

## 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.

## DEFENSES

Wounded things defend themselves  
In any way they can.  
Wounded child finds defense, protection  
Deep within her mind.  
Ugly, unloved, unlovable  
but not untouched.

She knew.  
She knew. All those years  
She knew. Somewhere deep inside  
She knew. Knew that something was not  
Right  
And knew to hold her silence  
Knew that silence defends  
Knew that secrets can kill  
Knew that unknowing protects  
She knew.  
She knew.

But silence can't protect  
Only draws adult eyes.  
    Are you ill?  
    What's wrong?  
    Why are you so quiet?  
    Talk to us!  
    We will make you speak.  
Needed now  
A wall to shield within  
Not freeze without.  
Retreat that began  
In the far mists of another country, another life,  
Is complete.

Retreat  
Behind a steel wall of protection  
Between herself and her world.  
Hard and firm, an erection against invasion,  
The wall rapes her soul, thrusting between  
Tremendous intellect and overpowering emotion.  
The hymen of her psyche is ruptured  
And mind and feeling are sundered, separated.  
No one hears the screams of pain while part is torn from part  
Emotional blood floods the void, dismissed as

Teen age tantrums.

The violence is  
Cauterized by the erection and the child is  
Outside the wall and the blood is  
Stanching within.  
She is safe now.  
Protected  
From betrayal imperiling survival.  
Still a child.  
Still needs the protection of  
The parents.  
Safe  
Now.

Not cold, the wall throbs with  
Her life blood. Always hard. Always firm.  
The wall grows warm within her,  
Warm with the comfort of wrapped and heated  
Rocks at the foot of a cold, winter bed.  
She cherishes the heat, drawing close to its  
Protection. She  
Basks in its warmth, and it  
Fosters growth, of a kind.

Protecting from her churning cauldron of emotion, the hard, shiny wall  
mirrors the joys and pains of those looking in.  
She weeps when they weep.  
Laughs when they laugh.  
Hurts, sings, cries, cheers, sobs, rejoices, grieves with the inlookers.  
Counterfeiting their every feeling as her own she is labeled  
emotional/caring/feeling/deep,  
when all she is  
is a mirror,  
hiding away from herself  
in fear and ignorance,  
accepting the label,  
and is loved for that.

Her mind is very quick, very bright,  
and soon hides the hard lines of the wall  
behind the softness of reflected emotion,  
and defends the defenses with the sharp bite of satire.

There is no one to hurt or make afraid,

except for a tiny worm.  
The worm knows what is held within.  
The tiny worm knows the walls must come down.  
In time.  
In time.  
They are new and beautiful, shiny, hard, hot.

Leave the walls a little while.  
They feel so good inside.  
They keep her safe.  
She will survive  
Now

## DESPAIR

Years pass.  
A child loses the awkwardness of childhood  
    without awareness of her sensuality,  
    without awareness of her grace.  
Inner wall throbs, firm and hard,  
Protecting growing intellect from churning emotions.

Occasionally,  
There are boy/men who like to play  
Daddy's game  
And she, repeating lessons learned not at  
Her father's knee, but close,  
Does not object.

Then there is the Scot  
Who teaches her the pleasure of a man.  
She wants to date. She wants to date  
The Scot.  
NO! NO!  
He is too old.  
You are too young.  
He could only want one thing from you.  
What else could he like about you?  
He is three years older than you.  
The mother shakes her head gently.  
The father rails.  
He will not risk  
Sharing her with another.  
The child/woman, long since  
Elevated into the eternal triangle,  
Defies the father/lover  
And takes another.

In her father's bed, at times, she  
Learns the pleasure of Daddy's game  
Until the Scot contracts a social disease  
(anti-social disease?)  
And she finds she has been sharing him with another  
All the while. Just like  
Her real lover, when she heard him with  
Mother. She learns the  
Exquisite pain of  
Sexual betrayal  
By another.



She is not yet sixteen and never will be sweet sixteen.

The intellect grasps the betrayal. Heat  
From the wall radiates through

The body  
    Melting,  
    Weakening,  
    Strengthening,  
    Changing

The very fabric of life until  
The system begins to fail.

Headaches, dizziness, fainting spells invade the system  
    until the parents concede a medical need.  
the child/woman sees only attention from her father/lover.  
Wanting/loathing  
    simultaneously hating/loving  
        fearing/craving,  
        needing/resisting

For the first time, the story spills out,  
Breaching the wall but not eroding it.  
White coat and stethoscope.

Tut  
Tut  
Shaking head  
Tut  
Tut  
Here are pills  
Take them  
They  
Will  
Help.

The father/lover flushes them immediately down the toilet.  
You are too  
Damned  
Young  
For  
This  
Stuff.  
(but I'm too old for other oral  
palliatives? i  
don't understand. i  
don't want to do any more.  
But i do, it was love.

But i don't  
But...)

The sixteenth birthday approaches  
not with kisses and lace and sweetness,  
but with arguments  
    with the mother  
        with the father/lover.

The fighting is confusing. It is  
child/parent/eternal triangle and the child/woman fears  
total destruction.

So  
She  
Runs.

Not heedlessly, though.  
The intellect plans. The wall holds. The rules say  
ifthesubjectis16andselfsupportingthenthelawcannotforceher  
toreturntoherparent'shome.

A few days to find a job.  
One to find a room  
    in the attic of a  
        three story  
            run down tenement.

A bed. A dresser.  
A fridge, stove and sink  
on the landing  
shared  
with the man  
across the landing.  
The bathroom is downstairs please use it thank you.

A call on a pay phone.  
The young officer tries to be kind.  
He is only  
The age of the  
Scot.  
Tut  
Tut  
Shaking head  
Tut  
Tut  
Here are words  
Take them  
They

Will  
Help.

The child/woman flushes them immediately  
From her mind.  
She will not be forced to return.  
It is enough.

A call on a pay phone.  
I am all right. Don't worry.

No

I

Am

Not

Coming home. How will it be if i do? Stricter? More rules?  
(But what about my father/lover? doesn't he want me back?  
are you taking care of him? if i come back,  
will someone take care of me?  
no. i don't want him again.

but i do, it is love.

but i don't.

but...)

No

I

Am

Not

Coming home! Just because, that's why.  
(it is our secret not yours and  
i will not share  
it with you)

The sudden popularity at school is  
Overwhelming.  
Teachers disapprove. Students cheer.  
No one  
    notices her.

No one  
    reaches to her.

No one  
    cares  
        about the throbbing wall.  
        about the crippling pain.  
        about the crushing dark

No one knows.

No one suspects.

The wall grows firmer, harder, penetrates deeper.

