

## 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.