

JOY IS MY DEFENSE

Choosing FREEDOM despite
a life of torture and abuse

by Fran Lafferty



SHE'S TWO PEOPLE!

-- originally written January 22nd, 2016 --

"She's TWO people, I tell ya! Just watch and see for yourself. When she comes back, she will be dancing around here like some pretty little pony. She won't even remember that just minutes ago she was crying, scratching my bare legs, fighting to get me off of her. TWO PEOPLE, I tell ya!! In ONE little six-year-old body! Ha-HAH!"

Stunned. I felt like the very definition of that word. Also: Betrayed. My own father KNEW about my self-defense, my splitting of my own self into isolated fragments, and he was knowingly USING this to HIS advantage!!

HURT! I slunk back behind the tree. Behind the barrier of reality versus fiction. Behind the dividing wall I had built within myself. My shield. My survival.

And then I ran. I RAN! I ran until I felt his hot breath behind me, his hand reaching out to grab me, his angry voice when he could not. And I ran some more.

Dreamland. That's where I ran to. That's where I always went. There, I sing to myself. There, my senses only vaguely acknowledge pain of the body or the heart-kind. I ran as hard as I could, in two worlds at the same time, trying to find a space far away from my treacherous father, to rest. To cry. To hold myself, sing to myself, heal myself.

And eventually, as my body started tripping with fatigue, I found what I didn't even know I was looking for. It looked like home, a place out of the storm, a place to hide and not be touched. A tree on a hill by a house. But a GOOD tree. One with soft, draping boughs that would hide me, that would be my comforting curtain of peace. I made it. I am SAFE now.

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WHY is she YELLING at me?!!! What is she saying? Old woman, what did I do? Where am I? How did I even get here? And why, why, why, is your face so ANGRY while it is yelling something incomprehensible at me now? What have I done? Have I killed your cat by trying to get it to stay put in a cooler? Have I hurt your dog, closing its tail in the door? Have I stolen a fresh carrot from your garden, like Rabbit?

“NO DIRTY LITTLE GIRLS IN MY YARD! SCAT! GO! OFF WITH YOU!”
The harsh broom scrapes my bare leg, making me look down and see the tattered fabric lining the edge of the mark this woman has just made on my flesh.

“Go, Go, Go, GO! NOW! Before I call the police and have them haul you back to... wherever you came from!”

I don't look at her. She is scaring me – but only part of me. A wild, strong, FREE part is noticing: It is daylight. Morning. I must have slept here. How will I get home? Could dad still be in the forest, cutting wood? Will he be even MORE angry with me than this old woman? Should I be angry at him BACK, or just be the happy one, the one he always expected to come back, until he spooked me away with his cruel words. How can I ever, EVER go back now?

“If she let me, I'd stay under that tree forever!”

“MEAN old woman!”

I repeat this to myself over and over like a calming mantra as I stumble my way back toward the clearing in the forest where I last saw my father. Now, he has hurt me worse than ever, for he has betrayed my very heart, mocked my means of surviving all he has put me through since I was a toddler.

Yet there's something he doesn't know.

I have a secret.

I may only be six years old, but I have at LEAST that many different people inside me already. I HAVE to -- each one can only take torture for minutes at a time before they have to go away and let someone else take a turn. Daddy may not make more than two different ones come out in a day, but his FRIENDS sure do!!!

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MY STORY

When I was born, my six siblings were nine to nineteen years old. Since my mother had given birth to three daughters in a row, it was assumed that, statistically, I would be a boy. Therefore I was named after my two grandfathers: "Frank Michael". A rebel from day one, I was born female, and my name was changed to "Francine Michelle".

Perhaps I myself changed my own name to "Fran" -- I know I stubbornly corrected every teacher I've ever had, from elementary to graduate school -- and I have clung to FRAN even more since I discovered several sources that say Fran means "Free One". I tend to ignore the sources that say Fran means "from France" although according to some sources, some of my ancestors on both sides were from France -- and Ireland and Germany.

When I was born female instead of male, it was amazing good luck for my father! He even told my mother not to get attached to me, as he owed blood to his ancestral Druidic cult, and money to several people as well. Not only could I be of use within the cult, but my young body could be used for easy money through child pornography and child prostitution.

The REST of the Story...

This is the "PG" version of my story, for all those who do NOT desire to be exposed to the most horrific details of abuses and tortures which I endured. If you would like the complete "hardcore" version, you may find it under the title, "I am Many", published on Amazon the same day as this book: my fiftieth birthday, October 5th, 2021. :D

The full version "I am Many" is about twice the length of this book and includes not only more details and events, but also descriptions of and writings by MORE of my personalities, as well as more FRAGMENTS and more Gypsy's Notebook.

You may find my ONGOING story on my prayer blog:
FranLaff.com/blog

There is also more of my "personal" writings at:
FranLaff.com/bits

First Memory & Ancestral Druidic Cult Abuse

It seems amazing even to myself, how vividly I recall laying there, in some type of crib structure, as a mere infant of approximately three months old. That is the age I have guessed myself to be, for in searching back into that memory, I sense an inability to roll myself over -- a skill my own children mastered around three or four months of age. It is possible, however, that I was restrained in some way, making me unable to roll onto my sides.

