in the orfulspoz...

Right where Rotklimmer is fmirbing.

Rotklimmer awgreez Bynerkrix seven times...

And swallows him down whole, easy as spomch.

Wunkum fluldes Rotklimmer at the right time...

And he upglusplups Bynerkrix.

Every time Bynerkrix is eaten, he's more gwitterful.

Wunkum and Rotklimmer oobeedoo him ya in their bones.

(Stewart, January 1997)
CHAPTER 7

ARTFUL HEALING PLAY:
FROM BOATS TO POPBOTTLE PEOPLE--ANOTHER LEARNING LOG

Like Jonah being carried by the whale and through the whale, I am being carried by and through this inquiry. It shows me what to include, where, when, and how, in a neverending process of change. I stumble as I move through this dark territory, my moods ranging through every colour of the rainbow. I know I am moving; I feel myself growing as this inquiry is growing. I keep a thesis journal to record my progress. Like Jonah, I have felt every peristaltic movement as I have travelled the long way through the whale's small intestine. Now I hear and feel all three sets of muscles—the longitudinal, the transverse, and the oblique—working, creating the mass movements of the whale's large intestine, propelling me along. I hope I am strong enough to reach the light. I hope there will be light. I hope I can keep hoping.

I'd rather build/create magic than talk about it, especially when I have to do it for a grade, which is more work than fun. I want to share my joy, part of the richness and fullness of my life and what I've learned, what I am learning, rather than demonstrate that I've earned an "A" for a graduate course. How do I stop imagining/imaging the memory of this pain inside my body? I must do something positive, constructive. Instead of trying to stop the pain, or push it out of my body, I must shift focus, imagine and create something new, thereby creating new memories. I will create space within myself. I have room inside for more than pain. I will fill myself so full of joy that I will have no room inside for pain at all.

Boats mark my journey from the intensity of twelve years of hard work, processing trauma and being suicidal during the writing of Playing to Lose, to healing through play. I am creating
laughter in my life. Let there be whimsy, with

...art so revealing of parts of [myself that I] had lost or had never been in touch with in the first place.... Many... adults have never played in their childhood.... (Kellogg & McEliece, 1993, 205)

No pain in my boats. They celebrate themselves. Each is a story of freedom, in and of motion. Many of my Boatpeople have been injured, and cannot hide their injuries, yet they still enjoy the trip.

Writing. I see and create pictures of my worlds in black and white--ink on paper. Aside from the opportunity to learn how to create with plastic bottles, styrofoam trays, glue and toothpicks, boats allow me to work with and give shape to colours that I have not appreciated until now, especially pink and green.

Sometimes, when I had finished, I had the happy feeling of having succeeded, not in terms of accomplishment but in terms of delight; I was able to satisfy my need to be playful, to express myself, to take sensual delight in colors--and I had survived. (Miller, 1986, 16)

It is astonishingly easy to forget that I have survived. I often feel like I am as transparent as a plastic popbottle. My voice, like a label, warns: Contents under pressure, do not shake. I experience many sounds, such as a slamming door, high-pitched speech, breaking dishes, low-flying jets, sirens, vacuum cleaners, dishwashers, ringing telephones, lawnmowers, dot-matrix printers, and rattling china and silverware to be physically jarring. I experience these sounds physically going through me, hitting my consciousness, which is always in motion trying to find a place in my body to rest, a place without pain. My skin is no barrier to these sounds. I have not yet learned how to filter them; I am constantly trying to protect myself from overload. I collect boxes of building materials in my kitchen, washing and sorting them. This is an act of hope, a
physical manifestation of my will to remain alive despite the pain.

"I am here," I say to these materials. "I am open to experience. I am listening. What would you have me do?"

I like one of the Concise Oxford Dictionary's (Allen, 1990) definitions of "listen:" "...to seek to hear or be aware of by waiting alertly" (691). I literally want things to be clear. These boats represent my various transparent selves, my various bodies, moving through time, on journeys.

One story that I had heard over and over from my older brothers and sisters since I was a boy is that my Grand-dad Algernon and his wife Emily intended to emigrate from England or Scotland to Australia. But by the time they arrived at the dock with their children, that boat had sailed. The next boat was bound for Canada, so they came here.

Boats

On June 7 1995, I called my eldest brother for the mysterious letter bearing the elegant signature of Algernon, my father's father, hoping it would authenticate this story. I felt excited about this letter that I had heard about as a boy. I had neither seen it, nor asked about it before. When my father died, this letter was passed on to his eldest son. I did not know it contained a story about my shipbuilding ancestors.

...all physicists must think of quantum waves "as if" they were out there in space and moving in time like any common waves you might witness....one multiplies two counterstreaming waves together, one coming from the present and one coming from the future...events, even those that haven't yet occurred, can generate these waves.

(Wolf, 1994, 162)

I had no conscious way of knowing that building boats was one of my ways of reaching toward
one of my future selves that would embrace my Grand-dad Algernon by reaching far into my ancestral past.

**Canoe**

I built my Canoe, September 17, 1995, out of two window envelopes, so I could have windows fore and aft. I brought it to my OISE/UT class on September 18, 1995. I found it difficult to ask for help, nevertheless, class was an opportunity to learn how to ask for help. A chance to allow others to give me the gift of their help. I asked my classmates to help me waterproof my Canoe by writing letters on it; it was not ready for water. Pens are shaped as paddles. The only boats my father and I were ever in together were the huge ferries that sail between the mainland and Vancouver Island. I have found paddling a canoe to be a meditative exercise; I push the boat ahead by pulling against the water. I like seeing how quietly I can paddle.

**Sailboat**

I resist building the Sailboat for 2 weeks; I am afraid of tearing (breaking) the paper. I am slowly learning that I will not be punished for my mistakes. I cannot answer two questions: "Why build it?" and "Why not build it?" It calls to me, and I wait. Then, I no longer need to be brave, for my fear has been dislodged by my curiosity. On October 5, 1995, the Sailboat boat shows me how to build itself. Its hull has windows on both sides, the bow, and the stern.

Now I want to build a boat that really will float. I spend hours alone, just holding empty popbottles, wondering, and I consider this time well spent. My sense of wonder enables me to see them as toys already, as they are. They embody space, unlike the belly of the great fish. They are windows that I can look through, and when I do, I see things differently, depending on the
thickness and the curve of the plastic. When I look through them at myself in the mirror, I look funny. Which self is this? I feel like Nick Adams. "He smiled at the face in the mirror and it grinned back at him. He winked at it and went on. It was not his face but it didn't make any difference" (Hemingway, 1973, 192). Distortions reveal how I hide. I distort words to draw new meanings out of them.

i see
not me
in mirror
therefore
mirror

(Stewart, September 13, 1986)

What kind of words self boat self do I see in me here, right now?

What is so enchanting about setting out on [sic] a canoe, a small rowboat, a sailing vessel, or a great ship? We sail not just for the physical sensations but also because the soul has its own fantasies on water and on [sic] a boat. In some deep way, we are living out a ritual that has strong ties to Jesus in the boat with his apostles, the Buddhist on the raft of religion, and Odysseus on his voyage home. Enchantment arises sometimes when myth and ordinary experience come together, as when we engage in some apparently innocent pastime, like a canoe ride, and are surprised to find that we're sailing on mythical water.

(Moore, 1996, 139-140)

Wilton visits me for the weekend, and we sit at my kitchen table together, talking about the design of boat hulls using different sized pop bottles and juice bottles, from dinnertime until midnight. I don't own a television—this is more fun.

**Paddlewheeler**

I built my Paddlewheeler on October 31, 1995. This is my first boat with an anchor, and it is down. This is my first boat with people in it. Fred and Ethel are celebrating by dancing wildly in the moonlight.
I move from building boats with windows, to building windowboats. Windows in the shape of boats. Sometimes I need to look out the window, sometimes I need to look at the window. I need to be the window, and I need to open the window, be the window-as-it-is-opening.

**Birdboat**

I built my Birdboat on October 26, 1995. The solo sailor, Dillon, rides on the neck of Birdboat rather than in it. This Birdboat is in motion, on and above the water, and is the only boat I build with rearview mirrors. Dillon steers it like an airplane.

For six hours, I try to build a helicopter. The pieces will not come together. Is this resistance? This is when I learn, with my tactile sense, that "No" may not be resistance, it may be a Guide, saying, "Not there, Matthew, over here. Wait, you're not ready for a helicopter yet. Today, you're ready for a submarine."

**Boat of Under-standing**

I built my Boat of Under-standing on November 1, 1995. This is my first and only coloured boat. Things are unclear; it is scratched and weathered. Its anchor is down. The submarine in this boat is used for exploring the depths, a window for seeing things clearly where light usually does not penetrate. Two people, Brad the student, and Garvin, the therapist-teacher stand under the sea, working together. The big yellow hands are an extension of Brad's hands. They are open, not empty. Brad uses them for bringing some painful things up to surface to get a good look at them, and for burying others. The moment I joined Brad's hands to his arms, I felt empowered, joyful. The arms reach lower than the body of submarine and are operated by voice command when Brad and Garvin inside agree what to work on together.
I am gaining confidence working with my materials. I focus on the building; time slows down. These boats bring me laughter. Each boat is a separate journey—where I've been, and where I'm going—yet each connects to the other together in the now of where I am.

**Skiboat**

I built my Skiboat on November 4, 1995. This little boat has oversize sails; it zooms along, skimming over the water. Maximum fun. Henry's water skis are the smallest barrier or window between him and the water. Sometimes he falls into the water, becomes part of the water, hence his life-jacket. This is the first time I created Boatpeople piece by piece, rather than as cut-outs. Their energy is given colourful shape and form in spacetime. I created Henry, the first Boatperson, very carefully. The other two Boatpeople, Marion cheering Henry, and SixT, the driver, are not so perfect—who is perfect? I enjoy the infinite possibilities of creating; it helps me feel more connected to my own body. Like being in a room with other people who are laughing, I feel happy inside to see Henry being wild, strong, and healthy. He is accomplishing his own freedom, his own independence, yet he is connected to the Skiboat and other Boatpeople.

I had stopped reading *Art is a way of Knowing* (Allen, 1995) on page 67, because I did not like the titles of the chapters in the Contents pages. (All 25 are entitled "Knowing" something.) I know very little, yet I have learned much. Allen (1995) overuses the term "knowing," to the degree that it loses its meaning for me in the list. Taking a three-week break from reading this book is my form of protest. When I do continue reading it, I find boat images on pages 68-69! I wonder whether the page number 67 has any relevance—I moved to British Columbia as a youngster in 1967.

The very next day dad built a four-by-eight plywood box three feet deep
and bolted it to the roof of his new truck. Mom and the girls packed stuff inside galvanized garbage pails, and we boys carried them up to dad. He lashed them into the box. In the basement, mom dumped all our boxes of folded clothes, and our tucked-in sheets willy-nilly into green garbage bags and we carried them out to him. He stuffed them up to the roof in the front of a big empty boxy silver trailer. We were told to go to bed, on bare mattresses. In our clothes. I couldn't sleep. When it was very dark, dad came downstairs. I sat up.

"You," he said quietly, "get everybody into my truck."

"Yes dad."

He turned away. I woke up all the boys and hustled them outside. I went to wake up the girls, but they were gone. Mom turned out the lights, and locked the back door, and climbed in beside dad. Thomas sat beside her on the folding front seat. I sat behind dad. He turned on his highbeams. Not a word was spoken. I knew we'd never be back, but I didn't know where we were going. I was really angry that I never had the chance to say goodbye to Darlene, Emma, and Brenda and I wondered where they had gone and if I would ever see them again.

I learned later that my sisters went to live with my brother Norman because Darlene had told Betty what she had told me in the outhouse and Betty was going to call the police and we were running away so dad didn't have to go to jail.

Dad drove slowly, the tires sounded like a long war siren, way off in the distance. I put a finger on one eyelid, then on the other, and as the hours turned into days, I learned to wink.

(Stewart, 1995, 44)

It was a long ride. The big overloaded trailer that Dad pulled behind his new truck had only a single axle; it fishtailed violently over 30 miles per hour. He kept pulling onto the shoulder of the road to let long parades of summer traffic go by, and often took breaks at truckstops. We spend one night in Saskatchewan in a big parkinglot full of provincial Ministry of Transportation trucks.

For supper, Mum cooks scrambled eggs in dad's butter on the portable Coleman stove on the tailgate of his new truck. They taste like she likes me. None of my schoolfriends know that I have left the province. I did not have the chance to write down their addresses; how can I write them letters and tell them I'm still alive?
Finding Other Travelling Family Members--Other Memories

On November 8, 1995, I pick up the package of family history material that I requested from my brother. Included is a copy of an undated letter, bearing my Grand-dad Algernon's famous signature:

Respecting our Armoural Bearings or more plainly speaking our Coat of Arms, I understand it dates from before the Inquisition during the period of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, 1498, I believe and our people the Smiths were rich merchants and large ship owners but during the Inquisition on account of not being catholics and refusing to be converted, all the property was confiscated and a portion of the family had to fly and find asylum of refuge. One portion spread to Holland, another portion were converted and remained. There is in London now a Vice Consul of a Spanish town and he is a Catholic. I went to see him and he told me what religion he was. There was some years ago an Admiral Smith who was in this country and was received in audience by the late Queen Victoria. No doubt years ago it was a great and noble family but time works wonders. Well the part that went to Holland eventually divided, some staying there and others to London so apparently we belong to the London part, although originally it was one family - I believe there are still some of our name in Holland - The Coat-of-Arms I can use by paying [pound sterling] 1-1-0 here but I have never used it on my paper and don't want to, it leads nowhere after all, only useless vanity, I think. This dearest is all I can tell you - I think our Motto is a fine one -

MOTTO - LET AMBITION BE GOVERNED BY REASON -
Our Coat-of-Arms since 1498.

[signed] A S Smith

Here I am building boats! "Our whole body remembers. Our whole self dreams" (Steinman, 1985, 73). Included in this package I find copies of my father's father's Birth Certificate recording his birth in the County of Surrey, England. His Death Certificate of 1951. Only today (October 13, 1997) do I connect that my father died almost the same day of the year as his father. Only today do I learn that my father's father's first name was Solomon, not Algernon. His mother's name was Louisa Rose Martin. A human Rose in my family; I am strawberried again! The name of his father, my Great-grandfather, is recorded on the Birth Certificate as Benjamin Smith, whose
occupation is listed as "commercial traveller." Four of Benjamin's poems, typed, are included. Poems; I am strawberried again! Three of his poems are dated, respectively, "25/12/27", "20/6/27", and "31/10/26", and "signed," using the typewriter, "B. Smith." But wait. The first poem in the package, entitled "A little bit of Heaven," is signed, as is the year, "1925", in ink, in his handwriting:

...For the Mother is the garden,
And sweet children are the flowers.
then you watch your little offsprings,
As you see them grow and thrive,
For each one brings a blessing....
(B. Smith, 1925)

Benjamin signs his name dramatically different than Algernon. Benjamin's capital "S" at the beginning of his last name is large, written, and rounded, the way my father signed his name. Algernon signs his name with a tall printed "S" with a deliberate serif at beginning and end. Clearly, the same typewriter was used to type Benjamin's poems as our Coat of Arms letter; this letter was written by my Great-grandfather Benjamin while in England, along with his poems, and sent to his son, Grand-dad Algernon here in Canada. Gentle Reader, this is very exciting!

Algernon signed the bottom of the letter in ownership, not authorship. Also included is the Birth Certificate of Algernon's wife, Emily Kate, in the County of Kent, England. Also included is a copy of my father's "Extract Entry of Birth." He was born in the county of Berwick, Scotland. Algernon's profession at the time of my father's birth is listed as "Postman." According to Army form B. 2079 issued by the Secretary of War Office, London, S.W., dated June 1916, Algernon was discharged from the Royal Field Artillery "after serving 14 years 91 days with the Colours, and Two years 221 days in the Army Reserve" at 35 years of age, "being no longer physically fit
for War Service." He too knew pain.

Also in the package, a letter from my mother to me:

May 23, 1994
Dear Matthew:-
I had copies of Dad's Birth Certificate done by my Notary Public for the family. It is a legal document and could be used if you or your children might need it sometime when travelling abroad. This one is yours.

Much love.
Mother.

This is the only letter from my mother to me that I have not destroyed.

I respect the boathistory within my body, and the beckoning future coming toward me, that my body calls. Through boats, I uncover my past, and discover my future. They help me locate my body in spacetime, in "relation" to my ancestors. I am no longer embarrassed by the simplicity of my boats, by their lack of apparent artistry. "The simpler, the deeper...focus and direct engagement are essential to depth" (McNiff, 1981, 32). Indeed, I am as proud of them as I am of Great Grand-dad Benjamin's poetry. Bless him.

Teachingboat

I built my Teachingboat on November 29, 1995. Barnaby Peg-Leg drives. The teacher, Gretchen, and the student, Noah, sit at the table in the boat. They build Angelboat together. Angelboats are the same colour as sunlight, that's why you never actually see angels sailing.

When this Angelboat is finished, Gretchen and Noah will set it free. Angels, even though they are invisible, like to go sailing. Angels sometimes work hard to help keep us alive, so they appreciate being invited to have some fun too. I feel a quiet happiness, a growing calmfidence inside; I value this exercise in learning gentleness.
By gently listening to our bodily cues and responding to them with small adjustments, we can create trust in ourselves....
(Allen, 1995, 29)

I'm not clumsy after all. I can work with small things competently. I rebuilt the broken styrofoam fishing line on my Teachingboat with wood, drilled holes, built the holder for portability, new transparent hook, and even the working reel, with a much lower level of anxiety than when I built my Canoe. The key is allowing myself to build slowly, patiently—even as I assemble this thesis. I am pleased to learn that I have good dexterity for a burly woods splitter. I'm healing—my hands shake less, so I can do the fine motor skill work.

I pack my boats carefully, in boxes, and transport them on floor of my truck, so if I need to stop suddenly they won't fall and break. I expect others to handle them carefully too.

During my presentations to Trent University students, using my Lecturing Voice, I ask for volunteers to assemble boats. Students are eager to touch the lesson, to build it themselves. I use my boats as instruments to begin from point of view of healing fun (where I am now) rather than anger (where I've been) with the Abraham poem. Student participation and laughter help me relax a little more, trust, and enjoy presenting. I hope to inspire others, as I allow the vulnerable part of myself to become visible. My boats serve as links between myself and the student-who-will-be-helped in the future, through these sensitized teachers-to-be that I inform with my teachings. I don't shake as much, or feel myself draining like I did during my other presentations, so I don't need to use adrenaline or anger as sources of energy just to keep going. My survival is not at stake. This is not an endurance test. I can slow down, I can stop any time. Professor Margaret Olson is helping me steer through this rough water, not judging me. This presentation is part of my art, not separate from it. Rather than learning to not feel threatened, I am learning to enjoy
Whenever we are threatened we need to bring the image of ourselves back into our awareness, so we can find out if the threat is serious, and how we should meet it...But in flow there is no room for self-scrutiny. Because enjoyable activities have clear goals, stable rules, and challenges well matched to skills, there is little opportunity for the self to be threatened....

(Csikszentmihaly, 1991, 63)

I see, I hear, and I read the students' generous responses—how do I take them in? I am honoured by their honesty, and their praise.

The OISE/UT tuition fee is well spent just to find out I have boats in me. I am glad to share these creations, to connect with my classmates who share their creations, in a way I never imagined. I too, feel joy in a "...loveliness that we have never known we possessed, and certainly, that we have never communicated before others" (Darroch-Lozowski, 1995, 2-3).

Each class is a vehicle (boat) for bringing my selves together. I asked my classmates to help me when I brought in my Canoe, and on the last day I thanked them for their help. I am learning to expect acceptance and respect from my peers.