It is all powerful and invincible. But  
There is still the tiny worm.  
Gnawing.

She hangs out in the village, Greenwich style, milling  
Mindlessly with the other lost  
Ones.  
Afraid to use the stuff  
Afraid to speak  
Afraid to be alone  
Desperately needing love. There is still more  
Child than woman in the child/woman.

Then there are motorcycles,  
their power as sensual and elemental as any male organ.

Attila the Hun,  
a loner and gentle and too nice for the child/woman  
he fades quickly into oblivion

Then Fred,  
the leader of the pack, powerful and strong amid cruel men.  
Dark hair. Brown eyes. Muscular and dirty.

He sweeps by on his black charger  
carries her off to his castle far away in a clubhouse  
in town with drugs and sex  
and booze and sex.

Then to his castle far away in the country  
on a farm with drugs and sex  
and booze and sex.

In his own way he loves her,  
cherishes her  
as much as he knows how.

He teaches her to love him and the child/woman is a willing student.

She pleases him. Obeys him.

Disobedience might mean loss of love.

Love is sex.

Orgasm

is a solitary thing

accomplished in the bathroom, in the dark.

Sex is love.

He treats the child/woman well. Protects her from strangers.

Takes her to meet his mother.

The mother and the child/woman like each other and celebrate by  
getting  
drunk.

You should learn to drive  
Yes i should  
Tonight  
Yes i should  
too fast too fast too fast too fast too fast too fast too fast  
god, please god, make her stop screaming.  
The ambulance driver makes her stop.  
The child/woman is unhurt. The mother  
goes away with the siren and flashing lights.

The child/woman is terrified. Fred will be furious.  
He is furious. Will not speak to her.  
Will not see her. Forbids the gang to own her.  
Abandonment is death.  
She must have someone to be there  
Soon there are many.  
She is nubile,  
    young,  
        attractive,  
(she is still the ugliest girl in the school)  
        available.  
There are many.

There is a boss with a pregnant wife  
    and he wants to fuck but not the pregnant one.  
It is inconceivable to the child/woman to be  
    paid for being loved. The boss pays her well and she is loved.

Sex is love.  
Orgasm  
is a solitary thing  
accomplished anywhere, under any conditions, alone.  
Love is sex.

She is loved by others.  
Then she is loved by one who sees  
Potential.  
He teaches her the art of  
Love.  
How to please a man.  
How to sense what arouses his blood, his passion, his cock.  
She is very quick, very bright  
    has a wicked sense of humor,  
        that few grasp as her weapon of distance.  
She learns well and is loved.

Sex is love.  
Orgasm  
is a solitary thing  
accomplished any time and anywhere she wants.  
Damn the world.  
Love is sex

And sex is revenge. And then there is Shirley.

Cataclysmic change is catalyzed by gnat-sized events.  
Shirley is a gnat with wild red hair,  
Australian, confused, thirtyish, single  
And a nurse  
And a Mormon.  
She lives across the hall in the boarding house  
Where the child/woman waits for her new apartment,  
her place of business, to be ready.  
The pimp doesn't visit her there but he pays the rent.  
She models at the art school during the days  
The pay is good  
The work is easy.  
Her owner doesn't know.

Shirley lavishes sisterly concern on the  
Lost child down the hall. They drink  
    (aren't Mormons teetotalers?) and talk  
        and laugh  
            until late into the night  
                every night.  
She speaks of Indian legends,  
    of mystical experiences,  
        of men from space,  
            of things beyond the ken of mortal men.  
She teaches the philosophies of men mingled with  
    scripture of her religion  
The child/woman learns willingly.  
There is seeking, searching, struggling,  
And there is the religion with its structure  
    and answers  
    and arrogance  
    and certainty  
    and confidence  
    and controls  
    and direction  
    and explanations  
    and government

and keys  
and management  
and ordinances  
and regulations  
and rules  
and solutions  
and strength  
and supervision.

There is a church meeting one day.  
One indistinguishable day there is a church meeting.  
The child/woman is late  
No one to greet her in the  
Church foyer. A picture of  
Christ-risen towers over her head, looking down,  
Smiling, midst hosts of heavenly beings, welcoming  
Inviting her  
Her wall reflects the welcome, the artfully painted emotion  
And she  
Weeps  
Believing that the response comes from her heart  
Never knowing that she is only a shiny mirror  
Used to enhance the reflection of inlookers.

Missionaries teach her  
the Faith  
the Truth  
the Way  
the Light  
And it is ice water to her hot town, summer in the city.  
It is cooling relief on the fire of her mirror  
So she drinks without question.  
She embraces without restraint, or thought, or caution  
envisioning a life of peace,  
directed and guided in the  
light of christ, never questioning the right of the light.  
Not eighteen, she lies about her age to enable  
her entrance into the church of  
Truth.

Her owner is angry and upset but is not violent and she thinks that  
she is finally free of something  
she only dimly recognizes  
and does not begin to understand  
and will not for many years to come.  
She believes herself to be her own,

unowned,  
uncontrolled  
unfettered  
by exoteric control.

She glows from within  
(but not from within the wall, it is still firm, hard, shiny)  
with the happiness of conversion.

The past will be eradicated, all forgiven.

The future will begin as she rises from the waters of baptism,  
wiped clear as tide swept sand.

Follow the program, she hears, and be  
transported to heaven and eternal life.

We have the system, the plan.

(a prepackaged mass transit system to god,  
merchandised and peddled with skill and sophistication  
far beyond the ken of the child/woman to resist)

Pay your fare, sit in our train,  
let us do the driving and we'll get you to GOD.

We, alone, know the route to GOD.

We, alone, know the straight and narrow way to GOD.

We, alone, can deliver you safely to GOD.

We, alone.

Pay your fare, sit in our train.

The child/woman is ready to pay the fare  
she is ready to transfer control  
from one owner to another.

There is Fred in the subway station. He was  
Good to her and she can be good to him, now, too.

He still hasn't fixed that broken tooth, but  
his wonderful brown eyes are now warm and friendly.

He still doesn't bathe often, but  
the earring in his left ear still glints brightly in the light.

I've missed you, baby. The old lady's fine now.

What are you doing? Where are you working?

You're looking great.

His embrace is fervent, and public,  
the child/woman feels familiar fires rekindled.

She has God now, though, so she  
can control the passion, she knows. They go to her place -

She can't teach him about God standing in

The mass transit system!

