

CHILD

There is a need to chart this journey, mine,
to understand the paths not taken,
to see the paths I took
and where, and how, I came to me.
Perhaps seeing where I was,
where I am,
I will know
where I want to be.

Journey with me through the murk of half seen choices.
Walk the past with me, down paths
both trodden and untrodden. Seeing who I was,
who I am,
then you may know
who you want to be.

This journey starts with but one step. But which?
With birth?
That screaming, squalling rupture into mortality,
bonding souls by common quest to all humanity
on our journey
through life
to our final bond?
No, not with birth.
Birth but defines
the forest through which we walk
not the paths we choose.

Begin then with self-awareness.
Move back through the swirling mist of life's unreality...

To the child.
Not sweet, not precocious, not exceptional, but
A child to be all children.
A little lost, confused by the world,
finding refuge from the insanity of maturity in the fantasy of innocence.
Seeking/fearing, wanting/fearing adulthood/knowledge,
ripped and torn by the explosions of growth
in the mind
in the heart
in the flesh of the child.
She is a child to be all children.

Except!

This child knows the touch of the father's flesh,
traces the thrust,
tastes the turgid tension

Not the sweetness of affection,
the tender caress, for this child. But
the swelling passion, the rising blood
from the parent to the child, now lost to innocence.

Not for her the tender, tremulous, terrifying growth from
child to woman, but a brutal thrust
to the tree of knowledge. (not painful. unpleasant)

No time!

No time to learn to love,
to learn to share,
to care,
to see the world through safely sheltered eyes.

No time!

No time for marrying Daddy,
for boys as friends,
for reaching,
for touching the world with safely sheltered hands.

The time of childhood trembles,
swirling bitterly into the raging whirlwind of unnatural passion
and passes before its sweetness can be tasted.

Daddy touching in the closet.
Daddy touching in the bed.
Fingers inside, caressing.
But never hurting, caressing.
(Daddies don't hurt their babies)
Let's play tickle, just you and me.
A game that's special for us. No,
Quick.
Quick, Mommy's coming.
O.K., Daddy.
We can play
Later.
Yes.
Run and play. But come again.
Soon.

No loss of innocence yet.

The child knows only trust,
and all adults have mysterious ways unpleasant to the child.
They smoke.
They spank.
They argue.
Wear suits
and ties
Work all day, sometimes nights.
So one more mystery is nothing to the child.

And
There is power in our secret, our secret from Mommy.
Mustn't tell Mommy. This is our game,
not Mommy's game.
And the child/woman becomes competitor,
the other woman in eternal triangle,
allied in carnality,
in power against the mother
who doesn't know our secret.

Mother
loves shouts gives takes cooks works smokes laughs cries loves
gives perms sews clothes makes jam loves the child
and doesn't know our secret.
The child is powerful, exultant in her power, her position.
And the child is confused,
hides in fantasy, in imagination
because all adults have mysterious ways unpleasant to the child.
Innocence is not yet gone,
the child still trusts and knows no loss.

Comes puberty and knowledge and boys.
Boys like to play with her like Daddy used to,
before she got too old for the game.
Still too young for pleasure
she begins to learn to please.
Daddy liked this. So do the boys,
But the child is not sweet, not precocious, not charming, not pretty
and too young to feel pleasure. So the boys turn to other flowers
already ripe for picking.
Her status, her affection are gone but not her innocence.
And the child is voted ugliest girl in the school.

Then there is health education.

In embarrassed matter-of-factness
sex is explained to children giggling with anticipation of
forbidden fruits and passions.

And the child is voted
ugliest girl in the school
while innocence wails its
Banshee scream of death.

The child hears the truth.
She IS the ugliest girl in the school.