**Dadboat**

I built my Dadboat from December 1-10, 1995. This boat represents me being a Dad for my children, literally taking them into my boatbody. Wilton moved in with me at the end of his school year in June 1996, and my daughter invited me to her place December 5. For the first time in 5 years, she came to visit me, and stayed over at my place December 18 and 19, 1995.

The children in the childboat, a girl named Lilac and a boy named Spruce, are on the high seas. Their feathersails are frayed and they cannot make progress. They call Dad in his Dadboat to help them. Dadboat is rusted with experience. Dad sails out to meet them.
"Take down your sails," he says. "Sit down and rest."

Lilac and Spruce sit on their sails.

Dad adjusts the ballast of his Dadboat, then lowers the rescue pod into the water. Lilac and Spruce secure their Childboat to the rescue pod. Slowly, Dad raises the rescue pod, and lowers it back into his boatbody. Lilac and Spruce climb up the ladder to the bridge, where they all have hot chocolate and toasted crumpets with sweet butter and ginger marmalade. Dad sails to a safe harbour and helps the children fit their boat with the new feathersails which he has brought. When they are rested, Lilac and Spruce head out to sea again. Liberty.

This boat marks a significant change in me. Instead of looking for a safe place for myself—such as a classroom—I recognize that I embody the truth that I am a safe place for my children. I have carried the ballast for this Dadboat in my toolbox 15 years. The act of naming my boatpeople brings me joy. I ask them their names, and they tell me.

Building boats involves my tactile body more, and differently than writing. I feel excitement in my whole body. I enjoy rescuing feathers from chicken-coop-poop, mud, the pond, horse dung, from under piles of leaves and snow. My search for feathers connects me with people in the community, and birds who squawk and waddle. I squawk back, and thank them aloud for their feathers, and assure them I won't hurt them. The hen corrals her chicks into the corner, or hustles them outside away from me. I hope the peacocks overhead don't poop in my hair for a laugh.

...The art process is at work, healing me and taking over from any conscious thinking and judging. This absorption in the process is what heals....

(Allen, 1995, 135)

I move about in my house, searching through my kitchen, my toolbox, my closet, for the
right part. Instead of looking for a word in my dictionaries or thesaurus, I kick up the snow in
search of twigs to whittle as axles. In this way, I allow my interior impulse to smile and laugh to
assume physicality. Rather than thinking joy, I do it. I give it space, and time, and it grows.

A primary tool...is that of amplification, which refers to that process which
strengthens and vivifies signals, thus assisting them to cross that person's threshold
of awareness.

(Steinman, 1985, 110)

Boatbuilding, unlike writing, offers me the opportunity to learn how to be comfortable
amid the chaos of cutting-boards, baskets, plastic dishes, twigs, popbottles, feathers, pieces of cut
bottles and styrofoam, wood, glue, scissors, wire, string, and tools on my desk. My Red Oak
desk is my sacred workspace. It is the only piece of furniture that I designed and had built to my
standards. It is rugged, simple, and elegant, and I do not allow others to mar it with earrings, car
keys, food, drink, clothing, etcetera. Working at my desk is a form of prayer, one of my ways of
giving thanks for the trees that became my desk, my books, and this paper on which I write. I
used to tear open my mail, and toss the envelopes into the trashcan. Now I use them as
containers for receipts that I collect month by month for tax purposes, and for scratchpads when
I'm on the telephone. That's how I came to save the ones that became my Canoe and Sailboat.

Boatbuilding transforms my desk into a playspace. Boat construction presents engineering
challenges new to me: how do I make these puzzle-pieces, and how do they fit together? As my
boats become more complex in design and function, the fun in learning is problem-solving: how
do these pieces work together? I merge with, and become my workplay. Time slows down for
"...the sense of duration of time is altered; hours pass by in minutes, and minutes can stretch out
to seem like hours..." (Csikszentmihaly, 1991, 49).
I keep needing to learn that it's safe to make a mistake, that no one is going to bust in on me and punish me. This is hard work for me, and I'm thankful that I have the opportunity to learn it through practice. I don't always break things because I'm careless. A thin sliver of wood, for example, can only endure so much stress, so when drilling holes in it, I must ease, rather than push the drill, or the wood will split. When I break something, I can learn how to fix it, or I can build a new one. I learn to listen with my hands.

I thought what was more important, I would write. Now I can draw it, form it, play it on piano. I thought my purpose in life was to learn how to tell the truth, now I understand it is to be me. "Though resolution is never complete, it is often sufficient for the survivor to turn her attention from the tasks of recovery to the tasks of ordinary life..." (Herman, 1992, 212).

My "ordinary life" is full of blessings. I am thankful that my hands work, that I can walk. I am thankful to be alive to learn how to build boats. During the process of boatbuilding, I transform envelopes and popbottles from containers to vehicles. I recognize them as valuable, rescue and wash them, cut them open surgically, though not at their prescribed opening-points (orifices), cleanse their insides, and infuse them with new colour, and purpose. I save them when they are on their way to destruction in the garbage or recycling boxes. With immense respect for birds, I resurrect their beauty and gentlestrength. Their feathers reach up and down (Sailboat), like boat is birdbody, and feathers are wings (Birdboat).

These boats serve as appropriate metaphor for my intense journey toward my own resurrection, unseen and unheard by the world inside the great fish, now brought into the light.
...a most radical notion for psychiatry may be that the acute state, however distressing or dangerous, is, paradoxically, a change which is needed, trying to happen.

(Steinman, 1985, 109)

As I create my new life, I am learning how to fill it with quiet joy, rather than busyness.

Boatbuilding signifies my need, and the exercising of my right to rest from gathering and presenting a quantity of academic "knowledge" for grades.

The central theme...is the existence of a dialogue between outward activity and inner stillness. This dialogue appears to be associated both with human interaction and creativity. The paradox lies in that it is in the moments of rest from outward striving and interaction, that the greatest insights, and the greatest feelings of oneness with the universe seem to occur.

(Fulkerson, 1987, cited in Steinman, 1985, 131)

Now is the time to let my boats be boats (I have shared them--they are no longer just mine), without taking them apart with interpretations. They come to me, from me, and through me. Joy is mine to share. I see the recycling blueboxes at the roadside laden with popbottles as treasure chests containing innumerable boats-in-embryo. I have run "boatbuilding workshops" for elementary school children.

What will the final outcome be?...the process itself is the outcome; every day is a whole--not a step toward some dreamed-of recovery, but an end itself, to be lived in its fullness as if no disease existed....

(Chopra, 1990, 242)

I remember seeing a wooden canoe in the ditch near my father's cottage when I was about seven years old. It bore a jagged hole in its middle, as if a big man with hobnail boots had jumped through it with his feet together. I wanted so to rescue it, to patch it, to paddle it to freedom. Every time I saw it I felt sad. I wanted so to bring that canoe back to life, I was sure I could if I had the chance.
I need to create space for new workplay. On December 14, 1994, I wrote in my journal: "I am collecting materials because I must build a complex boat in the shape of a human body, with liquid moving inside it. I must build hands."

Art "enables us to confront our resistance to opening the heart" (McNiff, 1981, 17). As artist, I am witness to myself as creator of worlds and events-in-motion, rather than judge of my work's "artworthiness." Art needs time to work. The more I cultivate my sensitivity, the more I learn how to synthesize different perspectives—ways of experiencing the work, and its meanings. Engaging in art, I agree to listen and honour the signals that prompt artistic creation. I agree, in essence, to allow creative energy to be channelled, indeed focussed, through myself so it can assume a recognizable form or shape.

I live within creative energy, as it lives within me. Art is the means of tapping into it. It cannot be harnessed; it is everywhere, flowing through the bodymind of all things which have been, which are, and which will be. This is the energy of life itself, the creation of death being a part, the energy wherein my selves are simultaneously composing, decomposing, and recomposing. Art is thus allowed to be born into my awareness so it can be borne by my expanding awareness. Fostering the flow of art creates consciousness-creating-art in the bodymind. Art is, in this moment, an opportunity to give thanks for the creative Spirit of one's being, and to celebrate that Spirit with feelings of joy for the gift of life itself through the utterance of the heretofore unutterable. This is my sacred space of listening to the call of my ageless, indestructible Spirit. Here and now I honour, and give resonance to the voices deep within, for "...our being tends to make itself, in the moment of artistic perception, isomorphic with the work of art...." (Foreman, 1976, 146). This life-affirming creative act allows that which I did
not consciously know that I knew, to commune with me and nurture me. Where the interplay of these positive energies serve to enrich the lives of my selves, the whole of humanity is enriched—the way the dropping of a pebble in a pond sends ripples through the whole pond, not just across its surface. Slowly, I come to learn that art is a safe way of giving to my selves and the world, thereby changing my selves and world. "We enter a world created by others, but we can also create and re-create our world through art-making" (Allen, 1995, 11). I move from being self-in-this-world created in memory, to selves-creating-selves. I learn that art is a way of accepting the gift of my childself, a safer openspace where I can begin to learn how to trust the process of transformation as fundamental to life itself. Art enables me to become more whole, more alive. The more I embrace my own liberty, the more I learn to rely on my particular inner path, the less I need my therapist-teacher. "My overall intention is to come to know the source of wisdom and guidance within me" (Allen, 1995, 16). Art serves to help me make meaningful connections, while challenging me to gain critical distance from my some of my selves and my art. As I move closer to and further from my creation, like the tide, I develop creative momentum and rhythm. This distance allows "a self to see, and a self to see my seeing-self seeing" (Foreman, 1976, 143). From both these perspectives, I experience the thing created as coming from within myself, now externalized, separate from me. It is a thing embodied, a place to move forward from, a thing to share, not wholly known or knowable.

Images...open a window onto the future....the meaning of an image reveals itself gradually...some of its significance remains shrouded in mystery, unveiling itself only in a future....

(Shuman, 1989, 122)

The significance of distance is that it is essential to movement, and it creates space within the
selves from which other art pieces may emerge.

My Grampa William's artform was carpentry. He listens to wood with his hands, like it is touching him. He moves his plane along the edge of the door in loooooong, smoooth strokes. I tuck some of the fresh woodcurls in my pockets to smell later so I can hold onto the memory of being with Grampa. As I type this inquiry, amid a flurry of paper, I keep a pencil on my ear, like Grampa did in his workshop. I can always find it.

Visiting Graves: Diary Entries

On April 29, 1992, I drive to Stoker to learn Grampa's middle name. One of my middle names was his first name. The headstone reads: William Baker/1886-1968/his beloved wife/Winnifred A. Jones/1892-1968. I feel sad; no middle name. I'm looking for a new name for myself. I still want some connection. Gramma Win died first, in hospital in Barrie, one year after we moved out west. My mother returned to Ontario for her funeral. Grampa William missed Gramma Win terribly; he died the same year of a broken heart. My sister Betty attended his funeral, my mother did not. My mother was the only one not named in Grampa and Gramma's joint will.

On December 28, 1994, I take Wilton and Christine to a Toronto cemetery to visit the graves of Grand-dad Algernon and his wife Emily. This is our first time. Raymond, in the office, gives me a map of the cemetery and opens large ledgers before me to read. Algernon died in Sunnybrook Hospital in Toronto at 70 years of age. Cause of death: pulmonary infarction.

Pulmonary infarction is a blood clot that lodges in the lung tissue and causes it to die within minutes—this frequently leads to a cardiac arrest.

(Johnston, November 23, 1997)

He was buried in August 1951. Emily died in our family home in Morganville at 76 years of age.
Cause of death: hypertensive heart disease. She was buried in April 1957. I was born January 20, 1956. The only memory of Grand-mum Emily that I can access so far, is of her lying in a big bed, to my left, under pale green blankets, with a big pillow under her head. My perspective on this scene is from slightly above the bed; one of my older sisters is holding me on her left hip. Grand-mum Emily died last night in her sleep. My sister is not sad; taking care of her was hard, thankless work for her. I clear away the dead leaves from the flat marker—the word " Redeemed" inscribed in large letters leaps at me. Many of my siblings told me that, as my father had commanded, a wooden sign with the word " Redeemed" hung over his casket in the funeral home. My father and his father were united in death with one word. In life, they had remained apart. Algernon and Emily were both 33 years old when my father was born. My father was 37 when Algernon died, and 43 when Emily died. My father died 1 year younger than his father. My father was 42 years old when I was born.

I am 42. I hope to successfully defend this thesis and be awarded my Ph.D. Born again.

Letter from Professor G

Dear Matthew,
I won't write a lot to you as we had that special long oral exchange around your work earlier in December. On the pages and in our conversation, you elucidated, and illuminated for me the meanings of the course work for yourself. More importantly, your work and your understanding of your own "Boats, Notes, and Quotes" demonstrat(ed) a deep knowledge, theoretical and applied, of what working with the arts educatively can accomplish. I congratulate you on your movement-of-self during the seminar. It is rare to witness such a phenomenon in such a condensed time span. As well, your contributions to the seminar were to the point and excellent.

(Professor G, January 8, 1996)

Popbottle People

I made many trips to the recycling plant in Peterborough. After a recycling truck dumped
its load indoors, I waded through the huge pile, filling large, clear plastic bags with popbottles of assorted sizes, colours, shapes, with different sized mouths and different coloured caps. This refuse is the material, "the dust of the ground" (Genesis 2:7) from which I created my Popbottle People. I usually collected about two hundred dirty popbottles each visit, filling the back of my truck. At home, I peeled off their labels, washed them with Varsol to dissolve the glue, washed them again in soapy water, and rinsed them before surgically transforming them. As I worked, I breathed on them. I breathed into them "the breath of life" (Genesis 7:2). My Popbottle People have names.

Becoming artists and theologians of our own lives, we can approach the depth that is the domain of soul. Fine art, like formal religion, is at times quite lofty, while soul in any context is lower case, ordinary, daily, familial and communal, felt, intimate, attached, engaged, involved, affected, ruminating, stirred, poetic. The soul of a piece of art is known intimately, not remotely. It is felt, not just understood.

(Moore, 1994, 290-291)

In the act of creating my Popbottle People, they have created me; they taught me how to create them. When Wilton and I created Janet, the teacher, for example, I did not know how to make hands. Baseball Bud taught me how. Hector taught me how to make feet. These discoveries brought me joy. The stories of all I learned during the creation of my Popbottle People, and the toys, are waiting to be told some other time. Allow me, Gentle Reader, to introduce them to you.

**Bud**

I created Bud on December 17, 1995. Bud represents the student subjected to extreme intrafamilial violence. Bud has no safe place inside his incomplete body for sense of a whole self. Bud feels hollow, empty, and so transparent that everybody can see clearly exactly what is going
...for a long time children may feel that somehow mother or father can see right through them. And even when children have come to the realization that one can keep certain things inside, the feeling has not yet faded that parents somehow have privileged access to their inner life...parents really tend to know their children well.

(van Manen & Levering, 1996, 78)

Externally, his eyes and ears are bigger than normal, indicating that Bud's senses are on the alert. Bud is hypervigilant. Internally, however, Bud's eyes, ears, and mouth are plugged. Gagged. In his family home, Bud is told repeatedly to "shut up," to "be seen and not heard," and to "speak when you're spoken to, and not before." Bud is punished for questioning, for talking. Although he sees and hears the horror of violence all around him, he is punished for seeing and hearing.

The connection between Bud's head and his torso represents the paradox of how extreme violence is synthesized in the body. Bud is plugged. He cannot learn the irrelevant lessons in the school classroom; he is already overloaded and overwhelmed with the trauma of his moment-to-moment survival at home. Knowledge is represented by orange coloured liquid. The school lessons add to his burden. Bud is unplugged. He cannot learn the irrelevant lessons in the school classroom; they run through him like diarrhoea.

But the genesis of trauma is not limited to the effects of war since the abuse of bodies destroys identity and leaves results parallel to war and its consequences. (Stiles, 1993, 96)

Bud cannot absorb the geography lesson any more than he can understand the meaning of the word "relax." Bud does not see his Victimself as having a complete body. He is not like other people in the world.
Janet

Wilton and I created Janet on December 28, 1995. Janet represents the teacher. Externally, she looks normal; she has a body, with arms and legs. Looking inside her, you see that Janet has body-knowledge, represented by the yellow liquid, throughout her entire body. Janet has internal "filters" for her eyes, ears, mouth, mind, limbs and organs, through which she "filters" her life experience.

Bud, the traumatized student, comes to Janet one day.

"I don't know how to learn how to learn," he says. "I find being in a classroom a traumatic experience. I don't feel safe in class. Or anywhere."

Survivors feel unsafe in their bodies. Their emotions and their thinking feel out of control. They also feel unsafe in relation to other people.

(Herman, 1992, 161)

"I'm looking for help," says Bud.

"Would you like to sit down?" asks Janet.

Asking for help, especially from a teacher, is an act of bravery. "Traumatized people are often reluctant to ask for help of any kind...." (Herman, 1992, 134). Janet invites Bud to tell her his story. Janet understands why Bud speaks so fast, his voice quivering in fear. She listens to Bud. While telling his story, Bud can see and feel that Janet is not rushing him.

"Filters allow you to slow experience down," she says. "They allow you to choose what you want to learn, how much you want to learn, and when."

Janet tells Bud about different types of learning, and how she appreciates his struggle with classroom book-learning. Janet tells stories about her own struggles with different types of learning too. Different types of knowledge, represented by blue, green and red coloured liquid,
move through Janet, mixing as they go. She is a teacher, yes, with a Teacherson. She also has a Motherself, a Daughterself—many selves. Bud hears her many voices mingling in her Teacherson, and hears how she embodies "...slowing down the frame to where there [is] a resonance: an integration of the personal and existential selves..." (Bloom, 1993, p.86). Knowledge flows to, through, and from Janet's body. In the exchange of stories, Bud learns that it's safe to talk about the body with the teacher; the teacher has a body.

"What would you like to do?" asks Janet.

"I want to learn about "filters," says Bud.

"Good. Come back and tell me what you find out."

The teacher actually cares; Bud goes home encouraged. Hopeful. Curious.

Bud-wiser

I created Bud-wiser on January 3, 1996. Bud-wiser represents the traumatized student learning how to bodily synthesize the lessons that Janet, the teacher, is teaching.

Bud-wiser is growing a body. His eyes and ears, his senses, are not so pronounced; he is less vigilant. Bud-wiser has been learning about "filters." Instead of white ones, like Janet, Bud-wiser has created his own "filters," in different colours. He recognizes that he already has body knowledge, represented by orange liquid in his limbs and torso. In the centre of his body, his heart is full of black liquid representing fear. He still feels afraid. He does not know how to feel confident inside his body. "Feelings are chemical and can kill or cure...There are approximately sixty known peptide molecules in the body...They make feelings chemical..." (Siegel, 1989, 16-20).

"I still feel like I don't know anything," Bud-wiser says to Janet. "It feels like fear."
"You do know something," she says. "You know trauma. I'm sorry. None of us should have to learn that."

As Bud-wiser learns more of the world, represented by taking in yellow and orange liquid, his fear slowly is diluted, and can pass out of his body.

**Sprout**

I created Sprout on March 3, 1996. Sprout represents Janet's baby-in-her-womb. I don't like the word "fetus." I remember being in my mother's womb, and she distinctly remembers me being there.

"You were the one who wouldn't lay still," she says "You always turned crooked, up under my ribs, like this."

She demonstrates.

"Daddy would take me to town, and the doctor would lean on you and force you down, but half-way home, you'd push yourself up again. It hurt."

A child contains more than his present and his past. A child, more than any adult, is filled with a sense of his future—provided of course, he is not severely depressed. Clearly, mothers and fathers may assist this process or obstruct it. Mothers and fathers carry for the child not only a sense of the baby that he once was and in part still is, but also a sense of the man or woman that he will become, and is becoming.