Fred, the most wonderful  
(he shuts the door behind them)



thing has happened to  
(he takes off his black leather jacket)  
me. I can hardly  
(he takes off her coat)  
explain how much it has  
(he embraces her passionately)  
changed my life. My whole  
(he feels the fire returned in her kiss)  
perspective of myself has altered.  
(he slips his hands under her sweater)  
No. No. Fred that's not  
(he kisses her body, feeling the response of her flesh)  
what I invited you here for  
(he leads her to the bed)  
Fred, I'm trying to tell you  
(he presses her tenderly backwards)  
that I've found a religion that I believe  
(he murmurs encouragement)  
and I'm going to be baptized  
(he caresses her breasts and rises to mount her)  
NO! I can't do that any more  
(he stops and looks at her in disbelief)  
I'm going to be a MORMON!  
(he laughs he sees conviction he darkens)

Time freezes the bodies into one motionless tableau,  
The black clad figure poised menacingly above  
The half-dressed child/woman, pinning her limbs  
Beneath him with his own.  
You're joining some goddam convent?  
You?  
A fucking mormon? I'll kill you first.  
I'm gonna kill you, you fucking bitch.

his fist crashes towards her face  
over  
and over  
and over

SMASH

POUND...

SMASH...

the world dwindles to cold, white skin

stretched over combat worn knuckles  
the pillow is soaked with the sweat and stink of her fear  
she lies motionless.

again his fist crashes down  
over  
and over  
and over

SMASH...

POUND...

SMASH...

now there are only pores  
bristling with black spikes  
glistening with wetness  
christening with pain  
finally, the heat of the rage is dispersed  
he raises his fist from the pillow  
molecules from her face.  
ThankyouGod,  
hedidn'tkillme

(Brutal laugh, heated breath inches from her face)  
Fucking little bitch. I'll let them  
have you. Maybe you can teach them some tricks.  
I'd like that.  
you can fuck your way to heaven.  
The contempt in his voice is like ice. He doesn't love  
Her any more and she shrinks inside herself  
Be a goddam mormon. They deserve you.  
They're all fucked up and so are you, baby. So are you.  
(He grabs the studded leather jacket and storms back into the past)  
ThankyouGod,  
hedidn'tkillme

The wall screams the truth.  
She IS the ugliest girl in the school.

Weeks flash by filled with fresh faces  
    deep doctrines  
    incredible ideas  
    hopes,  
    plans,

and visions from God  
The old, stately railway station is subdued in the predawn hours  
as friends gather tearfully to launch their  
newest convert on the overnight boat train  
on the trip home to England.  
Don't forget to write. Don't forget to pray.  
Don't forget us. Don't forget God.  
I won't.  
I won't.

Debarkation is overwhelmingly intense.  
    screaming gulls,  
    boats, traffic, people  
    banners and streamers cracking in the wind  
    balloons rising like crayola effervescence in the chilled-wine spring air  
Thousands line the quay and  
    flutter handkerchiefs and hands at the  
Thousands who line the rail and  
    flutter handkerchiefs and hands  
And weep.  
The emotion washes over the child/woman  
    is reflected from the wall.  
She weeps and waves with them at no one.  
And they wave back but not at her.

Salt spray blowing through her hair,  
    over her face,  
    into her heart  
(but never breaching the wall, only washing down it)  
she feels whole and cleansed, embarking on a new life of purity.  
Alas!  
Her spirit obeys, but her flesh is weak and  
Yields quickly to the champagne, but  
Only takes two men.  
(there are more who want her but she fights the urge to please)

She sails through the journey in a mist of  
    parties, food, men, and drink  
    arriving at her new life with the  
    shreds of her bridal-gown purity  
    clutched forlornly in her hands.  
No one knows. No one cares. No one suspects.  
She is safe.

In time the shreds will be rewoven into a modest dress of virtue,  
    stained occasionally, torn periodically,  
        mended and remended continually  
            until even she will hardly remember  
                that it once hung in shreds  
                    mere moments after construction.

England is a time of building.  
A time of building new images of herself  
New ways of discerning her reflection.  
Paintings from her mind carefully built,  
Stroke by stroke,  
Upon the burnished veneer of her wall.  
Reflections without depth,  
Without substance, only paintings  
Of projections exposed on the receptive film of  
Her wall.  
With vigor, with fervor, old images, the past, are  
Brushed from the surface of the wall like  
Frost from a window.  
Too late!  
Like age, each year leaving its tracings in the flesh,  
Each image leaves its tracings on the mirrored surface.  
Tiny etchings, invisible to the eye, mar the wall,  
Distorting, forever, each new projection,  
Imperceptibly changing and blurring each new painting  
With the fine lines of the old.

England is a time to play at youth,  
    at girlhood and sweetness  
        and other illusions.  
A time to learn that mormon girls are  
Responsible  
For the mores of mormon men.  
When mormon men play at passion, like other men,  
She says No! once, twice, maybe thrice  
And then, to be nice,  
She says Yes.  
She never quite understands why  
The morning after she says yes  
They say no,  
Goodbye.  
And she is alone, unloved again.  
The game of mormon man meets mormon woman  
Is alien to the child/woman.  
Not only are the rules obscure,

the game itself is hidden from her view.

With England came  
Mike and John  
Of Ireland and of England,  
Who loved her as she was  
No pretensions,  
No double expectations, impossible to satisfy.  
    nurturing love to lead the way to virtue,  
    to grow the skills of self-caring.

One she could have had  
To love and cherish 'till death do us part  
But  
She had learned the ultimate prize for  
Mormon Woman  
Is  
Mormon Returned Missionary,  
One who has served god and church  
By selling the system to straying sheep and  
Saving the souls of some who  
Sought a savior.  
The one she should have taken was not one  
Who was an ultimate prize  
And she,  
Not yet knowing that there is more to man  
Than an organ and his  
Reflected status,  
Would not take the prize that might  
Best have filled her life  
But might have not.

And there were some who filled the bill and thought to take her hand,  
But always, deep within their hearts, some small red flag would wave  
And they, with no awareness why, would simply fade away.  
Until one spoke for all the rest,  
Mere weeks before The Day.  
The closer I get to you, my dear,  
    the less there is to see  
        until I think that all there is  
        is images of me.

While bonds of future love dissolved  
New bonds transpired  
The child/woman found a  
Family.

Strong, religious, founded on tradition with  
Father/provider the patriarch and  
Mother/nurturer the supportive matriarch,  
The child/woman gratefully accepted the role of  
Obedient daughter.

Recognizing the wounded bird child, the family  
Accepted her, made her theirs,  
Reflected into her  
    their hopes,  
    their expectations,  
    their visions,  
    their images  
For their own daughters,  
The child/woman made them hers,  
Patterning her dreams, aspirations, on those  
Noble projections from beyond.  
The dreams brought self esteem, stability  
To the mending of the dress of virtue, and the  
Aspirations were good and high.