I remember an ominous feel, like impending doom. A dark shadow, so to speak, falling over me. Or like a poisonous cloud. I quieted, becoming solemnly still. Then -- PAIN! Something cut me, and I cannot even explain HOW I know, but in my "Knower" I am certain that that was the moment they spilt my blood and dedicated me to what I would later hear referred to as "the Bard". However, that was the name of the MAN, the human who supposedly housed the ancestral spirit kept "alive" through human sacrifice and other rituals, and to whom I was later wed, as the May Queen, when I was only five years old.

I call this a "Druidic cult" because I honestly have no better name for it. They followed many of the old Druid holidays and used many of their terms, but when I researched the ancient Druid religion as an adult, I found surprisingly few similarities between what I experienced, and what was written about the old Druid rituals and observances.

Therefore, I ask the reader to NOT associate my experiences with the name Druid or any other sect. The fact is, individual PEOPLE made choices based on their own personal beliefs, ideals, and needs. In my mind, no GROUP can be blamed for any individual's actions.

Please read "Druid" in this book to mean the ancestral cult I was born into, with loose ties to ancient Druid beliefs. It was told to me that one of our ancient Celtic ancestors never truly died, but his spirit lived on through a chosen man, and chosen girls were also allowed to house that spirit and perhaps others as well.

Some of the torture and abuse I suffered was in order to test me, see if I was strong enough to house those spirits. Other abuse was in order to procure money, and still others was for my father's personal benefit or convenience. Even after moving to a different state and escaping those influences, I still endured even MORE at the hand of a completely separate cult, in a Texas town called Terrell.

Child Pornography

Inside my dad's office machine repair shop near Detroit, there was a central office that was somewhat elevated -- I remember going from the front receiving area, through doors, down steps towards the actual shop area, with the office being up and to the right of the steps.

Inside this office sat a big desk, with a big drawer full of polaroid "mug shots" of all kinds of children, naked. Inside this office and in other places, there were several "sessions" of photos taken, of me by myself and with other children. This was the 70's, long before video was widely available.

Some events stand out from the rest of these child pornography sessions, but honestly most of them blend together as simply a form of deep humiliation usually without toooooo much discomfort. They seemed mild compared to the OTHER things I endured.

The most traumatic pornography session, at least in a physical sense, did not involve photographs at all, but rather was designed to capture SOUND. I was hung up with my back touching some type of metal probe. There was at least one man in the room, saying things to me that I didn't quite understand.

There was a clicky-droning sound, somewhat similar to what you barely hear when getting an old X-ray taken, and all the sudden there was a HUGE sensation throughout my body! I can rationalize now, and say it was an electric shock, but I had no concept of that at the time.

To me it felt like hot, liquid metal knives slicing across every inch of my body, and I contorted uncontrollably. I thought they were killing me for sure! When it stopped, the man yelled at me, "SCREAM, damn it!" I did not understand at first.

More of the knives and contortions, but milder now -- unless I was just a bit more prepared or more adapted to it. The man kept yelling at me to scream, and eventually I did my best to comply, in order to make it STOP. I don't remember getting DOWN from that contraption. I don't remember ever knowing that it HAD stopped, for certain.

Child Prostitution

Often on Saturdays, my father would take me to an old abandoned hotel-type place near Detroit. It seemed to me a HUGE building, but was probably only two, maybe three stories tall. I assume it had been a hotel, for it had many rooms off a long corridor, and most of the rooms had a bathroom and perhaps a closet. It might have been an old school.

The first time I remember being at that location, I had been placed in one of these rooms, and the door was closed. I was small enough to not be able to quite reach the doorknob -- couldn't quite turn it, and escape. It didn't seem very long before the doorknob turned, however, and a large man entered. I was startled, and fell back onto my diaper-padded butt.

This bristly-faced man with the dark eyes and peppery hair stooped down and looked me right in the face, crooning something like, "Well, what do we have here? Aren't you a pretty little girl!" He reached out and pulled lightly on a lock of my hair, commenting on its color or curl or some other aspect of its appearance.

Not getting any response from my tiny self, this giant man straightened back up, towering above me. He moved over closer to the bathroom and in a frustrated way, drew his hand slowly down his face, pulling at his cheeks and mouth, like someone contemplating their situation.

After another round of crooning to me, this towering man unzipped his pants and gave me my first introduction to what I would later call "the Big Man Need". However, there is not much that a toddler can do for such a big man, and I was simply tossed out the window when I didn't get it right.

Saved by the Bass

Having been tossed out the second story window by the towering man, I lay there in the rain on a pile of old wood. It didn't seem like I could move at all, and to this day I do not understand if this was because the fall had temporarily paralyzed me, or if I was pinned down, or if the emotional shock of my first sexual abuse simply stunned me.

For whatever reason, emotional or physical, I lay motionless on that pile of wood, feeling the raindrops make me colder and heavier. My mind was in a fog that I would experience over and over, a type of distance from my own body, even from my own mind. I sunk into a stupor, some type of fuzzy stillness that I would experience countless times again.