(Alvarez, 1992, 177)

I remember in my bones. "It is possible to restore memories to consciousness reaching right back to the womb" (Stettbacher, 1991, 20). I was trying to protect my left side. Trying to escape my father.
Our attraction to the creative process is instinctive, spontaneous, and innate; we make images and respond to them because we have to...we are what we feel and not just what we think....

(Shuman, 1989, 81)

Sprout has elbow room inside Janet's womb. Sprout has no "filters;" Janet is Sprout's "filter." Janet's Mother-self likes to listen to Erik Satie's *Trois Gymnopedies* while she is pregnant, Sprout is developing an ear for it too.

By 28 weeks, fetuses blink their eyes in reaction to nearby sounds (Birnholz & Benacerraf, 1983). And in the last weeks of pregnancy, they learn to prefer the tone and rhythm of their mother's voice. In one clever study, mothers were asked to read aloud Dr. Seuss's lively book *The Cat in the Hat* to their unborn babies for the last 6 weeks of pregnancy. After birth, their infants were given a chance to suck on nipples that turned on recordings of the mother reading this book or different rhyming stories. The infants sucked hardest to hear *The Cat in the Hat*, sounds they had come to know while still in the womb (DeCasper & Spence, 1986).

(Berk, 1994, 96)

Sprout's learning in the womb is represented by a blue pen that floats freely inside Sprout.

**Brenda**

I created Brenda, a racecar, a monstertruck, a 4-wheel-drive Jeep, and a stationwagon on March 8, 1996. Brenda represents how Bud sees his traumatized mate. Brenda and Bud have grown into adults. Brenda, in many ways, is plugged externally.

"Don't you tell me that," she says to Bud. "Don't you touch me like that. Don't you show me that."

She tries to control Bud like she tries to control her world.

Trauma robs the victim of a sense of power and control; the guiding principle of recovery is to restore power and control to the survivor. The first task of recovery is to establish the survivor's safety. This task takes precedence over all others....This initial stage may last...years with survivors of chronic abuse. The
work of the first stage of recovery becomes increasingly complicated in proportion to the severity, duration, and early onset of abuse.

(Herman, 1992, 160-161)

Brenda's experience of abuse dominates her sense of self. Like Bud and Buddy (below) she does not see her Victimself as having a complete body. In order to feel safe, she must maintain control of how close others come into her physical and psychic space. Paradoxically, while she tries to keep others at a safe, non-threatening distance with her rage, represented by the jagged ends of the cylinders, these same cylinders are open, and Brenda has no "filters" inside to help her handle the experience. Her left ear is super sensitive and open to "filter" music. She can "filter" some things she sees with her right eye. She has a difficult time "filtering" what goes into, and what comes out of her mouth.

The 4 toys I build for my Playself, just for the fun of figuring out how to make believable tires and a working steering mechanism from popbottles.

On March 15, 16, and 20th, Wilton and I built a snowmobile, a motorcycle, a tractor for cornfields, and a helicopter. I had been playing with necks of popbottles that fit inside each other with or without the cap on, since October 26, 1995, wondering how to build a working rotor. The solution woke me from sleep, early. Wilton and I worked on building these machines together from before breakfast until well after midnight each day. I allowed him to use my propane torch only after he agreed to safety precautions that I stipulated. He created the back half of the helicopter on his first attempt, exactly as we needed it. I had tried 12 times. When Wilton comes to visit here at my cabin, he sleeps on a piece of foam rubber on the floor beside my desk. Each night, when we stopped work, we lay on his bed together and drove our cars and trucks over each other. We landed our helicopter on each other's chest.
Buddy

On March 22, 1996, I created Buddy. Buddy represents how Brenda sees Bud. Impenetrable. He is covered, from the crown of his head, in shields. He can only "filter" experience through his eyes. His ears and his mouth are plugged; he can hear no one and no one can hear him. He’s always on guard, ready to do battle. Everyone threatens him. In his left hand, he holds another shield. In his right, a sword. Buddy’s main struggle in life is to learn to put his shield and his sword down. This is hard work. Each step he takes back from them, he feels more vulnerable.

Brenda and Buddy are evenly matched. Dangerous. Not easily hugged.

Bud-at-home

On April 15, 1996, I created Bud-at-home, who represents the how the traumatized student feels inside his/her body while being raped and/or tortured in his/her family home. He has no feet; no flight. He has no hands; no fight. Bud-at-home’s eyes and ears and mouth have been torn open by his assailant and they are swollen almost shut. Bud-at-home does not feel connected to any part of his body, including his limbs or his senses. Beaten senseless. He hears the bones in his neck crunch. He hears his skull crunch. He hears his nose, his ribs, his arms and legs. Crunch crunch crunch crunch. He is being mangled, broken and torn open. He bleeds from the inside, outside, top and bottom, front, back and sides. He is being excoriated. He becomes a sieve; neither the thin net that was his skin nor his bones hold him together. He is more than transparent now, you can put your fingers into the gashes in one side of his body, go through, and out the other side. "The message...is in the material and in the technique—in the cuts, the tears, the ruptures..."(Parra, cited in Christ, 1981, 5). Bud-at-home is dying. His name makes him the
hardest for me to present; I have not yet learned to make myself "at home." Each time I present these Popbottle People, I heal a little.

The struggle between the multiplicity of internal voices and the monolithic voice of external authority breeds trauma....Yet while trauma may be so severe that victims might require someone other than themselves to speak, recovery depends upon victims speaking for themselves.

(Stiles, 1993, 116)

Baseball Bud

On April 22-23, 1996, I created Baseball Bud who represents the traumatized student as healthy as he can be. He is in motion, running to catch a baseball. Balanced. Focused. His whole body is complete. He is celebrating life, celebrating having a body that still works, by playing catch.

Hector

I created Hector May 10-12, 1996. Hector is Baseball Bud's untraumatized friend. He too plays with his whole body. They play catch together in the field. The baseball is represented by the pingpong ball in Baseball Bud's left hand. He has just made a running catch.

Hector raises his arm and bends his right leg, in a little celebratory jig.

"Great catch!" he shouts.

Between Baseball Bud and Hector, is the Bud-Hector, the space where their friendship meets, and overlaps. The space where their individual Playing Selves mesh into each other. You might call this the Spirit of the game. Community.

Baseball Bud holds all these other Popbottle People within him. They are only some of his different selves that he has integrated. These clear Popbottle People, while being physically both easy to see and hard to see, help me bring the lessons of trauma that I have learned, out into the
Where such continuous peril exists, trauma is constant. The task is to undermine its invisibility. For its concealed conditions, its silences, are the spaces in which the destructions of trauma multiply.

(Stiles, 1993, 98)


Transparent Man, who is seen through, foolish, who has nothing left to hide, who has become transparent through self-acceptance; his soul is loved, wholly revealed, wholly existential; he is just what he is, freed from paranoid concealment, from the knowledge of his secrets and his secret knowledge; his transparency serves as a prism for the world and the not-world. For it is impossible reflectively to know thyself; only the last reflection of an obituary may tell the truth, and only [Great Spirit] knows our real names.

(Hillman, cited in Moore, 1992, 261)

My healing process consists of my moving through a series of events. These events precipitate the possibility of further life-enhancing developments (Dewey, 1938, 35). Healing is proactive and reactive. Paradoxically, both modes operate simultaneously. The proactive mode involves employing strategies that prohibit or inhibit the threat of disease, thus eliminating the need for corrective measures. Conversely, the reactive mode surrenders itself to life's inevitable consequences that require fixing.

We learn from experience, consciously or otherwise, how to internally translate fear into sensate pain. Memory, the wiring of the bodymind, limits the perception of the wholeness and, therefore, the wholesomeness of new experience. Within the circuitry of memory, the list or container of stored images and sensations may not be recorded accurately or chronologically, yet their echoes and their meanings are reflected, indeed lived, in the moment. Through healing,
rewiring the bodymind, we learn to look at our selves consciously, and ask our selves: "How is it easier to remember and hold onto the negative, rather than the positive? How do we choose thus, in this moment, to injure our selves and how will this injury manifest itself?" We must learn to respect our fuses—limits of capacity and endurance—that we share with the rest of humanity. Pain and illness, while separating us from the busyness of our former selves and our friends, also connects us to different aspects of our selves-in-transition, while offering us the opportunity to allow others to help us. My own quest for healing has led me directly to this inquiry. I simultaneously bring my Popbottle People home, Gentle Reader, while setting them free.

Transforming visual representations into textual analysis may increase insight into, and compassion for, suffering, empathy which is the first and necessary stage for reform.

(Stiles, 1993, 99)

Pain and illness are great teachers, asking us to learn humility and compassion for our selves and others who suffer. They ask us to learn patience, courage, and thankfulness for the gift of our lives, however meagre, for only through acceptance of our selves is inner change possible.

...Serious illness can be redemptive if it opens the sluices of vital memory, sharpens the focus, transforms the improbable into the possible, and imparts a quality of high art to the gift of time.

(Cousins, 1983, 192)

Pain, illness, fear, and death, therefore, are to be honoured, rather than feared. How do we sort through the messages of the culture of fear and suffering we live in, and learn to accept individual responsibility for our freedom? Memory is like a cage for the circus bear; healing is like the door on that cage opening. Where memory traps us, healing is freedom to help others.

...look for ways to bring yourself into a more centred whole, and concomitantly, bring yourself into harmony with all those who make up Human Being....We
can stop thinking of how everything affects only ourselves. Instead, we can shift the perspective to serving others.

(Dyer, 1989, 227)

We exist as the bear and the cage with the door. When we realize that memory consists of what is rather than what was, we empower ourselves. We gain the freedom to choose the safety of our cage, or risk a challenging life. We cannot escape our need to be free.

...meditation...the process of transcending, or "going beyond," detaches the mind from its fixed level and allows it to exist, if only for a moment, without any level at all...it has acquired a little freedom to move.

(Chopra, 1990, 192)

The imaginative healing of our present memory moment then, leads us forward to our next and healthier memory moment. The path of healing may be to clearly picture our future before we get there, like the brave Frankl as a prisoner of war,

...play out in your mind first exactly how you want things to go for you. Pay great and exacting attention to those images. They will be the source of what is to be played out in your physical body, and will determine either the suffering or the blissful condition of your body.

(Dyer, 1993, 167)

The path may lead us to reconstruct where we have been—our past.

In authoring one's own life, autobiographers challenge the irrevocability of the past. In effect, they reach back across time and say those things that remained unsaid, transform failure into success, and make achievements of humiliations.

(Franzosa, 1992, 408)

We may choose both paths. One thing is certain; we ignore the wisdom of the ages at our peril when we try to separate our bodymind into body or mind. For we think with more than our minds, and we feel with more than our bodies, and we die when they are separated. "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he..." (Proverbs 23:7).

When we learn to yield to the healing process rather than try to control it, "we do not
choose images so much as we are chosen by them" (Allen, 1995, 73). My Popbottle People need a place to live. They plan to take me with them when they travel.

People-Mover Motorhome

In December 1996, I commissioned Marie, a local artist, to paint my Peoplemover motorhome. I picked it up on January 14, 1997. The licence plate: ON TOUR.

Begin to act in your physical world as if that person whom you would love to be were already here. Even if you have convinced yourself that you have been afraid of crowds all of your life, or that you are a sickly person....Yes, I said fake it!....Act that part that you want to play. The acting is the physical world. The want is the inner voice.

(Dyer, 1993, 253)

After I complete this inquiry, I hope to travel with my Popbottle People, using my Lecturing Voice. I am afraid, yes I am, but here I come.
CHAPTER 8

ARTFUL DIALOGUES

CONVERSATIONS WITH ANCESTORS AND CREATURES

My first day of classes at OISE/UT was September 12, 1995. Professor Diamond's classroom seemed rather crowded to me. The following morning I called Professor Olson.

Matthew: Is it appropriate to tell my teachers at OISE/UT that I need more space in the classroom, that I need to learn how to be a student with others?
Margaret: Yes. Do you have an advisor?
Matthew: Pat Diamond.
Margaret: Go talk with Pat first. Let me know how it goes.
(Diary, September 11-12, 1995)

The next day, I dropped by Professor Diamond's office.

Matthew: I'm sorry but I'm really nervous in class I need lots of elbow room I feel trapped I'm trying to learn how to learn can I sit by the door? can we leave the door open? I talk too much because I'm afraid when the teacher asks a question I speak up trying to protect everybody this is hard work to say this right now I feel like I'm going to cry it's so hard sorry.
Pat: No problem, Matthew. Sit where you feel safe. Watch and listen how the other students do it. Don't be responsible for the class. Relax. Breathe. Perhaps you could write a letter to Little Matthew, telling him that he's safe now, that you're taking good care of him.
(Diary, September 12, 1995)

"Letter." One word. Resonance. Playing to lose had been published only four months.

In many ways, that book was a letter to my dead father. He was never late in his life—he missed it altogether—I see no reason why I should refer to him as "late" now. I addressed him directly (Stewart, 1995, 104, 106, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 117, 120, 122, 125, 149, 150, 151).

Five years earlier I had taken my unsent letter—a poem—to my mother (above) to my therapist-teacher Dr. Wehrspann.
To make progress in education, it is essential to establish a dialogue with significant others from the past and present—a dialogue in the literal sense....In this way you become in a very real sense the child's advocate....At last we will be able to see conflicts through....As children we were either unable to conduct such dialogue or never learned how....Thus it is crucial that we relearn and practice such dialogues....leading to self-enhancing behavior....carried out viva voce—in other words, in actual speech—for this allows us to constantly reexamine the interaction taking place within our system.

(Stettbacher, 1991, 54-56)

In many of my poems already written, such as the poemletter to Abraham (above) I had invoked the name, therefore, the presence, of whom I addressed. One of my healing teachers, the poet e.e. cummings, also invoked powerful presences into his prayerpoemletters. Are not the written prayers of Job, Daniel, David, Samson, and Jonah, invocations and letters to Great Spirit? The biblical new testament consists mainly of letters, many parts of which I had to memorize as a boy in order to survive: epistles from the apostle Paul, whose name was changed, from Saul, after his conversion (Acts 13:9).

And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto a high priest....And as he journeyed...suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?...And Saul was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink....And Ananias went his way...and putting his hands upon him...there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith....And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues....

(Acts 9:1-20)

Saul went into darkness, like Jonah in the belly of the fish, for three days. He became fishlike with "scales." Then he emerged from darkness transformed, symbolized by his new name, Paul.

"Letter." One word. I cannot say no to Professor Diamond; I live this word. I write.

Thank you Professor Diamond for the gift of your compassionate listening, for helping me find the word "letter" again in myself. "In the beginning was the Word" (John 1:1).
Matthew: Could I submit a letter as part of my essay for this course, Pat, showing how I've grown here?
Pat: Yes, Matthew.

(Diary, November 6, 1995)

So began my series of letters to my OISE/UT teachers (see chapter 9). Through dialogue with my teachers, via letters, I have allowed myself to open up. Through these letters I have been able to voice my experience of growing and learning in the classroom by reflecting how the day-to-day lessons help me heal from my trauma. This is an empowering exercise. Letters to my teachers help me record my voice, and gives them the opportunity to record theirs. We are connected, therefore, through conversation. Their comments reflect back to me that indeed I have learned something. What I have learned is valuable to me; it is valuable to them. I read their comments over and over, until I feel something move inside my body—a little chunk of fear inside my gut breaks away. Slowly, I come to feel that I'm not faking my way through these courses, that I'm not stupid. When I know I am being heard, I breathe easier; I learn I do not have to try so hard, so often, to be heard. I feel respected. I feel more like a human being, less like an alien in class. I feel happy. This inquiry, Gentle Reader, is my letter to you.

Letter to little Matthew

September 14, 1995

Oh Matthew,

You are alive. Oh yes. You are alive. You are hearing me now from the other side, little Matthew, the other side of yourself, where you are going.

Every time the pain is too great, and you stop breathing, and drift into this deathdarkness, I shall be with you. Rest. I shall breathe for you.
I shall be your very own rainbow. I shall bathe you gently in every softwarm colour of life. Rest. You shall hear me sing blue and green, mauve and yellow, and be comforted.

You shall not die, little Matthew. Oh no. For in your chest lives heart of Bear. And in your heart lives Spirit of Bear. These are my gifts to you. Rest. I hear your heart, yes I do, I hear it breaking. Your heart must break, little Matthew, because that is the only way it will open. Every time you drift into this deathdarkness, I shall gather your Spirit home to my bosom, I shall keep the drumbeat of your heart for you. Rest.

Every time he breaks your bones, I shall sew them while you rest here. I shall sew them with threads of summer starlight.

He cannot break your Bear Spirit. Oh no. You shall in all ways grow. And come the dawn, Little Bear, when you are strong enough to breathe again, I shall carry your Spirit back to you on the dauntless shoulders of my breath. Rest.


I am Grizzly. I breathe in beauty from song of Bluejay, flight of Heron, and vision of Eagle. I breathe flash of upriver Salmon, bending of Bluespruce in storm, and leap of Whitetaildeer. I breathe Porcupine on hillside, Honeybee in lilac, Turtle on log. I breathe them as they breathe me. Rest. You shall learn, Little Bear, to breathe deeply.

Oh Little Bear, I breathe the laughtertears of your son and daughter in firelight. I breathe youthem freshbread, garden salad, roast turkey, pumpkin pie. Milk by the gallon. I breathe youthem swim lake, dance music, and playbook. I breathe youthem sailboat, canoe, houseboat, and wormhook fish. I breathe your children for you now. They are waiting for you to grow to breathe
Woman to breathe them into Life. They trust your broken heart to let them in. You shall learn how to be a safe place for them.

I breathe your poems and stories. Rest. You shall be heard. Your truth shall bring honour to your new name.

You are alive, Little Bear. I give thanks for your life. You shall learn to give thanks, and in your thanksgiving, you shall find justice. Rest.

Amen and blessed be.

Big Matthew (Stewart)

Letter From Grand-dad Algernon: My father's father

September 25, 1995

Dear Matthew,

I am more than a thought in your head. I am a presence in your life. Although I died before you were born, your body knows me.

Say the word "Grand-daddy," Matthew. Whoa! Slow down, breathe when you speak. Try it again, rolling the r, and sounding the a's like ah. "Grrrahnd-dahddy." That's me. That's how I used to say it when I was a lad in Edinburgh.

My son strove to make things look perfect. Such a man cannot be a daddy. Only a brute. I am ashamed to call him my son. I call him that only so you know who I mean. When I was an old man, and lived not two miles from him, near the lake, he visited me two or three times a week to show all the neighbours what a good son he was.

You must not blame me for the choices he made.

I strove to make things perfectly. I built a small barn for Roy, my horse. I saw to it that
every beam, every plank, and every board fit together perfectly. Not one nail did I waste. I built it for Roy as a refuge from the bitter winter winds. I built it as a refuge for myself from Emily's rage. She simply wanted to be young, and with each birthday she became more desperate. When I'd tell Roy all about it, and he'd kick the wall of his stall for me, well, that felt more satisfying than swearing.

On Thanksgiving Day, I replaced all the screens in my new barn with windows. I made them myself. They fit perfectly. I set Roy's blanket on the seat of my cutter. I leaned my forehead against his strong neck, listening, as he munched the third of our best apples from my hand. Even the latch on my barn door, which I made, clicked perfectly.

In the morning, I found Roy dead. I had built my new barn perfectly airtight, and he died for want of a little fresh air. I walked most everyplace after that, and I began to see beauty in things that I had judged imperfect, therefore, unworthy.

Was I not walking about, after all, at the end of my day, in perfectly smelly socks? Was I not, at the end of my week, perfectly in need of a bath?

To mark the change in me, I changed the way I signed my name—I began to add a serif to the first letter of my last name. Your body knows me, Matthew. Your body trusts me. That's why you seek the last letter I wrote to my son, that's why you love the little serif in the first letter of your last name today, that's why you chose that particular typeface for your letterhead. I have guided you to learn to paint letters on paper with fountain pen, as I did, to help you slow down.