Accepted as a daughter,  
She responded with filial love and  
Obedience, wanting/needing authority in  
Her life, equating authority with love.  
And, with the new family, it was.

Dissolving manlove brought pain, but  
Pain softened by the new found  
Familylove  
Pain made bearable by plans  
To join twin sisters  
Already pursuing degrees and letters.

With spring's arrival  
The child/woman arrived at church college  
(student body of 25,000,  
    high standards,  
    noble expectations,  
    good hunting).  
Triumphantly the fit was made,  
    the fit of images within, projected from without.  
    good mormon college student, young, capable, doing the  
Proper Things, and  
Belonging  
To the group.

Within weeks she met the man.  
Within weeks he professed undying love,  
    mistaking the reflection of his expectations for hers.  
Her new family approved the match and the man was everything  
    he ought to be  
        except right for her  
And who could have been right  
For a mirror?

On the steps of the church  
She cries  
No!  
It shouldn't be!  
They smile knowingly.  
    maiden modesty  
    shyness  
    cold feet  
    typical bride  
    how sweet just  
    wait  
    until  
    tomorrow  
    then see her smile  
She believes the reflections of their gentle teasing and enters the doors.  
Doors leading to  
    life eternal, to perfect union, to everlasting joy  
Doors leading to neverending life  
    frozen on the surface of a wall.  
The worm knows, but what is one worm  
    against the might of  
Right.  
It gnaws, but makes no hole,  
And still it tries and keeps alive the hope  
Of healing.  
Some time.  
Perhaps.

She sees from those around her that it is  
Right  
To drop her studies  
(they are not as important as his)  
And support her fledgling family while  
He-who-has-authority completes his studies.  
The others do that and so  
It must be right and so

She paints that image, too.

Then she learns that it is wrong  
To use control to stay the  
Birth of young.  
Let god choose when the child shall come  
And so they cease control  
And Nature takes Her course.

The man is king, within his realm.  
The man, the priesthood bearer, is  
Representative of god.  
And she, devout believer,  
Transfers her life's control again.  
He, beset with crushing burden,  
Retreats into the strength of silence  
And she  
With nothing to reflect, is lost  
And turns to another.  
Captivated by reflections of himself,  
He, too,  
Professes love and passion,  
Watches with delight the swelling of new life within  
Although he did not seed it.

Lovers chained within the web of  
    god  
    family  
    culture  
    community  
They talk and nothing more  
'Till duty tears them part from part, and heart from heart.  
Yet life with him would have been none  
Else.  
Still she would have been a mere reflection of him  
Nothing more.  
Echoes from above reverberate throughout her mind.  
    "god will judge what's in the heart", and in her heart,  
        she knows, is vile and filthy  
            SIN,  
Now etched irrevocably on her soul  
    a blaze of desolation,  
        condemnation.

The wall reflects the truth.  
She IS the ugliest girl in the school.



Life goes on with procreation. She walks a line 'twixt death and life  
Each time she swells with seed, and  
Some survive and some do not  
But she persists, perhaps endures.  
Her health is poor.  
Her body weak  
And who who's to say and who's to know if the  
Problems are purely physical.

In time  
Child/woman surrenders to pedestal woman  
But pedestal woman has no  
Balance.  
God and life have trapped her on a pedestal  
Shaking,  
Trembling  
In every gust of life.

The years come and the years go and god  
In infinite wisdom tells the mighty  
Military machine to send  
He-who-has-authority to serve god and country  
In England.  
Finally, there are those who do not care to see  
Themselves reflected and she  
Begins to grow some images from within.  
Two years are good. Then silent change.

A crisis,  
    unannounced and undeclared,  
        with deadly portent,  
            passes unremarked across their lives and  
                sows its seeds of death.  
His military role, the part he plays in war,  
    necessitates the launch of birds  
        with radiating death.  
Perhaps just one would be enough, a squadron is too many  
And Vietnam kills once more,  
Not with knives, bullets, bombs  
But silently with boiling pressure, guilt and shame  
Too great for one alone.  
He helped  
To send the squadron up and knew the final cost to  
    women, children, life would be  
        untold

uncounted  
unaccountable

Birds recalled  
Clouds never grown  
But one would bear the price, unknown, of fury never scattered.  
Those who might give help, will not.  
There is no problem here, they say.  
These men are all anomalies, predisposed  
To stress,  
And weak.

Pedestal woman knows nothing  
Of the Bombs, or of the part her husband plays  
Holding firm the wall of  
Shaking dominoes.  
She knows he leaves  
Sometimes for weeks  
Is  
Distant, cool, withdrawn  
On his return.

With children, church, community  
There is no time for introspection and so she doesn't see  
The man she loves, for good or ill, has simply ceased to be.  
And time goes by and he retreats behind a wall of steel  
Containing all the grief and shame he's told he doesn't feel.

They pass the years in tragic insensibility to  
Reality.  
They are two mirrors  
Endlessly reflecting images that reflect  
Endlessly reflecting images that reflect  
Endlessly reflecting...

The worm turns over and she feels that something is not  
Right,  
Somehow, within her home, she  
Doesn't know just why.  
She turns to god and those ordained by him to point the way.  
Dear sister, you must be  
    more patient  
    more kind  
    more loving  
    more feminine  
    more womanly

more humble  
more obedient  
more fruitful

Dear sister, you must be more  
Because he-who-has-authority is enough.  
So she paints new pictures, piled on old,  
of all that she must be  
and never sees the incompatibility  
of everything she paints.

There is not time in mortal life  
to be all things to all  
and she is doomed to failure ere she starts.

And starts anyway.

god says she can do all things and she believes her god,  
Never questioning whether the voice  
Speaks from heaven

Or

The everlasting hills.

England ends. The US calls to him, though not to her.

In time they find themselves

Civilians in a tiny town, close by the heart of  
Mormon life and soul. They settle down, buy a home,  
Planting trees to shade their age.

Last child is born

(their doctor, local man of god,  
agrees it would be wisest, and so they have permission  
to stop the flow of life, after  
seven births, three deaths and  
her close brush with the final bond)

And home should yield a haven,  
Filled with peace of growing brood,  
Good, productive.  
But doesn't.

His choice of job, policeman, drives him deeper into silence

And she, unable to reflect for him, reflects for all the others.

Reflects a life agrarian, with canning, quilting, baking.

With handy skills she has not and

Social skills she has not either

Mormon social skills of

coyness,  
servility,  
obedience,  
submission.

Skills essential to local female life. In truth she is unlike them

Regardless of her efforts  
Valiantly made, to fit herself within the lines  
Reflected on the wall  
She fails.