As I lay there, perhaps on the way to death for the first time in my short life, I eventually became conscious of sounds. I couldn't feel much of my body, and most everything seemed distant and blurry. SOUND became my primary sensation, and all my hope, all my comfort resided in it.

There was a rumble, perhaps first of thunder, since it was raining. In response, I stretched my awareness out, hanging onto life, reaching toward that bigger-than-me presence, somewhere out there. There it was again! A rumble. But this one was slightly different, AND it was changing, getting louder, more intense.

It seemed like I was able to fit my entire self into that big, giant SOUND. No longer was I alone, wet and paralyzed on this old pile of wood. Now, more and more with each passing moment, I was surrounded, enveloped, protected, even loved, by this warm and comforting SOUND. I held onto it, and it onto me. I stopped knowing where it ended and I began.

Closer and closer the rumble came, louder and louder the SOUND. I began to FEEL the noise, as it vibrated my body and the wood I lay upon. Warmth. Comfort. Safety. JOY! I was bonding with this sound -- the deep bass of a train engine. It held me, gave me a foothold in this life, until my father came and plucked me off that pile of wood, yelling at some other man, "WHAT am I going to tell her MOTHER?!"

My Favorite Coat

Mostly, when my father felt the need to explain something to my mother about me, it was in regards to me being dirty or damaged, in a way that might attract unwanted attention. But I do remember one time it involved one of my prized possessions.

I was probably three years old, and my favorite of all that was MINE was a fuzzy white coat. It was a source of comfort and pride to me -- when I wore it I felt rather pretty, and could convince myself I was safe and adored. The softness of the fabric soothed me, like carrying a soft animal right there with me, wherever I went.

One of the many Saturdays that my father took me to his shop in Detroit, I was wearing my favorite coat. During the course of abuse, a big man tore the shoulder and sleeve of this precious garment. I was more upset about that, than about the pain and the messy, sticky bodily fluids.

All the way home, I desperately hung onto that dirty, damaged coat, burying my face in its softness and crying unseen tears. I felt like I had lost my best friend. When we got home, my mother was there. My father told her I had torn my coat, playing carelessly on a playground.

To me, this was a bigger betrayal than him handing me over to huge, horny men for money. I honestly felt like my heart was BROKEN. To this day, I really struggle with false accusations of this nature, that make me out to be so careless or clueless.

Over time, I learned to use my affinity for OBJECTS and natural items to my advantage, for my own healing and on-the-fly comfort. For example, I remember being shoved into a bathroom and told to "clean myself up" after a session of abuse. I grabbed a soft hand towel and put all of my SELF into that thing, adoring it, and convincing myself it was a valuable FRIEND who would comfort me even long after I had to leave it behind.

Of course the drawback to this type of ability to comfort and stabilize myself with inanimate objects and with nature is that I don't really seem able to do it with humans. Only within the last few years have I even begun to feel, in isolated moments, like another human can be a source of strength or comfort to me -- and that is pretty much limited to my Mate (soul mate husband) and perhaps a few family members, on occasion.

You think YOU are crazy?!

We live in a time when IDENTITY is King -- with what label or group do you identify? What is your orientation, your heritage, your CHOICE? Still, we are ALL human, and all bonded to other humans. Right?

But I honestly did not start out that way, and I still struggle with being so very DIFFERENT. I bet you can understand THAT feeling! :wink:

As I've said, when I was born, my siblings were nine to nineteen years old, and my father told my mother not to get attached to me. She did her best to comply, telling everyone, even her older children, that she was choosing a CAREER now. She took her first trip from Michigan to Texas, training to become a real estate agent.

The simple way to put this is to say that the closest thing I had to a mother was one of my sisters. However, she left for the air force when I was four years old. Recently, that same sister acknowledged that I really didn't HAVE a mother. Others of my siblings just don't get it. To them, our mother was THERE, an ever-present and reliable support. And they most definitely BONDED with her, as infants, children, adults... I did not.

Instead, I bonded with NATURE -- sounds, smells, sights, movement, and recognizable landscapes, plants, and animals. You think YOU are weird? I get a rush of JOY when I see an old "friend" -- a species of PLANT that I haven't seen in awhile.

As with most things, there are both benefits and drawbacks to this having bonded with the natural world instead of with other humans, as a young child. I enjoy a FREEDOM, an "unfair advantage" in that I am NEVER alone, always with friends, except when I cannot get outside, or hear it.

I suffer in the Michigan winter and in the Texas summer, because I am forced indoors, hibernating, waiting for better weather. Yet I can sit in front of a fan and it feels like the caress of the Creator Himself, reminding me of countless breezes I have felt, outdoors.

While I have grown and healed tremendously, and I have of course developed deep bonds with many humans, I still remain most FREE and JOYOUS when I am wandering the fields and forests, often barefoot. You may even hear me chattering to my "friends": the plants, trees, deer, rabbits... And you thought YOU are crazy! LOL. :O>

WHO is “Mommy”?