You brought me honour when you brought your son, my greatgrandson, to visit my grave. You bring me honour by sharing him with me. I shall not fail to protect your honourable son from my dishonourable son. Death brings truth to life, and makes us equals.
Fear not. You shall not hurt me nor dishonour me by changing your name. Our surname is not mine, was never mine. I only borrowed it for a while. When it no longer serves you, move on. Your son needs to find his own name too.

Write on the walls, Matthew.

Write in your textbooks, and in your Bible.

Write in the mist on the bathroom mirror. On the back door of dirty trucks. Write with pee in the snow. Write with your finger on the beach. Write your dying friend's name in the air with a burning stick.

And when you write your poems and stories and essays, I'll be right here, suggesting you say it wrong to say it right, suggesting you use too many commas, to help you breathe.

Truly yours,

Grand-dad Algernon

I wrote this healing letter before I received the letter to Algernon from his father, in the package bearing both their signatures.

**Letter from Gramma Win: My mother's mother**

October 11, 1995

Dear Matthew,

I know you miss me most at Thanksgiving, that's why I'm here. I'm your Gramma Win, Matthew, and I'm here to remind you that I only died, I did not leave you alone. So you don't have to miss me anymore.

I need to tell you a little bit about justice. I refer to person x, who is not quite dead yet. She does not deserve to be called my daughter, or your mother. Shame on her.

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Her I left alone. Anna my daughter, told me at the hospital that she called x, and she was on the plane coming to see me. I could have waited a few more hours to die, Matthew. But I was not sure that I'd be strong enough to hold my tongue. I feared, in truth, I might curse x. Shame on her.

Oh, how I yearned to look into the eyes of my beloved man just one more pink morning.

Your Grampa William and I walked through our midnight orchard for over fifty years, Matthew. Nothing pleased me more than pressing him against the trunk of our appletree with my lips in a thunderstorm. Ah, I'd take hold of his wrists, and bear down, trapping his hands in his pockets, and I'd kiss him till he'd breathe. Oh, when that man breathed, I'd hear his breath surging up from deep in the earth, up through the roots of our appletree, into our trunk, our branches, our leaves, and I'd hear it plunge down into the earth and surge up again.

He may have said no to me once or twice, now that I think on it, but I couldn't quite hear him.

He used to say we could be struck by lightning. That was before he figured out I was his lightning. Striking him up.

Amid the sound of the rain drumdrumming our apples at Harvesttime, we drenched each other. Ah, I danced upon that man like a Willow in the wind. For your Grampa William loved me. And I knew by the smell of the joy in our apples I was pregnant again.

The Thanksgiving Day when you were but seven years old, your Grampa William and I walked about in our orchard the whole day and night. That was the first we had heard how x knowingly allowed her children to suffer. Shame. We were already very old, Matthew, and almost worn out. Nevertheless, that day, we wore no warm clothing. No socks, nor shoes. We
neither ate nor drank. We used not our walkingsticks. We sidestepped not the mud. We fell often. We did not relieve ourselves. In so doing, Matthew, we aligned our Spirits with you children and we suffered beside you. Through our suffering, we came to a deep respect for your fortitude.

We prayed for each of you. We gave thanks that your lives had been spared, and we asked for guidance.

We decided to fight.

With great sadness, we struck the name of x, my cherished firstborn, and your Grampa William's dearest, from our wills. Revenge? No. Justice. For by what right did she bring forth so many children, and refuse to honour and nurture them? By what right did she hide the truth from us, we who honoured and nurtured her? By what right did she prevent us from honouring and nurturing our grandchildren? Shame. By what right did she prevent our grandchildren from honouring and nurturing us? By what right did she devote herself to that shark instead of running him through for attacking our grandchildren? Shame I say, shame.

We never failed to insist that she bring you children over to visit. Surely you recall the shields Grampa William made for you to use during snowball fights. From the window, Matthew, as I made hot chocolate, I watched you try to gather a pile of snowballs together from behind your shield, but you could not deflect all the incoming ones. When you took a direct hit in the ear, you stood still and cried, and they pelted you more. Then you threw your shield aside, whooped your warcry, and charged your bigger brothers, dipping and scooping and blasting away. I hung your shield proudly in the barn after you left.

When the weather turned bitter, whenever we could arrange it, all of you helped your
Grampa William in his workshop. Surely you recall how he made you your very own baseball bat. You took it home.

He often said that a housewindow is the best reason to play ball, and he replaced almost every pane of glass in our place cheerfully when he pitched for our children. He kept score, and at the end of each season, whoever had broken the most windows won a new handmade bat. Only a few things in life are worth coveting, Matthew, and that prize was one of them.

Your Grampa William would come home from work, when we were fighting, and he'd stand outside the door and toss his hat into my kitchen. Whenever I tossed it back, he'd go to his shop and work on that bat, while I kept his dinner warm. Fair ball.

Sometimes, love is impossible, so love is forgivable. Injustice is unforgivable because justice is always possible.

I have served Justice; I played fair ball with you as I drew my dying breath.

Truly yours,

Gramma Win

These letters enable me to establish a link, a healing dialogue with my interior Little Matthew, Grand-dad Algernon, and Gramma Win selves. Their voices ground me, and expand the circle of my family; I feel loved by them. I am strawberried; I am rosed. These letters, Gentle Reader, swim in the vast sea of letters that have never travelled through the post. Here they surface. They connect me with anyone who has ever written a letter and not posted it. They connect me with anyone who loves their ancestors or wishes they did. They connect me to anyone who hopes to create a sense of belonging in the world for themselves. A history. A healing history. For "...there are no events anywhere in the universe which are not tied to every
other event in the universe" (Bronowski, 1978, 58). These letters bear witness to our conversations, to the exchange of ancestral voices, human and otherwise, that transcend time and space. They are as sacred as the roarings between Grizzly and me during my meditation (below).

Like Santiago, I feel related to animals and fish.

Then he was sorry for the great fish that had nothing to eat and his determination to kill him never relaxed in his sorrow for him....It is enough to live on the sea and kill our true brothers.

(Hemingway, 1995/1952, 75)

Santiago talks to the marlin (Hemingway, 1995/1952, 42, 52, 54, 61, 64, 66, 74, 88, 92, 110, 115). He talks to a bird (54). He talks to sharks (108, 109, 114). Nick Adams talks to the fish (Hemingway, 1973, 94). None of them talk back, like the ass in the bible.

A Talking Animal in Scripture

And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab. And [Great Spirit's] anger was kindled because he went; and the angel of the Lord stood in the way for an adversary against him. Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants were with him. And the ass saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field: and Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into the way. But the angel of the Lord stood....where was no way to turn either to the right or to the left. And when the ass saw the angel of the Lord, she fell down under Balaam: and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with a staff. And the Lord opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times? And Balaam said unto the ass, Because thou hast mocked me: I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee. And the ass said unto Balaam, Am I not thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? was I ever wont to do so unto thee? And he said, Nay. Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way....

(Numbers 22:21-31)

Does the narrator of this story expect his/her readers to believe that an ass literally talked using human language, or are we to discern that Balaam confronts his own assself (this is the first time I
have joined 3 s's in one word) and angelself on his journey of transformation? See illustration
page 279. Biblical scholars locate the tale on their maps:

...when king Balak felt the need of a particularly potent spell to defeat his Israelite
kinsmen, he applied to the seer Balaam, the son of Beor, who lived at Pethor at the
confluence of the Sajur and the Euphrates rivers, twelve miles south of
Carchemish. Despite the length of the journey (twenty days by donkey), Balak
thought it would be well worth his while to wait to have the Israelites cursed by
the powerful incantations of so famous and feared a magician.
(Avi-Yonah & Kraeling, 1962, 64-65)

Other researchers overlay biblestories on other maps of human development (see also Eisler,
1988; Greenslade, 1963; Friedman, 1987). The more I learn about the history of the bible, the
more thankful I am for the depth that its stories bring to my life. I have no need to go to church.
This sacred space in which I write, like a grassy field, like the dock in the lake near my front door,
like my kitchen table, like my bed, like my shower, is my church. Thank you, Great Spirit, for the
opportunity to do this inquiry. For this pain, through which I have learned to love Life, thank
you.

...all illness is stereophonic. It plays out at the level of actual body tissues and also
at the level of dream. All illness is meaningful, although its meaning may never be translatable into entirely rational terms. The point is not to understand the cause
of the disease and then solve the problem, but to get close enough to the disease to
restore the particular religious connection with life at which it hints. We need to
feel the teeth of the god within the illness in order to be cured by the disease. In a
very real sense, we do not cure diseases, they cure us, by restoring our religious
participation in life.
(Moore, 1994, 168)

For storytellers and healing stories, thank you. For all those people who lived before me that
helped bring healing stories to me, that I might breathe life into them again, thank you. For the
biblestories with the ass that talked and the great fish that swallowed Jonah, thank you. For asses
and great fish, thank you.
Conversation with Great Fish: Matthew and Rage

In this conversation, the Great Fish comes to devour me against my will as my father overpowers me, shutting out light and hope. I lose all sense of time, space, and direction in the darkness of the trunk of the car. I cannot hold onto anything to prevent myself from being tossed about and hurt. I become bodily lost in the overpowering smells of oilrags and gascans, the incessant vibration, and roadnoise. I come to know darkness as blackliquid. Summers are hot and winters are cold here. I am dazed, too dizzy to stand, and blinded by light whenever the trunk is opened in daylight. I crawl out onto the ground. Laughter. As soon as I can walk, I scrub the trunk to clean up my vomit. The smell of bleach takes three days to leave my sinuses. I cannot fight my father; I fight the Great Fish.

Dad drove a 1949 Packard. It was black; I was afraid of it. My tears jumped off my face and slid down the shiny bumper. Dad stuffed me into the trunk to teach me to not be afraid.

(Stewart, 1995, 6)

Matthew: Oh no!

Whale: Oh yes.

Matthew: Please no! Don't eat me! No, please! Don't swallow me down! Don't lock me in!

Please please please! Let me out! LET ME OUT!

Whale: I must devour you.

Matthew: NO! I am holding onto your teeth; I want to see the sun!

Whale: You're a worm on my tongue and you dare fight me? Enjoy the view from behind my teeth. There. Now I will smile for you. Aren't I kind? Enjoy the sunset, boy, as I close my lips.
He closed it on me. Every time we went out.

(Stewart, 1995, 6)

Matthew: Please no! NO!

Whale: Down you go.

Matthew: NO! I won't let go of your teeth!

Whale: You've got a good grip, for a worm. Nobody else can hear you now. And I don't want to. I'll shake you loose. I think I'll hum myself a tune this trip. Hmm. Let me think.

Matthew: I recognize your voice.

Whale: No doubt. I'm Rage, boy.

To Barrie: fourteen miles.

(Stewart, 1995, 6).

Rage: How about a tune you like? How about "Mary had a little lamb" while I dive and roll over?

Matthew: Please, no. Please, please--

Rage: Mmmmm-hmm hm hm hm-hm-hm, hm-hm-hm--

Matthew: I can't hold on! I can't!

Rage: Down you go.

Matthew: I'm going down. I'm curling up into a ball a soccer ball no harder a softball no harder a hardball yes to protect myself from being squished when I'm swallowed. I'm holding onto myself I'm holding myself together.

Rage: Down you go.
Matthew: I'm bouncing down, bouncing off the walls of your—oh! oh! my head! my shoulder!

I've hit something hard in here.

Rage: Ah-ha! You found the carjack and the tire iron did you? I swallowed those a few days ago.

Matthew: Where are you going?

Rage: Wherever I like.

Matthew: I'm lost. I know you're turning because I'm getting tossed around here in your stomach, but I can't tell which way you're turning. I can't tell how long I've been in here. How long?

Rage: Miles, boy. Many miles.

Matthew: How long will I be in here?

Rage: Countless miles.

To Toronto: fifty-two miles.

(Stewart, 1995, 6)

Matthew: I've got a carjack and a tire iron. Hmm. I'll bang myself a tune this trip. Hmm. Let me think.

Rage: How dare you!

Matthew: How about a tune you like? First the chorus:

BANG BANG-BANG BANG-BANG BANG-BANG,

BANG-BANG BANG BANG-BANG BANG,

BANG-BANG BANG BANG-BANG BANG,

BANG BANG BANG BANG, BANG BANG BANG BANG,
BANG BANG BANG BANG-BANG BANG,
BANG-BANG, BANG-BANG, BANGBANG, BANGBANG, BANGBANG,
BANG BANG BANG BANG-BANG BANG.

I know the words too. I'll sing them for you:

Three sailors went a sailing,
Across the briny sea,
Across the briny sea,
And one was nine, and one was five,
And one was only three,
Yo-ho! Yo-ho! Yo-ho, yo-ho, yo-ho!
And one was only three.
At first they caught a minnow,
And put it in a pail,
And put it in a pail,
And then they caught a lobster,
And then they caught a whale,
Yo-ho! Yo-ho! Yo-ho, yo-ho, yo-ho!
And then they caught a whale!

(Davis, cited in Brooks, 1982, 133)

And now more chorus:

BANG BANG-BANG BANG-BANG BANG-BANG,
BANG-BANG BANG BANG-BANG BANG,
BANG-BANG BANG BANG-BANG BANG,
BANG BANG BANG BANG, BANG BANG BANG BANG,
BANG BANG BANG BANG-BANG BANG,
BANG-BANG, BANG-BANG, BANGBANG, BANGBANG, BANGBANG.
BANG BANG BANG BANG-BANG BANG.

Rage: Now just a minute, boy—
Matthew: —No! You just a minute! I'm taking apart this carjack. I've got the sharp piece of carjack that gashed my head, and the sharp end of this tire iron that gashed my shoulder and I'm going bang my tune on the walls of your bowels as I pass through you! I couldn't escape your teeth; you're not going to escape mine!

    stab stab-stab stab-stab stab-stab,
    stab-stab stab stab-stab stab,
    stab-stab stab stab-stab stab,
    stab stab stab stab stab stab stab,
    stab stab stab stab stab stab stab,
    stab stab stab stab stab stab stab,
    stab stab stab stab stab stab stab,
    stab stab stab stab stab stab stab,

    stab stab stab stab stab stab stab stab stab stab stab stab stab stab stab stab stab stab stab stab stab stab stab stab stab.

Rage: BOY! STOP!

Matthew: My name isn't "boy"!

    stab stab stab

Rage: Hohhh!

Matthew: I've got a name! My name is Matthew!

    stab stab

Rage: Hohhh that hurts!

Matthew: You want to talk to me, you call me my name!

    stab

Rage: Hah-ahhh! Matthew, please stop.

Matthew: Why?
Rage: This trip is over for you. At this moment, my tail is on the beach. The sun is shining.

This is the time of high tide. I am releasing you.

Matthew: I don't believe you.

Every time we came to dad's house.

(Stewart, 1995, 6)

Rage: If I do not release you, you will kill me. You have given me cramps in my gut; I can hold you in no longer. You are a brave boy, made of indigestible fibre.

Matthew: I'll leave my tools here in case I need them again.

Rage: No doubt. Ready?

Matthew: I am a hardball. Ready.

I never learned.

(Stewart, 1995, 6)

Rage: Are you alive, Matthew?

Matthew: Yes. Thank you for letting me out.

Rage: I didn't let you out. You cleaned out my pipes. You broke out.

Matthew: What a beautiful sunny day!

Rage: Breathe it in, Matthew. I'll be back for you in a few hours. And then again and again.

In the above healing conversation my voice changes from victim to survivor to warrior.

The Great Fish surrenders. In the following healing conversation, I accept my fate.
Conversation with Great Fish: Matthew and Annihilation

...he holds the strap like this and stretches it behind his head and how he brings both arms down, aiming, like this and lets go with his left hand and how his right hand keeps swinging down like this and how when the strap hits my chest first it pushes me down into the mattress and how when dad's hand is lower than the mattress both ends of the strap lick my sides and bounce me up a little...
(Stewart, 1995, 142)

Matthew: Whale, please come.

Whale: I am here, Matthew. Your father called me already.

Matthew: I recognize your voice; I know your name--Annihilation.

Annihilation: Yes. This is a licking. Me licking you.

Matthew: Please swallow me down. Your tongue burns my skin like fire, covering me with stripes.

Annihilation: Not yet.

Matthew: Please swallow me down. The hotsharp edges and the tip of your tongue are cutting me into strips.

Annihilation: I cannot swallow you whole, you know that.

Matthew: Please swallow down my hands and feet.

Annihilation: Mmmm.

Matthew: Swallow down please my nose and eyes and ears.

Annihilation: Mmmm.

Matthew: Down my shoulders.

Annihilation: Mmmm.

Matthew: Please my privates down.
Annihilation: Mmmm.

Matthew: My guts down please.

Annihilation: Mmmm.

Matthew: Down my heart.

Annihilation: Mmmm.

Matthew: Please my memory down.

Annihilation: Mmmm.

Matthew: My voice please down. Thank you.

Annihilation: Mmmm. You're all down.

Matthew: Oh no! The pieces of me in here aren't together! Oh no! How can I put myself back together?

Annihilation: Don't cry, Matthew. All your pieces are there. They're in motion, passing through me.

Matthew: Please don't let part of me go! I need all my pieces!

Annihilation: I'll hold it all in for as long as I can. Don't cry, Matthew. Use your energy wisely.

Collect yourself.

Matthew: I found my heart! Oh, it really hurts.

Annihilation: Keep your focus. You found it! Keep moving.

Matthew: I found my shoulders!

Annihilation: Good. Keep going.

Matthew: What's this? I can't tell. Where does it fit? Oh, it's my foot.

Annihilation: I can't hold it all in any longer, Matthew. I'm sorry. My tail is on the beach. This
is high tide. It's raining, and it's cold. I'm sorry. Out you go.

Matthew: This is a lot of muck to sort through to find myself!

Annihilation: Keep your focus on what you find, not on what you haven't found yet. Focus on how you're coming together. All your pieces are there. I must go.

Matthew: Must we keep doing this? Must my life always be this process of losing and finding the pieces of myself?

Annihilation: Yes, as long as you are brave enough to live.

Bravery has many voices. In the following healing conversation with the Great Fish, my trauma becomes an opportunity for laughter.

Conversation with Great Fish: Matthew and Ferdinand

I stripped in front of him in the shed. He held a three-foot piece of two-by-four with both hands. I was so afraid I...locked myself up like always.

"Touch your toes!" he bellowed.

(Stewart, 1995, 75)

Matthew: Whale, be near.

Whale: I'm here, Matthew. I hear.

Matthew: Have you come far, Ferdinand?

Ferdinand: Not far, Sir. Only from Greenland.

Matthew: Today is the day I'm beating my dad.

Ferdinand: It's your life and your death. He's quite mad.

Matthew: Open wide, Ferdinand Fish.

Ferdinand: Your command, Sir, is my wish.
I've got you buster, I thought. You're so mad, you want to explode. Go ahead. One day. One day. I touched my toes. Then I suddenly stood up straight, and turned and faced him and shook my finger in his face.

"One day!" I yelled.
"One day what! You! You threaten me!"
He cracked me on the head. My defiant thought shattered inside my skull. I tried to cover my head as I went down. Two-by four on my shoulders and back and bum and legs and feet and head and I couldn't feel or see or hear anything but blackness.