These are her people, she recalls, the peculiar people  
Of god. She has made them her own  
And aches to be  
One with them.  
They do not want her. Will not  
Accept her.  
You are not feminine  
    you are not womanly  
        you are selfish  
            you do not understand wifing  
you do not understand mothering  
    you do not understand womaning  
        you are not humble  
you do not submit to your husband  
    you resist priesthood authority

We know the truth.  
You ARE the ugliest girl in the school.

Time crawls on  
She finds diversion, if not solace  
Working hard she builds a business  
Successfully selling stuff throughout  
The region, managing half a hundred  
Saleswomen.  
She is adept and success is hers  
Without the violation  
Of god and home and mormon role  
As mother.  
Her husband is not neglected, much.  
Her children always parented by one  
Perhaps the other.  
Her reaching stretch to be herself,  
    to find some other purpose  
        besides the shallow imitation reflected  
            in the mirror,  
Results in growing confidence,  
    in fledgling independence.  
Yet the image growing now is directly oppositioned  
    to all the pictures on the wall, the many visions of submission  
        and she denies the growing struggle hidden far within.

Conflict

Stress that feeds the worm  
Strengthens its endeavor to gnaw one leak  
Right through the shiny dam. In time the worm  
Might cleft the raping wall

But once again her life is played for god and fate  
Who oft conspire with brutal joke  
That only god and fate  
Appreciate.

The road is damp, but safe enough.  
The light is good, clear visibility  
Along the highway.  
She does not find the road she needs, but finds the State Police  
And signals, turns to meet the man, requesting some direction.  
A glance!  
The rearview mirror fills  
With speeding devastation.  
Oh shit! Oh shit! Ohshit  
He'll hit me  
He can't miss!  
Nor does he.  
She's almost braked.  
He's almost 70  
Doesn't see her car  
Doesn't brake to stay the crash.

The impact is profound  
Snapping seat in two  
Whipping head back then front both times impacting.  
She sees that she can have a choice  
    power pole  
    street sign  
    switching box  
She just has time to aim the car towards the city sign  
    before the blackness takes her mind,  
    before the second impact  
    finishes destruction.  
Again her head strikes fore and aft. Body strapped to broken seat.

First conscious thought  
oh god the car he will be furious its trashed  
She struggles out the door  
Fighting to maintain consciousness

To stand alone,  
Unaided

Black uniform.  
Are you alright?  
You're white, so white.  
Let me call an  
Ambulance.  
You're white, so white.

No. No. She cries.  
i am fine.  
(he will rage even hotter if i come  
home with flashing light or,  
worse,  
stay in the hospital)  
No. No.  
i am fine.  
Help from kindly, thoughtful strangers  
Returns her to her home,  
Although her home is 50 miles away.  
There is no choice, he must be told  
That  
She has wrecked their car, their only car,  
And left it far away.

His anger is not hidden.  
Although in future years, she will  
See that anger was not aimed at her  
Just a quirk of war based stress  
Now she only sees the anger.  
Pain in her head is surpassed only  
By pain in her heart  
To see that he could be so angry, when she is so hurt.

The night is tense, sleepless. Morning  
Brings no respite, yet she urges him  
To work, to class held far away, and  
Goes about her daily tasks.  
She calls a friend to take the load of  
Work, to bear the brunt.  
While she speaks  
Blood-red flashes  
Her skull, an explosion without a sound  
The last she knows, her head explodes in  
Pain, in heat, in vivid red,

Then blissful black.

Awareness comes  
Weeks have passed.  
The pain has lessened some, they say, she doesn't know.  
No memory of laying helpless in the bed  
Screaming to be let to die, begging for relief.  
One loving cousin holds her hands  
Sentinel of the bed, and talks and talks of nothing  
Much, just comfort in the black abyss.  
Pedestal woman remembers nothing of the  
Hospital  
But knows the feel of the cousin's voice  
Extending through the mists.  
No words, merely  
Fleeting, tenuous strands holding her  
To reality. To love.

disjointed  
          images  
are  
          all  
she knows  
for many months  
          disjointed  
images  
          and  
pain

Pain - constant companion  
Requiring, demanding, attention.  
The pressure within her skull threatens to rip the bones apart  
Life is marked by valleys of  
          torpor trapped between  
          Himalayan peaks of pain.  
There are no grassy mountain meadows of  
          solitude and peace.  
Needles, pills, fleeting thoughts of suicide  
          (but god would be pissed  
          would never understand  
          so she doesn't)  
Mark the landscape of her life. Old friends visit but she is afraid  
Intimidated, by pressing faces  
          caring arms of people she can not  
          recall.  
Lost job

(perhaps she could hold on, they want her to  
the wall has seen the image of success and it is bad  
success will threaten her existence. It is  
not feminine, not womanly, not appropriate  
good mormon women belong in the home, not in the world  
and deep within she sees that success in the world  
will mean failure in the bed)

Rare moments she is fully sensible of the world  
Both outer and inner and  
Rages and despairs and  
Feels the midnight theft from  
The garage of her mind.  
Ferrari gone  
Replaced with Beetle.  
Parts of her mind that should do thus and so  
Do not.  
Instructions that she knows are commonplace because they  
Flow so easily, without thought, without intent  
Find no path, no route to follow  
Drifting endlessly through the shattered discord of her  
Mind.

The doctors concern is real  
But not so real as his  
Frustration.  
He sees  
    no major break,  
    no hemorrhage,  
    no fracture,  
    no blood,  
    no harm,  
Within her skull.

Neurosurgeon spends 20 minutes  
    no physical trauma. you simply need rest.  
    small concussion, possibly.  
Psychiatrist spends more time.  
    near death trauma. common, it will pass.  
    delayed stress syndrome.  
Neurologist spends 10 minutes.  
    psychiatrist says delayed stress.  
    nothing's wrong with your brain.  
    pull yourself together,  
    the pain will stop  
    when you stop being hysterical.



Home again she strains  
To follow doctor's orders  
Pulling, forcing herself to come  
Together.  
She aches to unify the pieces but  
They resist.  
Parts that should function like this  
(she's sure she should be able to do...  
to do...? what...?  
what was that...?)  
Puzzle pieces, mislaid or gone,  
Evade her flawed attempts to rearrange.  
Pieces gone, but where? and other  
Pieces  
Inhabit strange corners, seeding confusion.  
Apprehension is unclear, but she believes  
That things are adrift within her  
Mind.

She no longer feels at home  
Doesn't feel familiar  
Within her head, but  
Will not speak for fear  
Fear of being locked away  
Forever.