Since my biological mother just wasn't around much when I was little, and since she did her best to not get attached to me, I truly struggled with the idea of “Mommy”. I called the huge weeping willow tree in our front yard “Mommy” and swung from her branches. I called a wild wolf-hybrid named T'hara “Mommy”. I did NOT call my own mother by that name.

I used to feel resentful of this, but through my Mate's insistence that he truly liked my mother... and through my siblings' stories about how she was with them... and even through observations about her by people I don't really know, especially at her memorial service, I have come to appreciate my mother for her positive traits, especially her silly playfulness, which I definitely inherited, lol.

No matter how much I come to understand and forgive my mother, three events stick out in my mind that I'd like to share, so I can move PAST this.

One Sunday at church -- probably Mother's Day -- when I was perhaps three years old -- all the children were called up to the front and given a trinket to give to their mothers.

I returned to our pew and presented my mommy-sister with the trinket. She made a face and pointed down the pew. I made a face and tried to give it to the next sister. She too pointed down the pew. Finally, all sisters exhausted, I tossed the trinket at our mother and sat down, frustrated. I literally did NOT understand this “mother” thing!

It is well understood that my mother was a victim of my father and his friends and their abusive ways, along with myself and my siblings and several people in the generation after us. To what extent she was victimized is uncertain. However, it still strikes me as odd that she did not FIGHT for us. Perhaps they had some type of blackmail on her or threatened to kill us... we may never know.

Still to this day, I do have trouble feeling respect for my mother, because of two times that I desperately reached out to her, and she had ZERO warmth or reassurance or anything to offer to help me, even emotionally. This makes me struggle to not blame myself -- like I MUST truly be some type of Garbage People.

When I was about five years old, my mother took me shopping. After some time together, I was feeling a bit connected, trusting her more. When we were almost home, I gathered my courage and reached out to her. I told her I was bleeding between my legs and I was REALLY SCARED that I was going to DIE.

Her only response was a dismissive, "You CAN'T be -- you're not old enough!" (of course, referring to menstration).

I pulled further away from her.

Another day, we were all set to go on a camping trip and suddenly my mother was crying, saying she will RUIN it for the rest of us if she goes. I pleaded with her, outright begging her to go. I knew that if she was NOT there, my father had absolutely NO reason to not just abuse his daughters freely. And I figured she HAD to realize that as well, and was just playing the "weak nerves" card, thinking only of herself.

I pulled even further away from her.

Not wanting to leave this subject on a sour note, I'd like to say that my mother was held by my sisters to be "the light in the storm" for them -- a source of love, warmth, and stability. She really was a reliable source of support for her first six children, before I came along at the end.

My mother was a terrific grandmother to my children, willing to take my oldest son overnight or even for the weekend, in order to let me have a break, being a teenage single mom. She was warm and loving and fun with my children. I did my best not to be jealous or resentful. I just kept my mouth shut and let her nurture them. Why would I ever want to TAKE that from them, or ruin it for them with my own baggage?

My mother was also an avid reader, which probably contributed to my own love for BOOKS. :D With her grandchildren at least, she was often childlike and sang silly songs and was always coming up with things to do with them, or ways to engage their attention.

I do have a handful of pleasant memories with my mother. I actively choose to keep growing in my positive acceptance of her role in my life.

T'hara

By the age of three I was desperate enough for love, comfort, and a feeling of safety, that I would sneak out of the house at night and down by the creek, although I wasn't brave enough to CROSS the creek at night -- too many leeches!

Instead, I would lay down at the foot of the trees on the side of the creek facing the house. There, quite frequently during the months preceding and shortly after my "mommy-sister" left for the air force, I would be met by a large wolf hybrid canine.

T'hara, as I call her, had lost her pups in our hayfield, most likely run over by the harvesting machines. The first time she met me, she still had milk in her bulging teats, and they felt almost hot to the touch. She lay down not far from me, her belly bared, as if she was begging me to relieve her of her mammalian burden.

I didn't accept the milk, but I DID accept her warmth, her attention, and her protection. She was part of a pack of wild or feral dogs that ran the area. For a time, she met me at the trees by the creek, almost every night that I was able to get there.

Whenever one of the other dogs would get too close to me, sniffing, T'hara would bare her teeth and growl ferociously. It felt wonderful! I felt safe! Now THIS was a MOMMY!!

Even more lovely, she would lay herself upon me, covering parts of my torso or limbs with her own body, often licking the top of my head, above my eye. To this day, there is no sensation more comforting to me than one that reminds me of T'hara's touch. Unfortunately, my father shot her not long after my sister left for the air force, and I was more alone than ever.

He Who OWNS All This

Often when I returned home after various abuses, I would seek the solitude and healing of nature. There was a group of birch trees going up the hill on the other side of the creek that was my own special place to hide and gather strength.

Once I settled onto the ground beneath the trees, out of sight from the house and all humans, I would start chattering, crying, even yelling -- venting my frustration, complaining about my pain, and expressing my fears and worries.

I would sit there on the ground, usually with some type of plant matter in my hands, feeling the texture, perhaps pulling it apart. Sometimes I was hurting so bad physically, that I would start crying and complaining about that. Other times, the pain was more emotional than physical.