(Stewart, 1995, 75)

Matthew: Now, Ferdinand, down the hatch with me.
Ferdinand: Down you go in me, down I go into the sea.
Matthew: I just beat my father.
Ferdinand: You're growing; swallowing you whole keeps getting harder.
Matthew: Stop complaining.
Ferdinand: Right. Where are we heading?
Matthew: There's a beautiful beach in Barbados—
Ferdinand: —Where wonderful women wiggle their toes—
Matthew: —in the sparkling sand, sipping Scotch on the rocks—
Ferdinand: —reading perfectly plumb poems to penguins in socks—
Matthew: —Plum? Pardon me?
Ferdinand: Plumb, with a "b." Sorry Captain. I forgot for a moment you hate straight lines. I tried—
Matthew: —Don't try. You swim one length of your forgetful fishness, one flap of a fin, in a straightline, Ferdinand, and you're finished. Fried. Filleted. Fried.
Ferdinand: Yes Sir. Perfectly peachy poems to penguins in socks—

Matthew: —made from sweetsmelling, slippery, shinysmooth silk—

Ferdinand: —from weary worms with whiskers, white as milk,

Matthew: —who talk about trees in Tibet—

Ferdinand: —green gum trees, that don't grow there yet. Excuse me Captain, it's high tide.

Matthew: I've really enjoyed this wild ride.

Ferdinand: My tail's on the beach, Sir.

Matthew: How's the weather?


Matthew: Good night, Ferdinand. Thanks. I'll be calling you soon.

Gentle Reader, the above conversation witnesses my growth through this inquiry.

Whether or not I "pass" the oral defence of this thesis, right here, right now, I "pass" myself. For I have "passed through" traumatizing terror with humour in my heart. I have the tale by the whale. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil..." (Psalms 23:4). I do not have to learn this all over again. When I forget, I shall find ways to remind myself. I shall sit quietly with my Eagle feather. I shall listen to music.

Truckmusic--Diary Entry

Today I met with Theresa. She analyzes my voice, plotting it on a musical chart, and makes a special musical cassette tape for me while I am hooked up to a pulse-oximeter. When I experience three particular bass notes combined, my pulse drops from 72 beats per minute to 62, while my use of oxygen rises from 94% to 98%. I can hear and feel various parts of my body resonate at the same frequency as the music. I like it. The octave is so low that it sounds like a big truck idling far away. I cannot reproduce the sound with my own voice. Once in a while, my
vocal chords utterly relax and I speak in the same deep bass tones with which I sing. "...the voice can only produce what the ear hears" (Tomatis, 1991, 53).

Sometimes I vibrate and I can hear the note inside me without the tape playing. My pain inside sounds like a page of musical notation for a symphony that has been cut up and all the notes, stacked on top of each other, and are being played all at once inside my body. The din is black in colour. Healing is being able to bend that stack of notes and stretch them out on the staffs, separated by light, so I can play them and hear the harmony they create. I particularly enjoy the sound and the sensation of my wrists and ankles humming. I am listening with my body; comforting myself. Learning how to feel safe.

It is not the psychic energy that turns to glowing cheeks, shining eyes, humming nerves through the body, and laughter, passion or tears, that is dangerous. It is the cold, frantic denial of emotion that causes horrible splits in the mind and leaks out into strange ideas, bodiless voices, and chill moonlit inner landscapes.

(Priestley, 1975, 129)

Although I have a disabled parking permit because of the intense pain in my legs, I love every fibre of my legs from my tendo Achilles to my Gluteus maximus. They are the instruments and guardians of my body motion. They are my source of lifting strength. I draw the pain in my wrists and ankles as clusters of broken glass, yet I am stubbornly "strong at the broken places" (Siegel, 1989, 223).

(Siegel, June 22, 1995)

Schooltrucks

When I was in a grade four class, we were all given a fresh slice of red clay tile about 5 inches square and three-quarters of an inch thick. All our tiles were going to be used in a school mural.

Using the sharp end of a small finishing nail, I drew the driver's side, the left sideview of a big 26-wheel tank-train going up the road from right to left, diagonally across the tile. The tractor—the pulling part of the truck—had ten wheels—two front ones for steering and eight "drive" wheels—four sets of duals (one set of "duals" is 2 tires together on one end of an axle) on tandem axles (a pair of axles close together). Mounted on the chassis of the tractor was a sliding fifth wheel—the part that looks like a big tongue that the kingpin on the underbelly of the trailer—it looks like a big tooth—slides into and gets locked in place for hauling. The reason the fifth wheel slides on the
chassis (this can only be done when the truck is stationary) is to move the weight so the front
wheels of the tractor bear more or less weight. Too much weight over the drive wheels, for
example, makes the front of the truck too light and dangerous to drive because the front wheels
slide when you turn, rather than grip the road. I drew two tank trailers. The first one, that
hooked up to the tractor, was a long tank, with tandem axles and duals—8 wheels. The second
trailer, a short "pup" tank trailer, had one axle front and rear with duals—8 wheels. I drew the
B/A logo on the sides of the trailers. B/A stood for British American, before the company
changed its name to Gulf Oil. But to me, B/A was two-thirds of BAD. I wanted to drive a tanker
truck like the one I drew. I wanted to load up my saddle tanks—matching fuel tanks that straddle
the chassis of the tractor below the cab—and both trailers right full of diesel fuel. My boss would
tell me where to deliver this load. But I would drive that tank-train as far away from home as that
much fuel would take me. Anytime the saddle tanks were near empty, I'd just refill them from the
tank trailers. I would sleep in the truck. Along the way, at rest stops, I would write my boss a
letter admitting I was B/A/D for stealing his truck and his fuel, but I really had to get away from
home. He would understand. He would send somebody to bring back his truck. I would mail the
letter from Buenos Aires (B/A). Good Air. I would learn how to breathe.

I still go to the auto wreckers and sit inside the dying trucks and smell their breaths. The
spring-filled, cloth-covered seats and wood in the cab hold the smells. I picture the driver as
somebody's kind brother or grandpa.

Like the ill-placed junkyard, they may be an eyesore, and yet no one can deny their
fascination. Children love to play in an abandoned car...Ruins conjure up the past,
not only with a historian's reckoning of calendar time but in a haunting way
that makes the past immediate. Ruins place us chillingly and perhaps attractively in the world of ghosts, where the soul is as much at home as it is among the living.
(Moore, 1996, 86-87)

I build whole family stories of how they bought this truck and took their sweethearts out to the dance in it. I imagine what they hauled where and when for whom and how much and how they traded it for a newer model or an older model or a horse and buggy. All from the smell. My nose is crooked but I don't care about that. I'm glad my nose works at all.

"Did anybody ever hit you in the face?" asked Dr. Y in the Spring of 1992. He's an otolaryngologist. What a funny word. I had gone to see him about an ear infection.

I laughed.

"Dad, you didn't even know you still had a broken nose?" asked Wilton. "How could you forget your father breaking your nose? Didn't your face hurt? I'd know if somebody broke my nose! It must hurt a lot."

"Well, he broke many of my bones at the same time," I said. "Everything hurt. I had to focus on trying to stay alive, not isolate the pain in my nose. I didn't forget. He did it too often for me to forget. I've had other things to take care of first."

I agreed to let Dr. Y break my nose again on June 11, 1992, so I could breathe easier.
(Yes, it must hurt a lot.)

If I don't like the smell of a truck, I don't get in it. If I smell too much of what I don't like, I get a migraine and throw up. Even a good smell, if it's too strong, is no good for me.

My partner and our sons and daughters love all the friendly space in my truck. I keep the frisbee, the bat, baseball, home plate, and my glove in the cargo bay so we can play anytime.

Driving anywhere used to be a time of acute anxiety for me. I spent my whole trip
worrying about what I hadn't done and what I needed to do, and I drove fast "to make time." I
got less than my share of speeding tickets while endangering myself, my passengers, and others on
the road. It's taken me many years to allow myself to actually enjoy slower driving. Quite often
now I remember that these highways are really only wide paths through farmer's fields. Before
they were farmer's fields, Natives and birds and animals breathed and walked together here, and
their Spirits can't be buried under tons of concrete.

On my drives to OISE/UT, I wonder what all these trucks on the highway smell like
inside. Joe's dumptruck doesn't smell like Luigi's dumptruck. Ali's pickup smells different than
Gale's cement truck. Smell is signature, unique. The stories that I imagine of these truckpeople
paradoxically fill my trip while also shortening it.

Meditation
The difference between my prayers when I was afraid of Great Spirit, and my "Thank you"
meditation mantra today is this: Now I know I'm heard. My mantra makes a difference to me,
within me. I come to the classroom truly thankful for the gift of my life. I know it is a gift,
because I know from experience that I do not have the power to hold onto it. How easily it can
be taken from me. I have been denied breath; I tend to try to hold it in. It is difficult for me to
learn to trust, to learn that my next breath is waiting for me to enjoy. When I was gagged and
tortured, I learned how to stay alive with very little breath. I learned to inhale as little as possible,
for that act expanded my chest, making me a bigger target.

I close my eyes and say "Thank you" over and over, silently, to the Great Spirit, in my
Meditative Voice. My teeth feel like they open like flowers. I open my mouth and feel the wind
of my inhalation lift the pressure from inside my teeth. My exhalation carries that pressure outside
my mouth where it disappears. Breath like a gently flowing river.

As the personality perceives it, the world is structured into forms (thoughts, objects, people: anything is a form). And forms always tend to delimit, ultimately to imprison. The world of the Self, however, is experienced as formless—which is why contact with it can induce a sense of freedom and expansion beyond all limitation....It is not that forms disappear, but rather they lose their limiting aspect....

(Ferrucci, 1982, 135)

I learned to curl my shoulders in to protect my chest, and up to protect my neck. To breathe, to relax, was threatening to my physical survival. I had no time, no space to live.

Space is time. The greater the physical space between persons, the greater the opportunity to slow down the interaction. Driving on the 40l and being in class are similar inasmuch as space helps keep us all comfortable. The tighter the space, the more friction and heat we generate because we might bump into each other. As cardrivers, we all recognize and respect that big loaded trucks need more lane space as well as acceleration and braking space and time than cars. As truckdrivers, we take care to give cardrivers time to adjust to our space and time requirements. Downhill, we take care to respect the rights of slowpokes in cars and we use our four-way flashers to draw their attention to the fact that we are slowpokes going uphill. How can a teacher not allow each person in the classroom the freedom to choose and exercise his/her right to operate within their individual "comfort zone"?

My spiritbodymind taps into and utilizes intelligences and resources beyond explicit knowledge or conscious control to create a spacetime—a calmsafe interior Place hereonw. And for me, often, that Place was death. Through my "Thank you" meditation exercises, however, I've built new roads to that Place. The names of these new roads are Joy and Bodily Pleasure.

I close my eyes and say "Thank you" over and over, silently, to the Great Spirit, in my
Meditative Voice. My feet glow warmly from the inside, and the sensation spreads up my legs to just below the knees. Healing energy. My body is a source of quiet pleasure—my identity is no longer primarily connected to physical pain.

Meditation is a tool to use against pain, just as medication is. Being in pain is very counter-productive. It is a huge drain on your energy, and it takes away your ability to attend to anything else in life. Don't ignore your pain or try to tough it out. Instead, ask yourself, "How is my pain trying to help me?" Pain always has two components: the underlying physical condition, and the message it is trying to give you. Most of us are so afraid of pain and resist it so fiercely that allowing ourselves to come closer to it may actually lessen it.

(Simonton, 1992, 91-92)

In class I feel exposed and shaky whenever I speak. My words come through a filter of bodily pain, rather than flow, and they sound to me like take up too much space. I'm self-conscious. Everyone can see I'm struggling to find my balance. When others share their experiences, I see their vulnerability, and I feel myself connecting with them. I can feel their stories in my gut, and I am moved. I value highly this aspect of my healing. Until recently I believed basically that only those who had survived war intact (many do not) could ever understand me and my behaviour. My classmates have truckloads of stories. The more I am my Open Self, the less I bulldoze other's stories with my intensity, the more I heal.

I close my eyes and say "Thank you" over and over, silently, to the Great Spirit, in my Meditative Voice. My lower jaw feels like warm putty—I am letting go of and unloading my stubbornness.

As I learn to tell my stories and share my art with less intensity, people tell me how I have moved them, and thank me. Whole, wholesome circle.

I understand my journey inside the classroom as moving from self-consciousness to self-
awareness. Sometimes I participate so wholeheartedly that I forget my fears for a moment.

Everyone takes the same risk; everyone is equal.

I tend to measure my success in an endeavour by how well I handle the bodily stress I think I can or need to endure to accomplish my goal. I think in terms of "making mistakes" rather than "failure." Making mistakes is positive for me, inasmuch as I always give myself credit for trying. In the classroom, I find it difficult to learn that I will not be punished for my mistakes. Not being punished still feels like not being punished yet. I don't know how to let go of this fear.

At home alone, I do not allow my fear of punishment to silence the call of art; every poem, sculpture, short story, children's book, drawing, essay, or dream that I create is full of mistakes. Recovery, like revision, is the process of building on my mistakes. As I write this, I see that my real classroom challenge is that of trusting my Open Self to trust others. Many classmates thank me privately, saying the demonstration of my Popbottle People art was "powerful" for them.

Most people still think I'm too intense, and they're right. I tend to live my life as if I'm being driven--I always have things to accomplish. Yet the more I slow down, the more I actually get done.

Calmsafe interior place

Education and healing are synonymous for me. I need help creating a calmsafe classroom to which I can bring my calmsafe interior Place. I am obviously not ready to bring my calmsafe interior Place to the classroom (though I suspect that, when I can, that act will help create the very calmsafe classroom I seek). For me, the physical walls of the classroom are an extension of my skin--I am in the classroom as much as it is in me. All the people and furniture and windows and lights and books, and most importantly, the presence of Mystery, function to connect
Spiritbodymind. All these parts need timespace to breathe so they can work easily together. I can imagine my Open Self resonating in harmony within the classroom, when I am able to loosen the boundaries between classroom and self and allow them to merge or blend, like the boundaries of my hands during meditation.

I close my eyes and say "Thank you" over and over, silently, to the Great Spirit, in my Meditative Voice. I feel my hands, connected to my arms, until they blend. "Wrist" takes on a new lengthwise, rather than a crosswise meaning. The line inside where "every day I pressed the blade of my carving knife against my wrists" (Stewart, 1995, 134), for years, is fading away.

I want to learn that I don't need to be brave—where no fear exists, there is no need for bravery. I want to be fearless. But wait. Would I trade my (first mate) Starbuck-like self (Melville, 1851/1976) for a Stubb-like self? Could I, like second mate Stubb, willingly "hum [my] old rigadig tunes while flank and flank with the most exasperated monster...convert[ing] the jaws of death into an easy chair" (213)? If I lose my respect for Suffering and Death, how could I nurture my compassionate self?

Only through suffering do we learn to appreciate our world and make an effort to uncover the hidden causes of illness and pain. What else are wisdom and insight if not the result of gradual abandonment, at various levels, of the illusion of an individual self?

(Kalweit, 1988, 158)

How could I nurture others with my compassion? How could I let others nurture me? Without compassion, how could I hear the voices of my many selves? Without compassion, how could I hear the voices of the many spiritselves that swim about me in my natural world? How could they hear me?
In many tribal cultures nature herself plays an important role. During his initiation, the apprentice is often cut off from his fellow beings. He seeks the loneliness of the mountains, the forest, or the tundra, where he completely surrenders to the sacred powers of plants, animals and rocks. To live in complete harmony with nature, to learn its ways and become conscious of its greatness and power is an inherent characteristic of initiation. So we should not be surprised that a bear or other animal—rather than an abstract deity—acts as a bridge to higher consciousness....only when the apprentice becomes aware of his smallness and helplessness, when he becomes modest and humble, can his spirit blend with these tremendous forces.

(Kalweit, 1988, 101-102)

**Interlude: Three Meditations**

Alone, I am standing on a grassy hill, in the bush. Suddenly a huge male Grizzly bear, on his hind legs, stands before me, not ten feet away. He is roaring at me with all his might. I can see down his throat. His mouth is wide open and his saliva pours forth as he roars. I stand my ground. He does not advance. I am not afraid.

"What are you roaring at me for?" I yell.
He keeps roaring.
"What are you roaring at me for?" I yell again.
He keeps roaring.
I stare into his wide brown eyes and I hold his eyes fast with mine.
Suddenly I am behind Grizzly's eyes, looking out at Matthew standing in the long grass. I am roaring at Matthew, and Matthew is standing his ground. I keep roaring my loudest.

(Diary, November 18, 1994)

I am lying on my tummy, hiding in long grass in a shallow ditch.
A huge Eagle lands directly beside me on my left. I am terrified, yet I roll onto my right side to face Eagle.
His claws are as big as a man's hand. In one claw he holds a rough chunk of gold about the size of a large grapefruit. He raises this claw and smashes this chunk of gold through my chest wall directly into my heart.

(Diary, March 7, 1995)

I sit on the concrete steps to the front door of a house close to the street,
waiting for Grizzly.
   He comes walking down the street on all fours.
   I take my long piece of black chain, and loop it round his neck. We are
going to go for a long walk. The chain is for me to hold onto; Grizzly leads.
   (Diary, June 21, 1996)

I choose to nurture my Starbuck-like self, respecting all life, even though to live I take life.

Respecting my connection to all life, I choose to nurture my Santiago-like self:

   "Hail Mary full of Grace the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of [Great Spirit]
pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen." Then he added,
"Blessed Virgin, pray for the death of this fish. Wonderful though he is."
With his prayers said, and feeling much better, but suffering exactly as much, and
perhaps a little more, he leaned against the wood of the bow....
   (Hemingway, 1952/1995, 65)

A Prayer for my Father

My childself has been alone in a world without compassion; I would not wish this terror on any
living soul. Not even my father.

THE MISTREATED AND NEGLEcTED CHILD IS completely alone in the
darkness of confusion and fear. Surrounded by arrogance and hatred, robbed of its
rights and its speech, deceived in its love and its trust, disregarded, humiliated,
mocked in its pain, such a child is blind, lost, and pitilessly exposed to the power of
ignorant adults. It is without orientation and completely defenceless. Its whole
being would like to shout out its anger, give voice to its feeling of outrage, call for
help. But that is exactly what it may not do. All its normal reactions, the reactions
with which nature has endowed it to survive, remain blocked. If no witness comes
to its aid, these natural reactions would enlarge and prolong the child's suffering.
Ultimately, the child could die of them....Only by means of [educational] disclosure
that dispenses with bogus morality and pedagogy can this calamitous ideology be
stopped. Survivors of mistreatment need to discover their own truth if they are to
free themselves of its consequences. The effort spent on the work of forgiveness
leads them away from this truth.
   (emphasis added, Miller, 1991, 135-136)

Great Spirit, I pray for my father's transformation, that he may learn the joy of learning how to be
human. From this sacred place, with these words as my witness, I release my father's soul from
the curse of suffering which I set upon him in my rage. Great Spirit, bring him back to the light of life. Amen and blessed be. Let every Gentle Reader say "Amen and Blessed be."

I come to the classroom as a fellow traveller, sharing some parts of the road, and my selves. I must be still in this space and time to appreciate that I move through my journey as it moves through me.
CHAPTER 9

IMPLICATIONS: HEALING TEACHERS

[Great Spirit], sex, killing, loving, fear, hope, and hate must all be open to discussion...It is absurd to suppose that we are educating when we ignore those matters that lie at the very heart of human existence.

(Noddings, 1984, 183-184)

Arts-based, holistic storytelling curriculum creates space for students to voice the stories of their wounds. It recognizes that survivors' voicing of their stories is integral to their education-in-community. It enables and empowers survivors to create within themselves a healing listeningspace. Whatever form their stories take, they must be told, for the telling brings the teller to compassion for him/herself. Survivors of intrafamilial violence are experts in survival. The family home has been their classroom. Researchers and teachers who quantify survivors' lives in the school classroom and plot them on some convenient scale or plug them into little boxes on report cards gag and dehumanize the student as well as themselves. Survivors need space and time to learn and grow. They need freedom. Arts-based storying curriculum allows them freedom to explore their own Hoping Self (Mrazek 1987), Resilient Self (Mrazek 1987), Healing Self, Loved Self, and many others, as I have done in my graduate courses and this inquiry. They learn that education is healing. Teachers are friendly guides who can overcome their fear of being abused (Garanzini, 1995; Sullivan, 1997) by the survivor and his/her abuse story by recognizing the opportunity for their own growth-away-from-fear-to-trust, extending compassion to the suffering student. Storying teachers (Pearl, 1990; Sanders 1995; Press 1979; Schneider, 1987; Oates et. al. 1995; Craig, 1985, 1992) make valuable researchers. So do survivors.