And always is the pain.  
A rubber band, stretched too far  
Snapping suddenly  
Sharply, from extension  
Breaks inside her head each time the headache starts.  
A flash of snapping tension, then  
Tsunami wave of pain  
Washes the mind, the head, swelling through the body.  
Side effects unpredictable and  
Unbearable,  
Different with every snap.  
    partial paralysis  
    drooping features  
    nerveless fingers  
    unstable equilibrium  
    sightless eyes  
    meaningless mind  
(most terrifying of all, to be trapped inside a body  
    unable to speak, sending thoughts, words, uttering only gibberish

unable to comprehend the spoken word  
unable to recognize, decode lines and scratches  
on pieces of paper  
trapped inside, without communication)

She fears the destruction of her mind, insanity  
Inability to pull herself together.

Another test, the doctor says  
There's something more to this  
Than stress.  
Yes  
Psychologist agrees, there is more.  
See the specialist. He might  
Be able to help. I cannot.  
Pedestal woman has no wish  
To see another doctor.  
She does not want to hear the words  
That will lock her in  
Forever  
No choice. No choice.  
And so  
She goes.

The tests take weeks.  
Exhaustive, exhausting tests reduce her  
To tears each time  
Stretch her patience, sap her nerves.  
Finally  
Verdict delivered.  
The reason you feel your  
Head is in pieces  
Is  
Your head is in pieces.  
Organic brain damage. Nothing to do but wait  
Until the dust clears, so to speak  
Then assess how much permanent damage remains.  
It will take near three years ere the healing completes  
What you need now is patience.

Patience. Now a dirty word, ugly in  
It's context.  
She tries to wait without anxiety  
But fear will not be stilled.

There is always fear  
fear of the pain

fear of giving up the pain  
fear of going crazy  
fear of the fear  
fear of the future  
fear of the changes in her  
fear of the fear  
And there is the pain  
That eats into her head, her mind, never leaving  
Just existing  
Varying levels of intensity  
It becomes her lover  
her companion  
intimate with her every thought and  
action

Its companion, drugs, is her marriage vow  
Wedding her to the pain so that  
She can take the drugs so that  
She can live with the pain so that  
She can take the drugs so that...

Dependence is complete. She cannot  
Function without the drugs, without the help of  
Husband, without the help of  
Children.

Dependence is complete  
And she cannot imagine ever knowing  
Well and whole again.  
With the pain/drug cycle comes dependence/dominance  
Each facet feeding  
Each facet  
And cementing the circle of destruction  
Into an unbreakable mold.

Coincidental to the healing of the brain there is often  
Unavoidable  
Personality change.  
In bypassing damaged synapse, and building sound connection  
Old paths and patterns are disrupted, personality is perverted in  
Ways unknowable, unpredictable.  
Her damage has been  
a bomb dropped on a highway  
a twelve lane super highway.  
A detonation, disrupting pathways  
destroying traffic

scattering debris for miles around  
devastates the highways of her mind.

Slowly, imperceptibly  
Damage is assessed, repaired.  
The crater, far too deep to fill, requires mitigation.  
    bypass,  
    overpass,  
    reroute,  
    new lanes.

Pathways shift. Over time, traffic patterns change  
Full function resurrects, almost.

But

Changing patterns in her brain  
    trigger changes in her soul  
    not just the mind

The wall has suffered too  
The worm is working there  
    determined to prevent repair.

Weakening wall  
Personality shift  
Combine  
In ways that he-who-has-authority cannot grasp.  
Pedestal woman is  
Unaware that changes are occurring.  
She has no way to  
Scale the change.  
She has no memory of any other being within.

Again, a business.  
Not with great success, the business was too young  
But promise of success.  
Learning to work with crushing headaches  
Learning to live with constant pain  
Learning to live with drugs, many drugs  
Powerful drugs  
Drugs that dull the pain  
    in the head  
    in the heart  
    around the wall  
Drugs that stop the pressure against the cracks  
    marring the glossy surface of the wall.

Third anniversary came and went unremarked  
of the shattering crash. Then

in the very month  
It happened again. A fool  
Passing on a residential street as she turns left  
Collides from behind.  
Pedestal woman hits her head  
    once more inside a car.  
Once more the brain is hurt.  
Tissue only barely healed  
Torn anew and she  
Struggles vainly to complete the jobs she has decreed  
As good.

In months the business sifts away  
Like sand clenched in a fist  
And she strains with all her might to try to find a way  
To hold on fast to work and mind.  
Too  
Much.  
Too  
Much.  
She cannot hold.  
The business doors are closed and massive bills hang overhead  
Like Damocles' shining, razor sword.

Pain beyond her bearing, beyond  
Her strength to fight becomes all  
Reality.  
Stress does nothing but increase the intensity of pain.  
Pain does nothing but increase the intensity of stress.  
Shots and pills are once again the fact of life within the  
Shrinking boundaries of the house that holds her now.  
The biting sting of needle  
    sliding sensuously under skin  
        becomes the welcome harbinger of peace  
            release from pain.  
On days when needles seem too much, or owners start to frown  
    pills instead  
        but their effect  
            is slower, not as sure  
                unless they are combined just right.  
She learns the proper combinations that will let her float away  
    but leave her mind alert enough that others do not know  
        how far she drifts.

The wall grows dull from lack of use.  
Although it still is strong

it does not shine so bright  
Inlookers  
No longer see  
Themselves  
Reflected well and so they say  
    she has changed  
    she is uncaring  
    she is hard  
    she is ugly underneath.

Though the wall is not so bright,  
It has not become so dull  
She knows their cruel thoughts  
Reflected in the clouded wall  
She sees that they are right.

Black despair comes pressing in  
Reminds her soul  
She has no worth  
And never will

god knows eternal truth.  
She IS the ugliest girl in the school.

## MIND

Years drift past beneath a cloudy  
canopy of sullen gray  
and wisps of fog cling to my mind  
my soul  
my life.

fog that buffers wildly raging pain  
near,  
somewhere,  
but not quite here  
or there...  
just... near.

without intent  
the fog grows thick,  
extending probing fingers in and out and through my world,  
protecting me from all the pain but  
numbing, too, from all the world.

Some days a hint of blue strokes through the fog and suddenly,  
it seems to me,  
the world becomes  
more real,  
more clear,  
more imminently near and then  
i wonder why, and where it was before.  
i stretch, i grope to understand but then  
it slips away right through my sluggish fingertips.  
not quite like sand in tight clenched fist,  
more like the aimless, undirected drift of glue  
squeezed thoughtlessly in space and  
grasped by  
pressure-gloved and stiffened hand.