No matter what condition I was in, nature soothed me. As I sat watching the insects crawl and the wind blowing the leaves in the trees, hearing the birds sing and watching the sunlight sparkle and move on the water, I would slowly start to feel comforted, even LOVED.

By the time I was four years old, I had a distinct feel for a benevolent presence that seemed to always be there for me, whenever I ran to nature. It felt like a silent, loving grandfather: He who OWNS all this -- everything my senses could take in, all the plants and animals, the wind, the sun, and the water.

I would chatter to Him, and even to the plants and animals. I would start to sing, first in anguish, later in relief. My songs of pain would morph into songs of praise and gratitude. JOY would flood me, as I let GO of all the anger, all the hurt, all the lonely sorrow.

Native Americans respected the land and the Great Creator. My family went to church and talked about God, and the priest they called Father. I knew none of these things, only that there was this SOMEONE who met me in nature, heard my anguish, received my gratitude, and HEALED me.

Crawlspace Recovery

When people seem to be having a difficult time understanding my personal “issues”, I might ask: “If you heard about a little girl who was kept in a closet for a week straight, would you expect her to act normally, to interact with people normally?” Almost inevitably the person I’m asking will gasp slightly and ask, “Did they do that to YOU?” They seem appalled, and I am both amazed and slightly annoyed at their response.

Sure, this type of thing happened to me, but never was I granted a full WEEK! In all honesty, the worst of things always happened when I was NOT left alone... to the extent that being left alone for just about any length of time seemed like a form of PARADISE, lol.

Many times after abuse by strangers -- or in strange places -- I would be left alone to recover. In the church, it was usually in the room to the right of the altar, when facing the altar. Sometimes it would be in a bathroom, a bedroom, or a vehicle. And yes, closet-type places, completely dark.

One particular time, I was left for a rather lengthy amount of time UNDER a house, in a crawlspace with a grey-dirt floor. There were spider webs everywhere, and perhaps a few crawling insects, but for the most part this space was completely devoid of anything, as if it were the most sanitized dirt-space ever.

Usually, when I would be recovering, I would reach my heart out to embrace any living thing I could see or hear. In this crawlspace, there was practically NOTHING warm or friendly, and the time dragged on endlessly. I was acutely aware of every little discomfort within my body, from the bloody little cuts on my arms and one foot, to the near-constant throbbing ache in my little girl parts.

Without even the sound of distant birds to warm my heart, it truly seemed like this was the MOST excruciating recovery space I had ever had to endure. Even the rare little pebbles seemed to HATE me, seeming to pop up under my knees. I broke my own code of silence, and sobbed a little, almost wishing the mean people would come back to rescue me from this desolate place, even if I had to endure more abuse.

Dreamland

There is a nonexistent place I call “Dreamland”. For the most part, this is NOT somewhere that anyone would desire to be. It exists somewhere between memory and processing of memories, between dream and waking reality, between tangible truth and creative symbolism.

Perhaps the closest thing to my Dreamland that I have encountered to date is in the horror movie “The Cell” starring Jennifer Lopez. In the movie, J.Lo plays a psychoanalyst whose therapy includes entering her clients’ dreams and interacting with them in real time. The movie came out in the year 2000, I watched it when it was fairly new, and I haven’t been able to view it ever again, for it hits too close to home.

The Dreamland within me seems to be a permanent residence of an assortment of my childhood experiences, from settings to individual people. Yet it is so much more, for it has its own unique landscapes and characters, often stylized or symbolic. For example, in Dreamland my father is always an alligator or crocodile, and there are two “levels” to reality: above ground and underground -- both of which have sky and sunlight.

Fire Crackle Skin

Sometimes things would happen that for whatever reason, they would have some type of corresponding setting permanently featured in Dreamland. LOL -- but when serious DRUGS were involved, whatever followed was MUCH more likely to show up in Dreamland! Go figure!

They started drugging me at a pretty early age -- perhaps 3 or 4 years old, if not earlier. Mostly it was to calm me, make me less able to FIGHT, for I gave them as much trouble as I could, from toddlerhood until I got my head hurt at the age of 8.

After my head got hurt (closed head injury -- literally broken skull bone and resulting damage that took DECADES to heal in some ways, and still has not even yet healed, in other ways)... things changed. I had changed.

I had experienced the absolute vulnerability of being unable to tell which way was UP, what direction is the floor, etc. This is a skill that practically everyone takes for granted. I mean, if you literally cannot discern which way is UP, as opposed to DOWN towards the ground... then you would most certainly be in a hospital bed or some type of full-time care, right? NOPE. That was the life that was gifted to me at the age of eight, when my head got hurt.

But THAT is another story...

I go into detail in the full version of my story ("I am Many") regarding the effects of an unknown drug that only the ancestral Druidic cult members used on me. This sparkly power was BLOWN into my face and felt like tiny daggers on my eyes, mouth, and inside my nostrils. The intended effect seemed to be deep sedation, with near-immediate hallucinatory effects as well -- perhaps even long-term memory loss.