Why would teachers want to connect with my stories and creatures on a personal and
practical level? Although the survivor decides the meaning of the violence for him/herself, others who hear the story may decide it means something else. Survival stories are both personal, and practical.

Personal knowledge...is constituted by the stories we usually keep to ourselves, and practical knowledge by the stories that are never, or rarely, related, but provide, nevertheless, the structure for the improvisations that we call coping, problem solving, action.

(Grumet, 1991, 70)

Through dialogue, both the survivor's meaning and the listener's meaning may change, as they share their different perspectives. The healing process involves the survivor gaining distance from the violent events, and opening to more perspectives.

Though stories are effective in depicting and evoking powerful feelings...antithetically, by providing a perspective outside the tangled flow of experience, stories are also therapeutic in the detachment they evoke.

(Narayan, 1991, 114)

The survivor's story has value to others who may or may not be working through similar stories. The value of the shared story is exactly in the sharing, the connecting with each other that is enabled through the exchange of their stories.

In both art and healing we transform pain and conflict into affirmations of life and states of well-being. Healing occurs in the telling of the story and hearing the response of another person.

(McNiff, 1981, 42)

Even the noblest of teachers/researchers, hear the survivor's violent story from the outside and can keep it there, safely out of their awareness. By choice. How can survivor-researchers and researchers without the experience of extreme intrafamilial violence dialogue unless we share with each other?
My Teacher Voice

As a graduate student, I view this world as a place that I co-create with every other life-form, animate or inanimate. I experience this world as perpetual world-in-transition as, I with others, create myself-in-transition. This world is the place to give thanks for and to nurture the gift of life itself. This world is the dangerous, beautiful place. The place to struggle valiantly for justice and peace. The place to learn safety amid chaos and war. The place to leave a legacy of hope and inspiration to future generations. The place to heal, and to help others heal. The place to learn to be more human, to learn love. A loving education.

As a boy, I needed a teacher to love me so I could learn how to love myself. A loveless education is hardly a gain at all. Sitting in hard school chairs is quite painful when the body is so tender. Furthermore, feeling constantly overwhelmed and afraid directly affects the kidneys, and I needed to run to the washroom every few minutes, but the teacher wouldn't let me. I had to hold it all in.

In school, I needed to learn how to see, to hear, to smell, to be a human being. I needed to learn that my violent world at home was escapable:

...it is the office of the school environment...to see to it that each individual gets an opportunity to escape from the limitations of the social group in which he was born, and to come into living contact with a broader environment.

(emphasis added, Dewey, 1966, 21)

I needed a loving role model. "One good role model is worth a thousand psychiatrists" (Lefevbre, November 18, 1996). I am trying to provide such a model to teachers and other survivors by pursuing this self-inquiry.

My parents' fear of exposure and criminal prosecution had them isolate and silence my
brothers and sisters and me. As I now quickly look at family photographs, I see that I always chose to stand aside—on my own. In my imposed silence, I became alienated from my own selves, my brothers and sisters, my classmates, and everybody else in the world. Healing is a lifetime project.

This culture of silence, generated by conditions of an oppressive reality, not only conditions behaviour patterns of peasants while they are living in the infrastructure that produces oppression but also continues to condition behaviour well after the infrastructure has been modified.

(Freire, 1985, 31)

I had to do/learn what was prescribed by the teachers, or go home and be beaten for not doing as I was told. They expected me to sit still and listen to them, often while I had broken ribs and nose. Even students from Dewey's (1943) "ideal home" (35) cannot be expected to learn this way.

Learning? certainly, but living primarily, and learning through and in relation to this living. When we take the life of the child centered and organized in this way, we do not find that he is first of all a listening being; quite the contrary.

(Dewey, 1943, 36)

Not one teacher knew so could not actively care about my health, safety, or well-being inside or outside of school. Not one person in the world among the many who knew that I was being tortured ever tried to protect me. Julius Rath, my brother-in-law, could not then be my rescuer.

Matthew: Did you know about the violence that happened in our house when I was a boy?
Julius: Oh yeah, I heard many of them, oh yes. I haven't seen, I wasn't present to witness it, but I heard many of them—not just you boys, the girls--two by four's and punch 'em out and so on...I knew there was a very rough rough old monster in the house who did all these things to kids.
Matthew: I remember you used to bring big trays of pork chops to our house--
Julius: --Yes, yes. But I stopped doing that...I says [to my ex-wife] "We're not going to bring food into this house and the old guy eats the meat and throw the bone to the kids, to lick."
Matthew: Do you know he really did exactly that?
Julius: Of course...I saw it myself!
(Rath. Audiotaped Conversation, October 6, 1997)

Not one teacher, until I began graduate studies at age 39, allowed me to tell the story of who I was and what I was learning about life.

And there are countless people who have never in their life met anyone who could truly relate to them without trying to "educate" them, that is, to change them. How can such people be expected to discover their talents?
(Miller, 1984, 298)

Not one teacher allowed me to be myself-in-process inside the school classroom. "Education is more interwoven with living and with the possibility of retelling and reliving our life stories"
(Connelly and Clandinin, 1988, 154). It is too easy to imagine Dewey's (1966) idealized notion that "the inclination to learn from life itself and to make the conditions of life such that all will learn in the process of living is the finest product of schooling" (51). It took me years of struggle, however, until I was 34 years old, to finally find someone—my therapist-teacher—brave enough to listen to me. Now I struggle to be "allowed" to share this inquiry with teachers and others.

Not one thing I ever learned in a classroom helped stop the bleeding or mend my broken bones, or helped me endure the violence when it was happening in my family home.

From the standpoint of the child, the great waste in the school comes from his inability to utilize the experiences he gets outside the school in any complete and free way within the school itself; while, on the other hand, he is unable to apply in daily life what he is learning at school. That is the isolation of the school—its isolation from life.
(Dewey, 1943, 75)

My experience in school led me to the understanding that curriculum without love is tyranny. My definition of love here means the teacher allowing the student to learn how to actively embrace the freedom and responsibility of being a co-creator of his/her own life-with-
others. "While we teach knowledge, we are losing that teaching which can only be given by the simple presence of a mature loving person..." (Fromm, 1963, 98). In practice, this means the student is nurtured gently, firmly, and consistently through the implementation of a storytelling or holistic curriculum. S/he is encouraged to actively cultivate a liberating imagination, develop his/her unique sense of personal identity, and learn how to grow into a loved and a loving human being. Violence has taught this student to dread the suffering of pain and/or death on a moment-by-moment basis. The loving teacher offers this student hope, oriented in the moment. As these moments accrue, this student gains the opportunity to cultivate an internal capacity for relief from suffering and a wholesome sense of humour with which to celebrate life, and to enjoy a healthy, peaceful sense of bodily history. Although this process may take a lifetime of learning, the loving teacher affirms through his/her teaching that this is the healing moment. This student comes to school bearing inside the precious gift of life itself. With his/her very being, this student offers to help break open the teacher's heart.

A storying, holistic curriculum is the act of creating new worlds. Only through the compassionate teacher's act of sailing a boat to the world of the traumatized student can that student learn how to sail a boat to the world of the classroom.

Now when I go to sea, I go as a simple sailor, right before the mast, plumb down to the forecastle, aloft there to the royal mast-head....It touches one's sense of honor, particularly if...just previous to putting your hand into the tar-pot, you have been lording it as a country schoolmaster, making the tallest boys in awe of you. The transition is a keen one, I assure you, from a schoolmaster to a sailor.... (Melville, 1851/1976, 96)

The traumatized student needs a sailor-teacher with guts enough to learn how to sail, not a teacher who "teaches" by wielding his/her authority, serving every student in the class the same
recipe of expectations, assignments and tests, drowning their individual voices.

The teacher cannot be the only expert in the classroom. To deny students their own expert knowledge is to disempower them....Both student and teacher are expert at what they know best.

(Delpit, 1988, 288)

Interlude: Entries from my Learning Log

December 6, 1994
My first visit to Margaret Olson's office at Trent University.
"I need help and I don't know who to ask," I say. "I don't know how to learn how to learn. I've never had the chance--too much trauma. The problem with school is that I find being in a classroom a traumatic experience, and I don't know how to handle it."
Margaret talks with me about different learning styles, gives me some articles to read, and invites me back to talk about my problem. We make another appointment. I hope.
March 22, 1995
I tell Margaret about my Sociology class, Family & Kinship. We were watching videos of women, who've been assaulted by men, tell their stories. These women sound like my sisters. The men sound like my father. I sat at the back of the classroom, as far as possible from the screen. I usually sit in the third row from the front, on the extreme right. It's hard work to listen to their stories. These women, like my sisters, are real people, not actors in some violent movie. Some of them were killed by their partners. I told the class that I felt like I was at a funeral. Isn't that appropriate? I cried. The teacher, a PhD student at U of T told the class that I had written a book about abuse in the family, but she hadn't read it.
"On the last day of class while we're having cake," she said to me privately after class, "you can talk to the class for 5 to 10 minutes about your book."
"That's not enough time," I said.
She requested a meeting with the Chair of the Sociology department, in which she stated again that her course outline dictated how much time must be spent with the readings assigned, and there was no more time than what she offered to deal with my book. Rather than continue the fight, I agreed that she was hemmed in by the course outline.
"It's not every day that a student has written a book about course material," he said. "Too bad there's so little time for it."
When the teacher was ill during the term, the class material she cancelled dealt with child abuse. My anger is just. I strive to keep it constructive.
March 27, 1995
I'm amazed that Margaret keeps her office door open in such a heavy traffic zone, rather than posting her "office hours" on her door. I need quiet to read
and write, so I can listen without spending my energy on trying to block out the noise of the world. The one sound I welcome while I work is birdsong. While we are talking, other students flow in and out of her office and our conversation adjusts. I am vulnerable, and don't want to share my vulnerability with people in the hall. I sit at Margaret's table with my back to her open door, unable to see who's coming. Afraid. I prefer to sit with my back to the wall near a big plate glass window—I hate bars in windows. Theoretically, I know I have nothing to fear. I don't know that yet in my body. Margaret faces the open door. I watch her face for the sign that someone is behind me. The space between my back and the doorway is less than the width of her blue office door. What can I do to feel safe in her office?

May 9, 1995
Matthew: So my experience of trauma and fear counts as "knowledge?"
Margaret: Yes, you learned things, so you know things most of us, thankfully, don't know...
Matthew: It doesn't feel like knowledge inside. It feels like fear. I feel like I don't know anything...
Margaret leans over and writes the word "meaning" right-side-up from her perspective, upside-down from mine, on the bottom of my page, in pencil. She closes the bottom of her "g" with a big lazy loop, and topped her "i" with a circle.
How do you hold your pencil and write without fear? How can I learn to do that? At home, I circle that word in pen....

May 15, 1995
Margaret and I draft several versions (she writes, I think out loud), of the "Nature of Study" and Specific Topics to be Studied part of the Queen's University application for this half course. The information must fit in the box measuring 2-and-a-half inches by 6-and-a-half inches (less the quarter-inch across the top of the box that accommodates the above heading).

In the space provided, measuring five-eighths of an inch by eight inches, under the heading "Personal History" I write "not relevant to this application."
Who would devise an application form of little boxes? Some person actually did this, and it was approved by the bureaucracy as being appropriate. I am offended by this farcical application procedure, and protest by refusing to disclose my humanness in little conformist boxes that no one in the bureaucracy cares about, yet this is part of their judgement of my "admissibility."

Margaret tells me the story of how she was driving past a graveyard of wrecked autos in a field, and one of the cows had its head under a car's hood, like a mechanic. Two herds. We laugh.
"I wish I had a camera," she says.
"I don't want to see the photo," I say, "I've got my own movie."

May 23, 1995
A blue jay crashes into my window in front of my desk.
From way up, Blue Jay dives. Straight down. He worked hard to get so
high, for the joy of rushing back. He has done this all his life. The first time, when
his mother pushed him, he dropped, and spread his wings to save his life. Today,
he zooms down past the tree tops at the edge of the lake, like always. Just above
Earth, he lifts his head, his wings and tail cut a curve in the air, and he barely clears
the short grass. He usually levels off over the lake, but today he sees two lakes.
He is confused. He crashes into the reflection of the lake in the plate glass
window, and drops. Down goes Blue Jay like he has never known, like he has no
wings, like he is not himself. The rock punches his breast. He cries out. The
German Shepherd lunges from the doghouse. Blue Jay will carry the window and
the rock and the dog up into the tree in his song, or the dog will crunch Blue Jay’s
bones like cookies. I say thank you that I’m alive to feel this pain. I ask that the
lessons I’ve learned through this pain and through my writing work will help
encourage others who have suffered to keep trying to learn how create love.

June 2, 1995

Bible. According to the Oxford Reference Dictionary (Hawkins, 1989, 80), the word "Bible" comes from the Greek "biblia" meaning books, a diminutive of "bublos" meaning papyrus. (See also Klein, 1966, 169-170 and Skeat, 1974, 59.) According to Ackroyd and Evans (1970, 30), however, Byblos was a Mediterranean port city in ancient Phoenicia (now modern Lebanon). The city’s chief export was papyrus, and part of its definition is "belonging to Pharaoh" (30). The method of its manufacture was a royal secret. Pliny the Elder (Gaius Plinius Secundus) described an incorrect method of making papyrus lived from 4 to 79 A.D. He died curious, wanting to learn, "observing the eruption of Vesuvius" (Hawkins, 1989, 643). I respect this man. He was a man, like me, who grew hair on his legs, in his ears, ate breakfast in the morning, and defecated. And he lived 2000 years ago. He doesn’t sound dead to me. I feel more connected, to the history of Earth and the history of People. I am beginning to see that my existence is dependent, not on my father and mother, but on the ancestors that have gone before. I am like a drop of water in a flowing river, part of this large, mysterious thing called Life. I am glad to know about papyrus; I value paper highly. It is the only thing I hoard, so I divest myself of large quantities of it regularly. I call it editing. I edit my life. I mean I clean it up, make space for new writing, new life. Like raking up last years brown leaves, for compost, so new grass will grow.

When I edit too much paper—too many diaries, parts of myself—out of my life I give myself a huge crippling pain in the stomach that lasts for days. Mourning time. Learning about the history of the Bible means I can look at the book from a new, healthier perspective. Maybe now I can learn how to read it. I have always considered the Bible one of my parents’ weapons. We had to read it aloud at the kitchen table, almost every night. We each read a verse, around the table. My fear of making a mistake, of being hit for that mistake, makes me still dread reading aloud.

When one’s body is the site of constant, life-threatening physical violence, one’s energies
are focused on staying alive, and one's internal identity—"who one is"—becomes inextricably linked with violence and suffering, fear of impending pain and death. Narrative and holism offers the student the opportunity to work with and, therefore, work through the issues fundamental to his/her psychological health. "Holists...think of the student as a self-activating whole...learning is based on the intuitive knowledge of who one is..." (Courtney 1987, 8). Education is healing inasmuch as it helps the survivor to establish his/her identity, whereas trauma "...destroys the belief that one can be oneself in relation to others" (Herman, 1992, 53).

Unsent Nonsense Letter to Professor Olson's boss

Der Bospersin,
   Helo ta yu.
   Margaret iza fer sher gud techr kuz ferst she lisinz then ax kwestyunz that mak me wundr. Cors she duzit mosle on perpis.
   She telz tru storez.
   Cors she sujestid i red lotsa buks thin wunz thik wunz red wunz blu wunz so i did an we tawkt abowt them. We cudda stil ben tawkin abowt them an konektin them ta r livz an ta uthr buks but we rand owta tim. Tu bad.
   She duznt go mad awn me or thretin me or tel me ta shudup an du lik she sez wich iza nu wa uv bein lernd fer me. An she duznt punish me fer not noing how ta du evrething rit or not noing th rit anserz so i dont hafta fit her lik i did evre uthr techr in mi lif wich iza grat relief.
   Margaret obveusle injoyz lermin heronself thatz how kum she makz lermin me fun.
   In kas yu dont no it she iza hyumin bein with a brethin bawde with tu kidz an wun husband ana dad ana muthrinlaw hu biz her pudecat bukmars. She liks warin sandalz an myuzik. She duznt swar evin wen shez grumpe kuz she sez it duznt help.
   Margaret nedz a nu tabl fer standin awn ta rech her bukshelf so get her wun rit now.
   Yu betr hure up an get mor techrz in her lik Margaret.
Yorz trule

(Stewart, August 23, 1995)

Magical language is often playful, and yet at the same time it may have a portentous ring to it—magicians and poets are usually deadly serious in their play.
Nonsense may appear to limit the power of language by inhibiting meaning, but it may also express sentiments for which ordinary language in inadequate.

(Moore, 1996, 262)

**Letter Sent to Professor Olson's Dean**

For the first time in my life, I have worked with a teacher brave enough to help me explore the meaningful questions fundamental to my schooling experience. For 19 of my 39 years, the educational system has exacerbated my childhood trauma and isolation. As a child and teenager, my teachers were too busy telling me what they thought was important for me to memorize and when. Threatening me with their little comments and numbers on my report cards. My parents translated anything less than 100% into horrific beatings. This legacy takes many years of intense work to overcome, as my recently published book testifies.

Until I worked with Dr. Margaret Olson, I never had the chance to learn how to learn, despite my "achievements." Dr. Olson provided this opportunity for me. She encourages rather than "lets" me ask questions. My understanding of her authority as a teacher is based on her ability to trust how she guides my questioning, rather than point to and reward the "correct" answer. Indeed, her perspective on questions helps me gain in-sight into where they lead.

Dr. Olson allows humanity in her classroom—during our work sessions I cried sometimes, we laughed often. This is a vital part of my ongoing healing. Dr. Olson's method of teaching strikes me as innovative; I learn how to learn, I learn how to be a student, I learn how to trust. She respects my struggle; I learn how to be a teacher.

I consider this opportunity that Dr. Olson created with me no less than a gift for which I am truly grateful.

Sincerely yours,

(Stewart, August 23, 1995)

Integral to the model of Holism are the principles of "balance, inclusion, and connection" (Miller 1996, 3-9), which enable integration of all the survivor's experiences of self-growing-in-the-world. The survivor raised in an extremely violent home learns how to be violent him/herself as a survival strategy. It is, therefore, impossibly difficult to learn how to choose to live without violence. Survivors need to be allowed to learn to choose alternative ways of being, lest they perpetuate that violence. In order to choose, the survivor needs the opportunity to learn that s/he actually has choices. The perpetual, desperate life-and-death struggle at home has taught this
student that his/her "choice" in life is no more and no less than to do exactly as the adult terrorists 

demand, exactly when and how they demand it, and still s/he will most likely be raped, tortured 

and quite possibly killed. S/he knows that s/he has no basic human rights such as the right to be 

treated with dignity. Dignity is quite unimaginable, it is only a word from another world. A 

teacher who tries to tell this student that s/he has rights and choices will simply not be believed; 

the student's life experience proves that this is not so. Adults lie and get away with it. They smile 

in public and try to kill you the moment you come home. Only adults in positions of authority 

have rights; they have power over others. Every adult has more power than a child. Anything an 

adult says will be backed up with force. Adults punish. This student's ability to hear almost every 

word from adults as commands, and therefore, as direct death threats, and to prepare him/herself 

as much as possible for the inevitable onslaught, forms the foundation of his/her personal 

knowledge. This student yearns for, but cannot bodily understand the concepts of "freedom" and 

"love."