My time-space link disintegrates and I exist  
within a cloud of drifting torpor born of  
chemical dependence,  
sustained, maintained and subsidized by Hippocratic oath  
intent on saving from all pain.  
Deep within the cloud that numbs my mind  
one small faint voice  
coughs,  
gasps,  
trembles  
through the clinging murk.  
A feeble, fading, failing cry for help,  
feeble, but persistent

fading, but persistent  
failing, but persistent.  
it cries and sends me seeking once again for help.  
the time has come,  
i tell the man,  
to give up all the drugs.  
to learn to fight the pain inside without the aid of needles, pills.  
but fear is there  
intent  
inside  
and I am not a hero.  
i am not brave enough to face,  
Alone,  
the pain that rages in my head.  
nor am I brave enough to face,  
Alone,  
the long, drifting journey through  
the clinging canopy of gray  
that marks the course before me now.  
Please, doctor,  
do not say there are no other choices.

Don't make me choose between the two. i cannot.  
nor am I brave enough to drift alone,  
forever alone  
mentally extinguished.  
nor am I brave enough to fight alone,  
forever alone  
physically tormented.

Pain clinics, yes, I've heard of them how much?!  
oh, god. He never would agree to send me far away and  
pay so much.  
another choice. please let there be another choice.  
he really doesn't see how far I drift,  
nor do you and i  
cannot say to you how much i need the drugs.

Addiction is complete and i  
cannot say to him how much i need the drugs.  
what little he and i have left would die and i  
would be alone again to  
face the cloud or  
face the pain.  
Please let there be another choice, not just the three.

Hypnosis. Yes. I like the sound of that.  
you could tell the pain to stop and i



could tell the drugs to leave. i hope.  
and he would never know how far i drifted on that cloud  
nor  
guess the depth of need within my flesh.  
he need not take an active role,  
    need not participate, in my release from  
        clinging bars that hold my soul in bondage...  
need never know  
that i am weak and sold my agency, my birthright,  
for a simple bowl of pottage –  
a churning bowl of chemical enslavement.  
Yes, hypnosis! Please, doctor,  
do the work and do it soon before i slide  
Alone  
beneath the surface of the soup and drown.

You work for weeks.  
you talk and talk and talk and i...  
cannot explain the reason for your slowness.  
Hurry! Do your work. Release me from the prison.  
Hypnotize my soul, my mind, and  
make this pain dissolve and leave.  
You can't?! Why not?  
Because  
    i will not let you in?  
Because  
    my mind is closed and walled?  
how can that be?  
i want - i need - to be released.  
no matter that, you say, i still  
will not relax the entrance to my mind and  
let you near.  
whirling, spinning, inner panic stirs the clouds around my mind.  
    to come so far,  
        so close, and then to see the final straw...  
            snatched  
                stripped from my clutching grasp  
to see the only light of hope  
flicker in the empty night and threaten desolation.  
NO!  
Somewhere deep within a cry is made  
one last gust of rage  
    rips through the languid torpor of the cloud  
        rouses resonating chords to  
            fight just one more time.

A pause.  
a timeless pause.  
while paths are opened,

thoughts exchanged and  
contacts made so far away  
that i can only vaguely feel the  
echoes of their movements.  
and suddenly i know! The knowledge is full grown  
(but who knows in what soil the seed was sown  
nor who the farmer is)  
it is not you who does the work  
not you who stops the pain. The secret of hypnotic help is  
not the passing of control from me to you. The secret lies  
in license granting right  
to pass control from me within  
to me without.

i do not need your help to use hypnotic trance  
no matter who or what you are  
no matter what your skill  
work performed within my mind, beneath the cover of your trance  
is all performed alone  
by me.

You simply give permission for doors, already there, to open out  
and use the vast, untapped resources  
of that deeper mind  
perhaps subconscious  
perhaps the soul  
perhaps...  
who knows what word to use  
the word is naught. It is enough to know that  
i and i alone  
can access tools inside my self and make the needed changes.

The timeless pause has come and gone.  
An epoch marking pause for me, a chunk removed from time.  
for you  
unremarked  
unrecognized  
unregarded moments  
embedded in the ceaseless, incessant current of invariant time.

Alone, the next step vague,  
i feel a flag, a small red flag of warning.  
a momentary,  
cautionary warning.  
this path will not be free.  
one brief wave... the flag is gone. i wonder  
call from divinity, from god?  
is this a tool of devilish proportions, to meddle with my soul?  
will god remove himself from me? Is this a step upon that path,

long threatened in my church, that wide and easy path that leads  
to apostasy?  
How can it be? It's only me.  
there is no invocation of powers, spirits, souls of hell  
unless i am myself  
a soul of hell, incarnate.  
and i am not!

And so i dredge up every word i've ever heard  
about hypnosis.  
i try to blank my mind.  
such total concentration.  
each muscle of my flesh rebels  
one twitch,  
one itch and all is lost and then i start again...  
again...  
again...  
it takes such time to free my mind from earthly occupations  
to drop the bonds that hold me fast within the realm of flesh  
but time i have and use, alone, unnoticed in the dark.

Excitement builds and wanes through  
flawless flight  
or  
crumbling crash  
of tests intended to explore  
that lets me plumb the limits of my inner mind.  
the doctor frets. what consequence this playing with my mind?  
the danger is  
unmarked unknown unimportant  
i say, and, anyway,  
i cannot stop what is.  
i do not say  
i will not stop no matter what the cost.

Three short weeks to trace the lines,  
find points of contact in my head  
disconnect  
disengage  
separate  
terminals that carry flashing blasts of pain.  
Liberation!  
Emancipation!  
How can i be without the pain?  
without that constant, pressing, slowing, dragging, pulsing, prying pain.  
i fill with light  
with energy  
with joy.  
gone! The pain is gone, blocked by me alone.

i jump  
i run  
i play  
i sing  
i float far above the ground with joy.  
the pain is gone, blocked by me alone.  
doctor frets, nervous and confused.  
not a normal mode of treatment  
he is not sure not sure at all. Except...  
he can see  
the pain is gone  
blocked  
by me alone.  
now exploring always exploring  
Where can i go?  
What can i do?  
Why can i do it?  
What is happening?  
What else can i do?

Other corners of my mind i probe and dig and press,  
exploring dusty echoes out of time.  
i feel the strain of being close  
to all those things within - those things  
From which i've spent my life  
Implicitly and compliantly misapprehending,  
Dividing each and every episode experience evinces  
From each and every other episode  
So that their interaction and impaction never need  
Be defined  
And analyzed  
And integrated  
Into my inner mind.