The absolute agony of this drug -- outside of it having been used during a ceremony where a hole was drilled into my sternum, above my heart -- was that when I was "coming down" from it, the entire surface of my skin seemed to radiate with a super-intense burning and prickling sensation that I call "fire-crackle-skin". Worse yet, wherever my skin was touched during that time, the sensation concentrated in that area resulting in such an overload that I dreaded that feeling MORE than any amount of rape or torture. The drug itself WAS torture!

Headless Cat

I was put through many trials and tests to see if I was a suitable vessel to house the spirits held sacred by this ancestral cult. I honestly do not know how I physically survived all the ordeals, but I know how I survived them, spiritually.

Simply put, I had already experienced first-hand the LOVE and LIFE that was the Creator (“He who OWNS all this”). All other claims to power seemed feeble, weak, puny, futile, a joke.

Even by the age of three or four, my faith was strong, and the seed of Love and Life had taken root. I believe I could not have passed the test of the headless cat without that early introduction.

Remember, I had bonded more with the Creator and His creation than with humans. Any “power” men possessed seemed entirely inferior, even irrelevant. What could they offer me, compared to what nature gave?!

They were trying to convince me of their power, and what an amazing power I could wield, if their spirits lived in me.

They KNEW my weakness, my LOVE was nature, animals. They knew I could not stand to see things suffer. So they cut the head off an orange cat, and told me I had the power to make it come back to life.

However it happened, turn yourself blue trying to speculate, but that little orange kitty got up and WALKED -- without its HEAD!! I remember it so vividly, I can point to the spot on this earth where it walked, for a distance of maybe eight feet across a field.

But I had seen LIFE. I had known LIFE. I was very intimate with the LIFE that surrounded me, welcomed me, nurtured me, HEALED me. And THIS -- this horrific headless thing did NOT have Life, no matter how much it moved!

I rejected their “power”. I wanted no part in their false “life”. I was THREE.

Yet I realize, if it weren't for God's awesome mercy in allowing me to be fully aware of what REAL life and power were like, before this headless cat event... I could very well have been tricked into believing I DID have power, and that someone besides God could give Life! Whew!

Girl on the Boat

Other tests were of a physical endurance sort, but perhaps these also tested mental and emotional endurance. My will to live was tested on many occasions as well, but none more than with the girl on the boat.

I do not know who she was or where she came from, though I suspect that she came from one of the other families in this ancestral cult, because by this time I had already passed a number of tests and was some type of "elite" candidate. I assume she was, as well.

I wish I could explain to you the mechanics of the contraption they had rigged up, but I honestly cannot. By this time, probably four, maybe five years old, I had already learned to not only expertly distance myself from my own body, but also to be mostly oblivious to my surroundings. It was enough to deal with what was done to me -- without adding to fear by SEEING what was coming!

There was a thick rope tied to one of my ankles and to an ankle of this little blonde-haired girl on the boat. We were both tossed overboard, and almost immediately the boat was going FAST, making the waves raise up high alongside the boat.

There must have been a pulley or something similar, because whenever one of us got our heads above water to suck in a breath of air, it plunged the other one of us deeper into the waves. The men on the boat stuck out some type of plank, and kept driving the boat FAST.

Only one of us two little girls could survive. It was a struggle to the death. The other girl didn't even seem to TRY. The desperation of drowning lungs took me over, and I hauled myself up onto that plank, not realizing until later that I had caused my competitor's death.

When they finally slowed the boat, they hauled the girl's lifeless body on board. They not only left me tied to her, but tied me to a pole so that I was forced into constant contact with her lifeless body.

Much worse, when we got back on land they put us both into the back of a truck and drove to a local garbage dump. They made me help bury her, and tried to convince me that the police would KNOW it was me who killed her, and would some day punish me for it. When I healed from this one, decades later, I realized I always felt like there was a dead body in the trunk of my car, just waiting to be discovered. I had to let her GO.

Samhain Sacrifice

Once again, I would like to reiterate that, while the cult my predecessors embraced was loosely based upon ancient Druid customs and holidays, by sharing my own personal experiences I am NOT saying that other Druidic groups practice these rituals, or share these beliefs. In fact, I doubt that many do, past or present.

Samhain (Halloween/All Saints' Day) is one of two "bookend" holidays, the other being May Day or Beltane. Basically, Beltane is the beginning of "six months of life or light" and Samhain is the beginning of "six months of death or darkness".

It is believed that on these special days, the two worlds of Earth and Spirit come so close as to almost merge. In fact, it is only on either of these days that Names are revealed, faces shown, and spirits seen. It is also the best times for supplication and gaining of favor and "blessings".

I had just turned five years old at the beginning of October 1976, and at the end of the month I was SUPPOSED to have died, giving my life to secure just such a blessing. I was literally buried alive as a Samhain sacrifice.

If I DID survive the burial, I was then supposed to die at my "Six of Six" -- thirty-six years after the ritual. Since I am here writing this now, you can be certain that NEITHER timeframe suited the Creator, who is the only One who CAN determine my day of death, since it is He who breathed life into me, and whose Spirit sustains me.