**Freedom** is a central concept in the analysis of personal knowledge....It means the 

power to be and to become through relationships in which the integrity and worth 

of each person are responsibly affirmed by the others with whom he is associated. 

Another fundamental concept in personal relations is *love*....It means simply the 

reality of the active, caring, responsible relation of an "I" to a "Thou."

(Phenix, 1964, 198)

This terrorized student needs a teacher to approach his/her world of terror, slowly, on the 

boat of the teacher's compassion. Then, and only then, can the student begin to learn how to 

approach the teacher's classroom world of education. The teacher needs to demonstrate his/her 

compassion primarily through the act of listening. Being a compassionate listener teaches the 

student, by demonstration, to learn how to allow someone to hear him/her. The compassionate
listener creates a safe space for the speaker, the teacher-and-classmate audience, and the terrible story. In so doing, the teacher shows by example how s/he honours him/herself and all students as compassionate human beings.

...the danger of this approach is the vulnerability that goes along with sharing difficult, painful, and perhaps even tragic stories. Teachers, therefore, must recognize both the opportunities and the risks inherent in such an approach and be prepared to respond accordingly.

(Tappan & Brown, 1991, 186)

Compassionately hearing this terrified student's stories, the teacher enables the student to create space inside him/herself for other, healing stories. Then the student, grateful for being heard, can begin to learn that being heard and hearing another is how to build a new life, and a new world for him/herself, opposite to his/her familiar, familial world of destruction.

**Letter to Professor Diamond**

Dear Pat

...I stumble over my words, trying almost to warn you that I'm trouble—I learned how to save the lives of my children and myself through sheer stubbornness and defiance of authority—and I am not willing to relinquish this most valuable way of being. Why should I have to ask for permission to speak by raising my hand? Competition with others to ask a question is undignified. Why should I have to do anything I don't want to? My first response to any demand is "No." Trying to simply let go of this childish response is not at all easy. The problem is that I still see teachers as demanding authority figures. Saying "No" is my way of throwing their demands right back at them—I demand that they acknowledge my right, my freedom, and my responsibility to say "No." When my resistance is not respected, when I am forced, I fight. Once I have said "No," I am free to choose if I want to participate. When my resistance is respected, I am more willing to engage with the teacher to find out what might happen. This is very risky because I am more open, more vulnerable than when I fight. Mostly, my resistance is fear of exposure of how much fear I carry inside. I don't want to be ridiculed and punished any more for not conforming, for not having the same skills as my classmates....I listen with my body. I love learning how to play ball. When I focus on the joy of catching the ball, rather than my fear, as I run and leap and stretch for it, the ball seems to slow down to give me time to meet it in the air. We are both flying. Oh, that's what I'm doing here in your class. I'm learning how to play ball....Often, playing catch, I
miss the ball and get hurt. Mostly, I try too hard. When I expend too much energy to catch it, I take one step too many and it zips past my glove and bruises my body. I find it very hard to learn to wait for the ball, to trust my hand-in-glove, rather than try to defend myself by charging the ball. When I focus on how thankful I am that my arms and legs and hands still work, so I can play ball. I play wholeheartedly. I'm dancing, celebrating my life, temporarily forgetting how I hate being hit by the ball. I refuse to let pain stop me, but it manages to slow me down, often to the point where I must rest. In your class, I'm eager to participate, so I try too hard. When you ask a question, and nobody speaks up, I feel obliged to protect the others. It's difficult for me not to see the teacher as inspector and punisher. This is my experience. Others are not speaking up because they're afraid too, so I must show them how to engage the intimidator. With bravery. No matter what cost.

"You're not responsible for them," you say in your office.
I don't know how to synthesize this message....
I see you as a coach, Pat, working with an infinite variety of possible ballgames in each class. I am only one player. I see now that the only way I can play, the only way everybody can play, is if we take turns. Therefore, instead of asking permission, I will raise my hand to indicate that I want to play, as a signal to you that I respect fair ball. Otherwise, I'll accept your kind offer to learn by studying how others play while I rest this inning. Thank you.
(Stewart, November 27, 1995)

By example the compassionate teacher demonstrates that conversation is taking turns listening, more so than talking.

Through the opportunity for conversation students can hear a variety of views and experiences which may awaken them to new ways to story their own experience. Conversation is not a process of telling what we know, but rather a collaborative endeavour where each participant brings meanings and questions to the conversation. As stories are told, given back, and retold, "knowledge communities" (Craig, 1992) develop in which knowledge is constructed in the transactions between individuals. When we construct meaning through conversation, the reference point exists in the transaction, the space between the individuals involved. This is a "middle ground" (Clandinin et al., 1993) which needs to be a safe space in order for the persons involved to risk making their narrative knowledge public. This middle ground is not possible in the sacred story of certainty, prediction and control where knowledge (and, therefore, the people who hold that knowledge) is hierarchically structured. The middle ground is a collaborative space where each individual struggles to articulate and inquire into his or her own knowing of educative situations. It is the diversity of knowledge expressed in a collaborative situation which makes reconstruction of knowledge
possible.

(Olson, 1993, 247)

Being heard, this student begins to learn that his/her voices, his/her being, his/her life are valued by others, namely the teacher and classmates (see also Harri-Augustein & Thomas, 1991).

**Letter to Professor L**

Dear L

...The unremitting, urgent need to learn how to create, rather than destroy, is the call of my bones that I have risked my life to heed. Writing art is the motion, and poems and stories are the sounds of the motion of my survival. Survival and healing are as inseparable in my experience as birdsong and the bird....Although my stick-people drawings show no artistic skill, they speak to me, and for me, in ways which I value highly....In almost forty years, before coming to your classroom, I believe I had drawn only about ten pictures altogether. In grade four, I copied photographs of a helicopter in flight, and a cruise ship with slanted smokestacks under way at sea. They were not required for school. I drew them, in a rare moment of being alone, for the sheer pleasure of doing so. I showed them to no one, and guarded them like secret treasure until, fearing punishment, it became necessary for me to lose them. In grade twelve, I sketched, in pencil, the rear view of a man running naked down the beach. His rather square butt did not impress the art teacher. I did not have the courage to ask how to draw a round butt....Last summer my fifteen-year-old son Wilton, studying draughting in high school, showed me how to roll the pencil when running it along a straightedge (so it keeps its point) and three different ways to draw a box. We talked about my helicopter, and about perspective, but a helicopter is not a box or a cupboard on the wall, so I'll wait and ask how to draw a spinning rotor later. Unlike writing, where I instantly edit and re-write, I am not willing to erase and re-draw my sketches and coloured drawings until they look "proper." Last Spring, instead of writing summaries of six psychotherapy sessions as requested, I submitted drawings in protest!

Being a student in your classroom has been particularly challenging. Once I feel that a work which I have completed in private is worthy of sharing, although I am uncomfortable in the classroom, I rely on bravery to present it. I protect my privacy at home so I can produce without being watched....My classmates notice how I take notes, and when. Why are they looking at my paper without my permission? How can I be free to write or doodle when I'm being watched? I am not so curious; my eyes do not invade their space. As I learn to relax in class...I notice my hands are dry, and are not shaking.

In the outdoor classroom, I have learned to honour life. I have learned to cover all the windows with blankets, turn off the lights, and open only one door, so
the bird trapped in my house can find its way back to freedom. I have learned to turn on the lights and open the door at night to set the bat free. I have learned to cover the windshield and the rear window of my car with towels, leaving another window open, to set the humblebee free...I need to scribble with my left hand, sideways and backwards (I hate straight lines), to alleviate some of the stress of being in the classroom.

For the first time, on September 26, 1995, I experienced the chance to work with paper while everybody else was busy with their own. Not watching me. I drew my problem "In The Classroom" without hesitation. In the moment of creating, I felt happy because you gave me some liberty to play, and I was happy the others had the same chance to play too. By giving us choices (which problem to draw), you recognized our individuality while rendering all of us, as a group, equal. Not that I felt superior or inferior—just alien, alone, and in danger, as my picture shows. I was delightfully surprised; I am not used to being treated with respect in the classroom. When you guided us in the sharing of our drawings on October 3, 1995, you said to "honour the other by listening, by being open to receiving the gift the other shares with you." These words are valuable gifts to me, because with them you gave me permission to rest while the other spoke, rather than hurting me by telling me to shut up or pressuring me to speak up....Working in your class, through tears and laughter, I have been able (as Doreen suggested when I shared "Outdoor Classroom II" with her) to "add more life" to my pictures, and, therefore, to my life. I'm not trying to be rebellious and different from everybody else. I'm trying to be me. I understand intellectually that I try too hard most of the time, and the more I relax, the easier it will become. Learning this message with my body takes time. It is hard to learn that I no longer need to record everything the teacher says lest I be punished. It is harder to learn how to sit still in my chair and be myself-with-others who are being themselves-with-me. I need to move about, to use space, rather than be confined to my chair. My body hurts. I can tolerate the pain easier if I can move, if I can celebrate being alive right now with motion, rather than focus on how much it hurts to move. In my turbulent past, I had to keep moving to survive. This is hard to unlearn. Being allowed to hop out of my chair to fetch different coloured markers, to exchange them with others, helped me immensely....My drawings afford me glimpses into how I meet my various selves in particular moments of time and motion. I am amazed by the liquid nature of truth—how my "problem" of isolation and silent distress in the classroom, once given voice (drawn), transmogrified itself into optimism and hope in my musical "resolutions." Drawing helps me in my struggle to learn how to be Matthew, to accept myself, rather than try to change. That is how I change.

In that the image is an ambiguous pictorial event, containing a prophecy of self-fulfilment, it encourages change and therefore hope.

(Shuman, 1989,122)

Entwined in this process, enriching it, is my childlike glee in being given two gifts:
paper and marker....My drawings cannot be wrong, and nobody is going to judge
them. Not even me. I will let them be, and appreciate them for what they are,
what they show me.

...In being imaginal it is an intensified representation of my experience of
my life and so one to which I must extend authority.

(Darroch, 1982, 111)

I have no need to prove anything by drawing. Each drawing adds to my interior
collection of joyful memories, enabling me to build a new history of myself for
myself. "...The process of healing is really a process of remembering, remembering
who you are" (Brennan, 1988, in Siegel, 1989, 189). When I am in turmoil, I
forget how to return easily to the creative circle: the more art I create, the more I
am able to synthesize beauty, the more art I create. I build pictures like I build
sand castles, logpiles, pies, and poems—to celebrate that I'm alive to do so. I have
loved myself enough to stay alive to create love, and no longer live my life in fear
of pain and death.

...the body produces its own poisons under circumstances of
apprehension or emotional train...this factor is intimately involved in
serious illness....Death is not the enemy; living in constant fear of it is....

(Cousins, 1983, 185-186)

Generating art is my way of allowing art to regenerate my spirit and, therefore, my
body. Art is the motion of me rebuilding my body as a joyful home, however
temporary, for my spirit. I recreate myself in my own image.

...memory must be more permanent than matter. What is a cell then?
It is a memory that has built some matter around itself, forming a specific
pattern. Your body is just the place your memory calls home.

(Chopra, 1990, 87)

When I draw, I'm terribly curious what will happen with (rather than to) me, and I
enjoy the thrill so much more when I let it reveal itself to me rather than control it.
The more I learn to trust my art process, to surrender to it, the more fully I engage
life in the moment. In the meantime, the work nourishes and rejuvenates me. I
become so focussed on creating that I forget my troubles. I am alone with my art;
I am neither alone nor lonely.

...being able to forget temporarily who we are seems to be very enjoyable.
When not preoccupied with our selves, we actually have a chance to
expand the concept of who we are. Loss of self-consciousness can
lead to self-transcendence, to a feeling that the boundaries of our being
have been pushed forward.

(Csikszentmihaly, 1991, 64)

With each artpiece I create as Matthew-I-am, I move a little from Matthew-I-was
to Matthew-I-want-to-be.

Professor Margaret Olson, who is more comfortable with life's general
turmoil than myself, who sees in me more the process of integrating paradoxical
selves rather than a self divided, invited me to share my boats and drawings with
her two Concurrent Education classes at Trent University on November 28 and 30. I incorporated the following three pictures that I drew in your class into the seminar—on overheads. As I explained the pictures, many students shared how they too had experienced similar classrooms. None preferred the first. We discussed how they might build the third for their students.

Drawing: In the classroom, September 26, 1995.

[See page 320]

Problem: Being in the classroom.
Scene: I am Porcupine on a big Learning Log in a fast-moving river. Out of my element. I cannot steer. I am headed for obstacles and rapids; I am going to crash and drown. Immediate solution to the problem: A net is cast across the river to stop me from hitting the rapids. Now I will crash into the net, my big Learning Log will turn sideways and begin to roll beneath me, faster and faster as the current hits it broadside. I am trapped. I will not be able to let go of my spinning Learning Log to reach for the net; I will lose my balance and fall off and drown.

Drawing: Outdoor Classroom I, September 26, 1995

[See page 321]

Problem: Being in the classroom.
Resolution to problem: The classroom has room to move in it. All the students, male and female can sit, stand, or dance around the fire. The fire plays firemusic on the small Learning Logs, fire bring heat and light to all of us. We are singing. The teacher looks like one of us. We can all sit down on rest notes anytime we like. The river plays rivermusic. The moon, playing moonmusic, reflects off the lake. Stars play starmusic.

Drawing: Outdoor Classroom II, October 3, 1995

[See page 322]

Problem: Being in the classroom.
Ultimate resolution to the problem: The river flows into and beyond the lake, playing rivermusic. The sailboat plays boatmusic, even though tied to the wharf in the lake of lakemusic. Fish swim. Around the campfire, people of different colours (2 male, 2 female), sing, dance and talk, burning small Learning Logs. I am Blue Man. There are many tee-pees, each decorated by its owner(s). Mine is the blue one that opens toward the stars so I can see and hear starmusic. Trees play treemusic and bear musicfruit. On some green trees, is a ladder. I can climb up and rest in the tree on the rest notes. A big house on stilts with 3 ladders and big doors, with Sun, Moon and Stars on its roof, is a safe place for all who want to go there. When the gong is whacked 3 times, the gongmusic warns everybody to seek shelter. A big Learning Log bridge crosses the river. Not everybody needs to be at the fire at the same time. Others walk different paths, alone or with
someone. The paths lead out of the classroom, and each one has a rest note. One man sits and rests. A big brown rock plays rockmusic under the moss. The moon plays moonmusic. Bear plays bearmusic.

(Stewart, January 8, 1996)

When this student feels valued, the feeling, so unlike any feeling in his/her experience, is overwhelming. This feeling is as intense, as painful inside to bear as the feelings of hatred and fear and rage s/he has come to learn at home, and the behavioural backlash will be proportional to his/her internal distress. Still s/he needs the teacher to hear with compassion. Only through this process can the student begin to learn how to value, how to love him/herself.

Confronted with the rigidity of the adult ethnocentrist, one turns naturally to the question of whether the prospects for healthy personality structure would not be greater if the proper influences were brought to bear earlier in the individual’s life, and since the earlier the influence the more profound it will be, attention becomes focussed upon child training. It would not be difficult, on the basis of the clinical and genetic studies reported in this volume, to propose a program which, even in the present cultural pattern, could produce nonethnocentric personalities. All that is really essential is that children be genuinely loved and treated as individual humans.

(Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson & Sanford, 1950, 975)

When, and only when, s/he begins to learn how to value him/herself, can this student begin to genuinely value others and sail his/her boat from his/her world to their worlds.

Letter from Professor T

Matthew:

I read the evaluations of students and I listened to the taped evaluations [of your class presentation by Professors Olson and Berrill]....

Here’s where I am on your work. It is first rate scholarship so you can get your Ph.D. if you want to allocate the time to it. I hope you do and I expect you will. More importantly, you have a very significant social message. You are learning how be a social activist so that your message will have impact. That may be your most important life work. These two activities are in the cathedral. That means you do not get rich from them.

You can also live in the marketplace. Most of us do. I believe your message has market value....I believe you can be distracted from your main cause,
however, by giving priority to getting rich rather than your mission. I expect you already know this but I am sure it gets confusing if you need to keep your eye on basic income. I can be most useful to you in getting your doctoral work done successfully....

(Professor T, April 7, 1996)

The healing circle forms, and slowly, very slowly, expands. Healing is not linear. Straight lines are not inclusive.

Interlude: Two Etymological Classrooms

The alienating classroom:

```
schoole

scol  scolu  schole  cole
skule  scoole  skole  scule
skoole  scywle  sculle  scoll
scoulle  skoll  scolle  scoile
scwle  scuil(l)  schuill  schuile
scoill  skuil(l)  scole  schoule
scool  scoull  scooll  schule
```

(Simpson & Wiener, 1989, 631-637)
The healing classroom:

(Simpson & Weiner, 1989, 226-228)

Not until this student's experience in his/her world is acknowledged and honoured will the world of arithmetic and geography bear any meaning for him/her.

If the experiential background of students is so remote from the content encountered as to make it essentially meaningless, it is obvious that the curriculum, regardless of how defensible on other grounds, is inappropriate for that population....one has still to appraise it both developmentally and experientially with respect to its suitability to the population for whom it is intended.

(Eisner, 1994, 182)

This student's right to choose, and therefore, to refuse to participate in irrelevant curriculum—that subject matter which is imposed and which, therefore, does not serve his/her pressing needs—needs to be respected. E.W. Eisner's (1979) holistic "Personal Relevance" orientation to curriculum is crucial because it offers this student "the opportunity to learn how to choose as a central aim of educational programs" (Eisner, 1979, 59). The teacher needs to recognize and appreciate that this traumatized student, developmentally, is, however wounded, still far ahead of his/her classmates and the teacher in coping with and practising the moment-to-moment
practicalities of survival under extremely harsh conditions (unless the teacher also survived extreme intrafamilial violence). But this student is far behind the "normal" others in basic taken-for-granted social skills. The teacher needs to practice being practical. Practical is defined as working with educative possibilities that are feasible, concrete, grounded in personal meaning for this student, and determined by the needs of this student "at the level of the concrete case" (Schwab, 1969, 14). The needs of this student need to be learned and acted upon by the teacher in the design and implementation of relevant classroom curriculum—that which meets his/her needs—precisely because the learner needs to be considered of equal rank as the other three commonplaces, namely, the teacher, the subject matter, and the milieu (Schwab, 1973, 508-509).

These milieus include, among others, "...the school and classroom....the family, the community, [the] aspirations, styles of life, attitudes toward education, and ethical standards [of] parents [that] affect the children" (503).

I drop in on Professor T, to talk about my struggle being a dad and an OISE/UT student and a teacher. He reminds me that they are "good problems." He tells me about cheering on his grand-daughter at her hockey games. He shares a gift that his son sent him: an electronic letter celebrating the birth of Professor T's newest grandson, now only a few days old. The last line: "I hope I can be as good a Dad as you are someday." This is a healing story for me; my good teacher is a good dad. Professor T says "You never stop learning how to be a dad, like you never stop learning how to be a teacher. You're always a student." I feel happier, lighter inside; I understand. Being a dad is like writing a poem. I never stop learning how. It's always new. Nothing is created without struggle. "Drop in anytime," says Professor T. I know he means it. He creates space for me. When I come home, I create more space for Wilton.

(Diary, Stewart, December 2, 1996)

Letter to Professor Miller

Dear Jack,

Your classroom is a healing place....My thankfulness mantra spreads out across time and space like the lovingkindness mantra emanating from within your

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classroom. I'm glad I asked, and you slowed the mantra down for us. Thank you. Just being here, offering this prayer together changes me inside, and so changes the world in a small, yet significant way.

"Relax," you say in class. "Breathe."

How? How do I suddenly let go of my survival skills? People have tried to explain it to me for years. I'm sure they meant well, and perhaps I learned a little from each of them, but mostly I felt like they were speaking a foreign language. I need to learn how to breathe by somebody showing me how. A demonstration—try it like this, feel this part of your body here doing this.