One step, one tiny microscopic step, each time i slide inside  
Is fine.  
No more is needed, but more is left to do  
And each and every time i slide inside  
i feel the strain and even then i reach for more.  
i wonder if somehow i'll drift inside and loose my way,  
nevermore coming home,  
nevermore to be in this reality that  
god has made for me.  
i think, perhaps, the reality i touch along the rim  
When i have gone inside, is better.  
But maybe not.  
And, if i knowing flee this old reality,  
that god has made for me,  
Then will he come and drag me home and

take away what little joy i still maintain?  
So home i come from every trip,  
though not willingly.

Time flies.

i feel the changes as they pass - paths,  
Worn and trampled trails, through my being are changed.

What was fixed - is not.

What was unmoving - is not.

What was immutable - is not.

What was unalterable - is not.

What was known - is not.

Strange, these changes cause no fear,  
An odd response to abruptly shifting landmarks in my soul.  
But then i realize,

i see, that

fear is that unnerving thing

i once tore up,

uprooted from my mind,

although in context i thought precise but

now i see was not defined.

A small command to free from one small fear.

My inner mind,  
finding freedom in my outer imprecision,  
extended this injunction  
far past the single need  
perceived the way, at last,  
to start that long postponed,  
procrastinated day of  
integration.

Great slabs,

Small chips,

Rolling stones of fear

tear from the pathways of my soul

replaced by peace, calmness, confidence, serenity.

i explore and wander, confused but unafraid,

within the uncharted confines of my mind and find

a dusty, cluttered maze of

desiccated baggage.

Refuse trips my psychic feet,  
blocks paths and dims the air with  
accumulated dust of ages.

This, too, i choose now to attack

begin the arduous task

of cleaning.

Not all at once, but mote by mote,

just as debris was laid within my soul  
who knows how long ago.

In quiet hours of peace alone  
my mind becomes my own.

## INTEGRATION

My inner mind, alive since birth,  
has always called my number, but I  
completely unaware, 'til now,  
have never heard the call.

Conscience  
still small voice  
subconscious  
feeble voice  
god  
worm...  
Labels worn from time to time  
Labels defined by  
    purposes  
    goals  
    limitations  
of my inner mind.

Yet, somehow, it never died  
though the shifting labels set  
    restrictions,  
    conditions  
    unnatural  
    debilitating  
that blocked its interactions.

In spite of all the blocks and walls that  
    built a prison in my soul to  
        hold, contain  
            my inner mind,  
                it never died.

And now, at last, I've learned to free  
    to open doors  
    to breach the walls  
that held it chained within.

A thought, a call, through well worn paths  
Interaction is complete  
We meet, my inner mind and I  
    comparing notes  
    assessing facts  
    sharing thoughts

testing truths  
Once the meeting is complete, channels disconnected  
my inner mind considers all the options.  
Sometimes the process takes some time  
new data is requested.  
Sometimes one call can satisfy  
more input is not needed.

Each time my inner mind considers all the cases  
Considers  
consequences  
facts and feelings  
reasons pro and reasons con  
alternative conclusions  
things that must and things that can  
emotional conditions  
Factors weighed  
Choice is made through  
reasoned intellect  
emotional involvement  
of which direction I should take  
what choices I should make.

Times there are, my conscious mind  
cannot accept the choice and marches down another road  
one chosen out of reason  
emotion not considered.  
Without fail, when paths diverge, and intellect, alone, controls  
the road results in less than best  
Wisest proves to be  
the road resulting from the choice  
that measured every element - the choice of inner mind.

It has not failed me yet and yet my intellect cannot freely trust.  
In time.  
In time.

Caution, though, is apropos. No wisdom in blind faith  
of god  
of mind  
of heart  
And so I strive  
Equilibrium, balance of my soul and overall  
I see  
I feel



I know  
I have become whole!

It has not been an easy path, this struggle towards balance  
Reclaiming what once was; what once should have been  
undoing  
unmaking  
untaking  
steps that differentiate the soul

Steps made with no consideration for consequence unfolding.  
Till each event of life became  
derivative to one before  
which was itself nothing more than  
derivative to one before.

And each event was  
separate  
distinct  
disconnected  
from all the other parts of life.  
Each thought  
each feeling  
living in a sharply walled compartment  
divided from the rest

Except the one  
the one that came before.

At every step, each derivation made,  
something singular was lost  
Lost in every step was part of what connects  
each room within  
Integrates the whole.  
The key that reconnects each isolated part -  
Lost  
Lost

What remains  
consists of hard and shiny walls  
ever bolted doors  
strong enough to block my inner mind from me.

In spite of all the blocks and walls that formed the prison of my soul  
to hold, contain  
my inner mind  
It never died.

And now, at last, I've learned to free,  
to open doors  
to breach the walls  
that held it chained within.

My inner mind has learned the skill, has learned to integrate  
recapturing  
rebuilding  
renovating  
what was lost.  
It slowly wanders  
inner halls  
unlocking musty doors.

The outer wall remains  
it serves a useful place  
Now it serves, does not control, my soul.

Sometimes it serves to shield the world  
from all of me  
for all of me can be too much.

Sometimes it serves to shield my soul  
from turmoil from the world  
for turmoil from the world to me can be too much.

The wall still lives within my being  
No longer raping, sundering, breaking.  
Not tamed  
understood.  
Not broken down  
willing, active partner  
In all that interacts within that makes me whole.  
The gloss is gone  
No longer mirror for the world  
Not reflecting, nor transparent  
opaque, absorbing.  
Not defense, nor offense  
tool, absorbing.

Once used to mirror every feeling, motion, passion  
the wall absorbs  
noise, touch, sound  
Passing inwards

partner in learning.

Opaque

Now describes the rim of my being

Some

with vision impaired

assume opaque means my soul is

cold

calculating

distant

remote

It is not.

True the wall is still strong but

the number and shape of the doors

is uncouncted

each one no longer locked.

Access is let to all

who approach and request

Though the level of access depends

on the mutual trust of two souls.

Sometimes the wall sees illusions projected

as real

Entrance is granted that should be prevented

but the level of trust grows weaker

not stronger

Access, once granted

can still be rescinded, and is

not by the wall, but by me.

My inner mind, alive since birth, now strives for equilibrium

not simply recognition.

I, exhausted by this long, strained trip

have struggled through the dusty cluttered maze; have

explored alone within my soul; have

looked through many rooms; have

opened many doors; have

learned of me; have

learned to like me.

I have learned to integrate all parts of me

not just the wall

not just the inner mind

not just the intellect

not just one part alone

All of me.

I have learned to see  
not just with my eyes  
not just with the wall  
not just with my mind  
not just one part alone  
With each seeing part of me.

Finally, at long, long last, I see the truth.

**I  
am  
beautiful  
and  
whole**