In fact, while I was in the ground, at the point nearing death, just before they dug me back up and plunged me into freezing cold water, I had a vision of Jesus. He didn't appear as a man, nor as angelic. Rather, I saw Him as a boy about my own age.

Obviously, I have felt many things very intensely in my life. I have felt great Love, awesome Hope, and wonderful Joy -- along with all the fear, sorrow, and pain. Still, that moment closest to death, as they were digging down to me in the ground, was THE most intense thing I have ever felt. It was like having liquid BEAUTY saturate every fiber of my being -- and not my OWN beauty, but HIS!

I had known powerful Love both towards and from the Creator. I had felt an abundance of gratitude for the Spirit and for the natural world. But I had never known LOVE and BEAUTY until I saw Jesus, in my own little five-year-old near-death mind's eye. His eyes alone made me want to be with Him FOREVER.

In my vision, I saw Him sit with me, listen to my cries, touch my face, my hands, my spirit. He was infinitely loving and patient and kind. I wanted more than anything to go ahead and DIE, and be with Him for eternity.

His smile was worth every ounce of agony I had suffered. And His Promise -- that I would see Him again, at the TRUE end of my life -- is one of only two Truths I know for certain. The only other thing I know for SURE is: God is Faithful.

Scary Showers

When I was five years old, my father taught me how to take showers instead of taking a bath like a child, lol. At first, I thought this new skill was a sure sign that I was growing up, able to take on more adult-type responsibilities. I was pleased with myself, and proud that my father could trust me to handle such a grown-up task on my own!

The first several times, my father stayed in the bathroom with me, making sure I could turn the handles the correct direction, preventing me from scalding myself. I felt cared for, and very proud when I did everything without any trouble at all -- even keeping the plastic curtain sealed tight against the wall so as not to let any water out onto the floor.

But my father lingered in the bathroom even after I mastered this new skill. He would sit on the toilet and chat about things at his work, or around the farm. He would even ask me about school -- how cool! But it didn't take long before I began to DREAD showers more than anything else in my daily life!

The first time was a SHOCK! I was happily showering away, with my father chatting from the toilet. When he stopped chatting, I called to him. He didn't answer. I heard the sound of his belt, and I froze, listening. I tried calling out to him again. Then I laughed, assuming he had to go poop suddenly, which I found humorous.

I started to call out to my father to reassure him that it was okay to poop in the toilet while I was in the shower... just don't flush it, hahaha! But I never finished what I was saying. My father's hands reached in and grabbed me, pulling me out of the shower and onto his lap, where he proceeded to rape me.

I was slippery and every effort I made to push myself up off his lap and away from him, resulted in my hands just slipping on whichever surface I tried: the sink, the tub, even the floor and the wall! But I fought enough that he DID have trouble, he DID remember that I was a FIGHTER!

Once he was finished with me, he pushed me off him, over the side of the tub, under the still-running shower, which was starting to run a little cold by now. I curled myself up under the spray of water and sobbed. I was still just Garbage People. My father DIDN'T really care, I reasoned.

For the next three years or so, almost every shower I took was a terrifying ordeal. Would my father enter the bathroom? Would he pull me out, all slippery wet, unable to defend myself? I tried to take them when I thought he would not be home, but I NEVER felt safe.

As an adult, going through healing with my Mate, I went through a period where I was pretty terrified of showers. To this day, if I am about to take a shower in a strange place, such as a friend's house, my Mate will reassure me that he will stand guard. I was THAT scared, that it made a lasting impression on him, enough to realize that I may ALWAYS deal with my fear of showers.

One particular day near the end of the worst of my shower fear, as an adult going through healing, I learned a new way to comfort myself and be less afraid. I was undressing when I felt like God's Hand was covering me. It was like the opposite of Adam and Eve using big leaves to cover their nakedness before God in the book of Genesis: God was the covering for MY nakedness!

I had the warmest, friendliest, safest sensation. It felt like I was INSIDE of God's Hand, like He was a strong shield around me, reminding me of one of my old favorites: Psalm 91. I realized that anything that touches me must go through HIM. And I reminded myself of that, all the way through my shower. It was the most peaceful shower I had, for quite some time!

Since then, I have reminded myself that "nothing can touch me unless it goes through Him". That understanding has helped me through a LOT!

Tommy

If ever I would have been able to die of heartbreak, or even from literal, physical torture, this 8 day period would have been it. My father dropped me off at a farmstead with what I called his "army buddies" -- four men who sat at a table playing cards, and a few of their friends who popped in.

Over the next week, I was subjected to the most agony of my entire life. Not only was I brutally raped and tortured -- with metal shoved up inside me -- but far worse: I was forced to watch a young man named Tommy be tortured every day, worse and worse until he died after 6 or 7 days and then his body was STILL brutalized.

I BARELY survived that week. When my father returned after eight days, Tommy had been dead a day or two, and it took a couple weeks for me to be well enough to return to school. I believe my parents said I had mono -- the kissing disease -- something that in the 70's kept kids home for a long time and made people NOT ask questions, not get close to me.

When the "army men" were not torturing us, Tommy and I were kept locked in a barn, recovering as best we could. It was during this time that I got to see the very BEST of human strength and compassion, as my companion and I were strong for each other, and did our very best to hang onto HOPE -- again, more for each other than our own selves.