I am glad to be here, breathing with this group of caring people, all of whom breathe slightly differently. Dialogue in class about breathing is itself a healing exercise for me, an opportunity to connect with other human beings being human as I see and hear how others acknowledge, accept, and struggle with their own bodies.

At home alone, I've been teaching myself to breathe. In the classroom, (like in bed, like in the kitchen, like at my desk), excuse me, I need some space. I need room to open my arms wide so I can open up my shoulders. I need to open my legs too. Breathing is about opening the passages so the air can flow through, and when I'm scrunched in a little chair, sandwiched between people, how can I open? I need to see some physical space, some air around me. I'm thankful, Jack, that you want to include me in the circle. I believe in whole circles. I don't want to leave your class; I want to learn how good, how relaxing it is to be here with others. Could you get a bigger room, or make this room bigger by getting rid of the extra furniture? Everyone would benefit. Then I'm asked to move in, make the circle smaller, closer yet. As I do, my stress level rises. I need more time to learn how to do this. Can we slow this down, please? Surely I'm not the only one here who feels this way. Why doesn't somebody else speak up? I use bravery to get me through the exercise(s). I work hard just telling my classmates that I'm struggling. I've never said this before, Jack, and I didn't know I was going to say it until just now. You have encouraged me to speak truths, to participate bodily, and as I write this, I assure you I am. This is work. This is risky. My responsibility to my Self is to be free. (Allow me this honest space, be in no wise offended.) Nobody can teach me to not be afraid, no one will ever convince me there's nothing to be afraid of, and I don't want anyone to try because I've learned that it's impossible to teach someone to not do or not be something. What I need is space and time to learn that classrooms are safe places. I need the opportunity to synthesize this bodily. I need the freedom to co-create my classroom environment, so I can include, rather than exclude myself and others....During our bodily introductions (a new experience), I participated so wholeheartedly that I forgot my fears for a moment. The fun of hearing everybody saying my name and growling together felt liberating....Despite being very reluctant to work in groups, our group presentation...in your classroom was the most rewarding of my life. I am proud of what we did and how we did it. Making music and laughter together is powerful
medicine. I was surprised to hear my grown-up adult classmates say they enjoyed making music with the "waterdrums" so much because they "could not fail." I am very pleased that everyone succeeded joyfully. My joy came from sharing my best work, which is my best gift, with the rest of the class. Many classmates thanked me privately, saying the demonstration of my Popbottle People art was "powerful" for them. I have synthesized the comments of my classmates in the creation of the children's books that were born from inspiration during meditation.....Jack, for the lovingkindness you bring to your classroom. For the challenge. For the healing. Thank you.

(Stewart, August 19, 1996)

What, then, constitutes curriculum? How can the needs of this individual student be served by the busy teacher of a group of 25 or 30 other students in a classroom? First, this student and every student needs to be considered as individuals, and treated as single cases. The "group" is composed of individuals, and practical education, especially for the terrorized student, does not consist of being made to conform to any "group" or any authorities' version of what is "deemed" practical.

To Dewey, education is a series of psychological events which originate and happen primarily within the individual:

...this educational process has two sides—one psychological and one sociological...the psychological is the basis. The child's own instincts and powers furnish the material and give the starting-point for all education.  
(emphasis added, Dewey, 1897, 6)

Only the individual, not some group in a classroom, can gain an education. The group is comprised of unique individuals in a social situation: "...the individual to be educated is a social individual" (Dewey, 1897, 8). Education is a natural growth process, a "cultivation" (Dewey, 1966, 10), for throughout our life span we continuously learn and develop (grow) internally.

Experience is the reciprocal action of an individual encountering the environment (that which is external to the individual), and the environment encountering the individual, which brings
about change in them both. Those actions and changes within the individual are "personal."

Experience does not go on simply inside a person....Every genuine experience has an active side which changes in some degree the objective conditions under which experiences are had.

(Dewey, 1938, 39)

To Dewey (1938) experience is educative only if it promotes future individual growth (36) in the direction of one's chosen calling, by enhancing growth in the present. It is mis-educative if it inhibits, prohibits, or "distorts" this growth (Dewey, 1938, 25). The organic connection between education and experience consists of the interplay between an individual's "psychological and social sides" (Dewey, 1897, 7). The individual student exists in the container of the environment, an integral and distinct part of the social group, for "...society is an organic union of individuals" (Dewey, 1897, 8). When education and experience are individually growth-oriented, both the individual and society benefit. The student, and therefore, society, can grow when the student's experiences and education are woven together to create a relevant--growth-oriented--curriculum for the particular student. Imposed irrelevant curriculum ignores the student's inner growing life.

The trouble with traditional education was...that it paid so little attention to the internal factors which also decide what kind of experience is had.

(Dewey, 1938, 42)

Being forced to learn an imposed irrelevant curriculum that disconnects the student from his/her own inner life is an alienating, mis-educative experience. According to Dewey (1897), the student's home and school experiences are organically connected, for "the school life should grow gradually out of the home life" (9). Dewey's (1943) philosophy is founded on his belief that the "ideal home" and the "ideal school" (34-35) are actually feasible, and by working together to
serve the inner interests of the student, they serve the interests of the greater community.

These are the great things in breaking down isolation, in getting connection—to have the child come to school with all the experience he has got outside the school, and to leave it with something to be immediately used in his everyday life....

(Dewey, 1943, 80)

Education that provides relevant curriculum enhances the growth of the individual by nurturing the student and allowing him/her to be a partner in the creation of his/her own education.

Letter to Professor Booth

Dear David

...My Popbottle People are in a constant state of re-vision, for me and my audience. The audience is co-creator during the whole presentation. The presentation itself is "liquid" and I grapple with its form each time. I must perpetually adapt to my audience. Each time I present them, I do so from a place of more experience, and I modify the presentation. Only after I presented to this class did I summon the courage to modify Bud-at-home, who represents the child after being beaten....The next time I present him, members of the audience will help me to restore his eyes, ears (his senses) and mouth as well as his limbs. It's important that Bud-at-home is not "put together" from the top down, or bottom up. Linearly. Instead, I envision someone giving him back an ear, then a leg. This will help the audience remember that our inner ear is also "the sensory organ for balance" (Newby, 1979, 38). I try to present with dignity, though I struggle, and fail, to maintain my composure. Comments from members of my audience attest to their involvement and appreciation. As an artist/teacher, I think and write in concrete terms, then expand in bigger, conceptual circles....

(Stewart, October 29, 1997)

Growth means perpetual change, and relevant curriculum needs to provide the student with the appropriate, individual opportunities and tools for initiating inner change, and adapting to the reciprocal change from the environment. Thus, the "...educational process is one of continual reorganizing, reconstructing, transforming experience" (Dewey, 1966, 50).

This student has learned through experience how to face unimaginable fear and bodily pain and imminent death alone. His/her inner strength, born out of his/her determination to simply
keep living against all odds needs to be recognized as a significant individual achievement.

What is particularly important here is that recognition of one's own individuality is the basis for recognition of the individuality of everyone, and for the democratic concept of the dignity of man. These values are expressed ideologically in terms of opposition to all social structures (military, religious, educational, politico-economic) which are based on the principle of absolute authority, which value power more than love, which engage in group suppression and exploitation, in short, which prevent man from developing his innate potential to a maximum degree...What has been called "conventional values" might also have been called "conditional values," since their main function is to place limitations or conditions on the expression of needs rather than to stimulate need-experience. They might also have been called "authoritarian values," since they are based on the assumption to conformity to external authority rather than on inner moral responsibility.

(Adorno et. al., 1950, 597-598)

This student has learned from experience how terrorists isolate, inflict injury, and silence their prey. An irrelevant curriculum isolates and silences this student further. "To empower is to enable those who have been silenced to speak...we cannot teach through forms that silence....An education that creates silence is not an education..."(Simon, 1987, 374-375).

In a very literal sense, this survivor does not experience him/herself as being allowed to grow, in any sense of the word. Schwab's (1971) theory that "each of us is usually well wedded to belief in our own existence as enduring and determining persons and are inclined to extend the same courtesy to others" (529) simply does not apply to this student. This student knows that his/her existence, and therefore, the existence of others is too precarious to be taken for granted.

How then can the teacher determine the appropriate curriculum for this student, and how can s/he actually teach it, given that this student will not be told what to do, how to do it, or when?

Conversely, how can the teacher determine the appropriate curriculum for this student, and how can she actually teach it given this student who behaves in exactly the opposite manner? How?
Ask questions with the student. Listen with the student. Hear with the student. Many student survivors desperately try to blend into their surroundings, and will do almost anything not to be noticed—silent and invisible. S/he says "yes" to every demand from adults, and obeys every adult rule without external resistance. This student is the unseen unheard achiever in school, the "excellent" student. S/he has learned how to be a chameleon, an expert at camouflage, in order to survive. The teacher is a compassionate guide, one who values, indeed encourages the student to say "no." Saying "no" is an empowering experience, integral to helping the student who must say "no" and the student who must say "yes." They, who had no choice, learn that they have choice. Saying "no" is critical to learning how to overcome their overwhelming feelings of powerlessness, of being a victim. "No" is an opportunity for the teacher to learn what truly interests this student, where s/he is willing to genuinely say "yes," where s/he is willing to devote his/her energy based on choice. This student's Being is a significant gift to the teacher, for the student represents with his/her Being, the opportunity for the compassionate teacher to learn how to focus his/her listening so s/he can hear. The student begins to learn how to hope s/he will be alive in five minutes. The words "tomorrow" and "future" slowly become a possibility. The compassionate teacher listens for the one word that connects the student to the world of life and living and holds deep meaning for the student. That one word might be "fishing." Let that word be heard. If the student's only interest is fishing, if fishing is one thing that the student is curious about, that is the place to start. Curiosity is the spark of life. Anger, fear, hatred, jealousy, even hunger, yield like the temple pillars when curiosity is unleashed. Curiosity sails boats to travel to other worlds.
Went fishing
on my horizon

Caught my
self
reeling in the dawn

(Stewart, June 3, 1991)

Every question is a different boat. Every question is exciting; it is generated from within the student; the student owns it. Let the questions be heard. Let the student choose which question to explore first. What kind of fish might s/he catch in local streams/rivers/lakes? What kind of boat, bait, and fishing gear would s/he use? Why? What would be the most likely season to catch these fish? What do these fish look like? How do you tell the difference between live male and female fish? When and where and how do they spawn? What do these fish eat and what eats them in the food chain? Are they safe for humans to eat? How do you measure the size and weight of a live flopping fish? What kind of imaginative fish might this student be? What fish story might s/he like to tell, draw, paint, sing, write, act, or build? Through questions, this student gains the opportunity to learn how to focus. Worlds of educative possibilities open up with just one word that is heard. Together, the teacher and the student create a relevant storying curriculum. In the act of learning about a new world, the student creates this new world, and a place to belong in it. The student creates a work project, an educative enterprise with deep meaning and personal relevance. Something to share. The world of terror recedes. Inner city students who may not dream of "fishing" have their own words that need to be heard. Everybody is curious about something. Those words might include motorcycles, basketball, crocheting, piano, turtles, willow trees, Santa Claus, robots, movies, Bugs Bunny, dinosaurs, marmalade,
clothes, boats, rocks, Greek gods, cats, and pencils. Let that word be heard. For that word is the boat to freedom, both for the student and the teacher, and freedom is the heart of my philosophy of curriculum. "And surely nothing can be more important than finding the source of learning not in extrinsic demands, but in human freedom" (Greene, 1995, 382). I situate my definition of curriculum within Eisner and Vallance's (1974) five "conceptions" of curriculum, namely:

**Self-actualization, or curriculum as consummatory experience...**education is seen as an enabling process that would provide the means to personal liberation and development....helping the individual discover things for himself...a liberating process by providing integrated experience....provid[ing] both content and tools for further self-discovery (10-11).

Questions allow the student to learn how to actively embrace the freedom and responsibility of being a co-creator of his/her own new world of life-with-others. Compassionate listening is the means of gently, firmly, and consistently nurturing this student, encouraging him/her to actively cultivate his/her own liberating imagination. This will help him/her build trust in self and learn how to feel safe inside his/her own skin, as I am learning while I build this inquiry.

If the child at home wonders whether he is loved, the pupil wonders whether he is a worthwhile person. In both settings he can find some kind of answer by observing how others treat him.

(Dreeben, 1968, 38)

The compassionate teacher is neither threatened nor afraid of the real lives of his/her students. How can the student survivor of extreme violence, the one with the internal story and the internalized, embodied understanding of its dynamics and-complexities, believe that a teacher can and will help him/her learn unless the survivor learns how to trust the teacher? The trustworthy teacher is the one who actively demonstrates his/her own self-trust through the compassionate act of nurturing the student's self-trust. This teacher does not lie, does not punish,
does not deliberately cause students pain. S/he stands by his/her words and actions in private and in public, and honours his/her position of power by empowering students, rather than abusing power.

Trust is only involved when the trusting expectation makes a difference to a decision; otherwise what we have is a simple hope....Trust therefore always bears upon a critical alternative, in which the harm resulting from a breach of trust may be greater than the benefit....One who hopes simply has confidence despite uncertainty. Trust reflects contingency. Hope ignores contingency.

(Luhmann, 1979, 24)

How else can the teacher demonstrate, and how else can the student learn that the teacher deeply appreciates his/her struggle? A loving teacher would have allowed me to say "no" to learning the irrelevant lessons, without punishment. A loving teacher would have encouraged me to say "no" in the course of guiding me to my own "yes."

But young people, if they are to develop a sense of their own individuality and unique value...also need privacy, and some experience of themselves as individuals who have rights of their own...the need to establish a right to say no; No, I'm not coming to school today, I have plans of my own; no, I will not talk to the guidance counsellor about my hostility; no I will not take tests for you to build into a dossier about me.

(Friedenberg, 1976, 115)

The loving teacher demonstrates his/her trustworthiness through the act of compassionate listening. S/he sails boats with questions of his/her own, out in the open. S/he takes time, chooses questions with care. Questions, not answers, keep the exploration alive. Building self-trust, s/he also takes risks; s/he is a fellow explorer, a learner. The student who has been swallowed by the great fish needs the teacher to sail an underwater boat, a submarine, to reach him/her. Not to rescue the student, but to be with the student. Together, the student and teacher listen. The teacher's boat has sonar (sound navigation and ranging), like the student's body, like the great fish. The student who has been silenced, and the great fish who has not been heard,
Because of ocean properties and the tendency of sound to be reflected off sharp gradients in the water, these [whale] sounds are audible [to another whale] for thousands of miles.

(Calambokidis & Steiger, 1977, 23)

Together, the student and the teacher listen. The teacher is witness to the conversations.

The possibility of change depends on whether there are a sufficient number of enlightened witnesses to create a safety net for the growing consciousness of those who have been mistreated as children, so that they do not fall into the darkness of forgetfulness, from which they will later emerge as criminals or the mentally ill. Cradled in the "net" provided by such enlightened witnesses, these children can grow to be conscious adults, adults who live with and not against their past and who will therefore be able to do everything they can to create a more human future for us all.

(Miller, 1991, 136-137)

Dr. Wehrspann, my therapist-teacher was my first witness, my first healing teacher. "—I'm still suicidal, but I can live with it. I always have" (Stewart, 1995, 166). My other witnesses, healing teachers are named above. Being with the student, the teacher encourages the student to be fierce. The student learns how to build maps of the insides of the great fish. The teacher is witness to the revising of these maps as the student sounds the interior of the great fish. The student brings these maps as gifts to the teacher, as I offer them now, Gentle Reader, to you. You see that I see, that, like Job, I have more life in me, that I am healthier than I thought I was when I started this inquiry. Like Samson and like David, I have learned how to focus my energy to bring down the lie that survivors of violence should live in fear and silence. Like Daniel, I have learned that I was never alone.

Curriculum is the act of creating wholesome worlds, internal-external places that we co-create with every other life-form, animate and inanimate. Curriculum is how we learn how to be
more human, how we practice being compassionate Beings.

Through my inquiry, teachers now have access to a first-person account of the detailed struggle of a student who endured extreme intrafamilial violence and became a survivor-researcher-educator. They now have the opportunity to study this story, and to compare it with other autobiographical accounts—both to engage their own empathy and advocacy and to obtain a more complete picture of the context and the complexity of the issues I address. They now have the opportunity to compare it with other research literature in the field. They have the opportunity to reflect on it, critique, and dialogue about it. Most importantly, teachers now have the opportunity to compare it to the story of their own lives as human beings and teachers of human beings, and be moved to compassionate, empathic educative action.

**Releasing this Inquiry Releasing Me**

Take these maps, Gentle Reader. I entrust you with their safekeeping. I hold the original in my body. I release this inquiry into the world as it releases me. We both are born. Like Nick Adams, I release Ferdinand Fish.

He kneeled down in the gravel on the bank and reached down into the trout sack. It lay in the stream where he dragged it across the shallows. The old boy was still alive. Nick opened the mouth of the sack and slid the trout into the shallow water and watched him move off through the shallows, his back out of water, threading between rocks toward the deep current.

"He was too big to eat," Nick said....He wanted to get back to camp and get to work.

(Hemingway, 1973, 219-220)

Gentle Reader, you are my witness. Like Jonah and like Frankl, I've got a teaching job to do.

Amen and blessed be.
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APPENDIX

SOURCES FOR THIS ARTS-BASED NARRATIVE INQUIRY

Creative Work

Poetry

Playing to lose (Stewart, 1995)

Sculpture--Popbottle People

Boats & Toys I've Built

Letters to Myself

Drawings

Storybooks for Children

Short Stories

Essays

Songs

Personal Sources

Memories Re-collected

Diary

Journal

Learning Log

Meditation Journal

Historical Family Papers

Medical Records and Documents

Legal Records and Documents
Academic Records and Documents

Academic and Leisure Reading

Videotapes and Photographs of Myself Giving University Presentations

Audiotaped and Written Evaluations from Professors and Students who Attended my University Presentations

Written Evaluations from Health-care Professionals who Attended my Presentations

Drawings and Written Evaluations from Secondary Students who Attended my Creative Writing Workshops

Letters and Postcards from Elementary Students who Attended my Boat-building Workshops

Drawings and Letters from Pre-elementary and Elementary Student who drew Pictures for one of my Children's Storybooks

Personal and Professional (Written) Correspondence

Personal and Professional Electronic Mail

Animals/Symbols/Totems as Sources

Grizzly

Eagle

Great Fish

Blue Jay

Rocks and Trees

Yellow Rose

Strawberries

Gifts from Children

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FORMS EMPLOYED IN THIS ARTS-BASED NARRATIVE INQUIRY

Postmodern Automatic Organic Rhizomatic Palimpsest

Nonsense Letters with Phonetic Spelling

Invented New Words by Joining Words

Extended Quotes That Need Space to Breathe and be Heard

Reproductions of Bible Illustrations

Diary and Learning Log Entries, Ongoing Since 1983

Meditations

Poems

Short Stories

Storybooks for Children

Parables

Music

Prayers

Electronic and Written Letters

Boats, Cars, Trucks, Helicopter, and Other Toys

Popbottle People

Melville, Hemingway, cummings and Bible as Literary Sources

Written Text from Essays to my Teachers

Written text on my Essays from my Teachers

Conversations Between Persons Remembered and Recorded in Diaries

Conversations with Ancestors

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Conversations with the Great Fish

Encounters with Grizzly, Eagle, and Blue Jay

Encounters with Trucks

Strawberry and Orange

Baseball

Soccerball

Dreams

Puns

Alphabetical Lists on Cenotaph, in a Parade, and at a Banquet

Inverted Cliches
IMAGE EVALUATION
TEST TARGET (QA-3)

150mm
6"

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