Tommy gave me the nickname Little Miss Sunshine one of the times we were together in a barn, recovering as best we could. I would happy-chatter to him, as soon as I could gather the strength to do so. He would ask me questions, or answer mine. I would chatter on, telling stories, singing, and being as cheerful as I could muster, way beyond what I could ever have, if I hadn't been trying to keep HIM alive.

Perhaps halfway through the week, around the time they broke him so that he could no longer walk, Tommy marveled aloud at my continued JOY despite our circumstances. He was sputtering blood, but that didn't take away from the beauty of his voice when he called me "Little Miss Sunshine". He even had something of a smile on his face as he said it, which is a badge I wear with pride and honor. It was the only thing I had to offer my dying friend -- my JOY.

Intermission of JOY

Whew!! That stuff is HARD to read, isn't it? I hope you are pacing yourself, dear reader. Remember, I endured all these things over the course of several YEARS -- it is an assault on your sensibilities to try to read too much, too fast. Be compassionate with yourself, and take a BREAK.

Think about how I survived all this without becoming HARD or COLD or BROKEN. I used JOY as my defense! I ran to God, to nature, and I let all that negative garbage GO, first complaining, then singing, then praising in an Attitude of Gratitude!

I paid attention to the things in this life that NOTHING can destroy -- like the lovely breeze, the way it ripples the leaves, the SOUND the cottonwood leaves make when they sparkle in the wind.

Perhaps Joy and Gratitude are close relatives. I wish you and I could have a chat right now about it! What relationship do YOU think exists between focusing on the positive things in your life -- whatever does not SUCK -- and feeling a sprinkle of JOY in your heart?

I am grateful for SILLY things that people take for granted. I live in a minivan, so I get SUPER grateful when I use hot water, or cook a hot meal, or relax on a comfy couch at a library or at someone's house. My toilet in my van is a bucket lined with several layers of disposable bags, and I am both extremely grateful to have it AND quite joyous when I am somewhere that allows me to flush my bodily waste away without having to change a bag.

I have ZERO fear of death, because to me that is the time of REST, and of going on to the next timeframe mentioned in my FAVORITE part of the Bible -- Isaiah 65, when God's people get to live as long as the TREES!! Man, now THAT is something to be grateful for!!

So... what have YOU got to feel grateful for? Your house? Your car? Your family members? Your health? Your job? Running water? A good job?

I bet that if my abusers had spent more time cultivating an Attitude of Gratitude, they would have spread Love more than pain and suffering. Do you think it works that way? Could appreciation and Joy be THAT powerful??

Broken Arm

Some of my aunts, uncles, and cousins were at the old farmhouse property where we went to hunt for the perfect Christmas tree in the snow. I had had my sixth birthday just 2 months earlier. There must have been some of my cousins old enough to have kids my age, because I remember other girls, even a boy, up in that hayloft with my dad - and I am younger than practically everyone else in my family, in MY generation. I was closer in age to most of my nephews and nieces, and I suppose... to my second cousins?

Whoever they were, my dad was tickling those girls, and I was filled with dread and perhaps a touch of jealousy. I knew my dad's attention could be a DANGEROUS thing, and I didn't want his attention on those little PRINCESSES. They couldn't take it, and I REALLY don't like to hear little girls CRY, even quietly! So I improvised. I stood up on top of the wood rail and shouted, "Daddy, daddy, watch me do a backflip!" I honestly thought that my cheerful entertainment would distract him long enough to stop the inevitable from happening. Maybe he would forget them, and just hurt ME. Maybe he wouldn't even hurt me -- maybe he'd just like my flip soooooo much, that we'd all just go back into the house now.

I wish I would have visualized in my head, exactly HOW I was going to perform that "backflip", so I could tell you what had been in my mind. But I think I basically just THREW myself off that rail backwards, hoping in mid-air I would figure it out. Whatever I thought might happen, I did NOT foresee myself landing on my left arm and not being able to raise myself off the hay, noticing hopelessly that my dad was laughing with the cutest, youngest girl, and realizing that he probably had not even SEEN me jump.

I kept trying to raise myself, but it HURT! I instinctively supported the suddenly nonfunctional left arm with the right, cupping right hand under left elbow, supporting the long bones. I didn't really notice any discoloration or distortion or swelling, but I had trained myself years ago NOT to notice my own body and any but its most SERIOUS injuries, and those, only temporarily.

After whimpering a bit unheard, I told my dad I think I broke my arm. Of course he didn't believe me. So I said something to the effect of "I am going to show mom" -- which earned me only a brief glance in my direction, and an impatient nod. I carefully, painfully climbed back down the ladder, and made my way across the snowy field to the house, where a fire blazed and women chatted.

Strange, how in moments of greatest bodily need, the best-known female is sought out, regardless of how much she has been previously trusted, or not. I did not know ANY of those other ladies there besides my mother. A couple of them seemed a bit familiar, but NONE of them seemed friendly -- including my mom, and especially as I showed her my arm. She was annoyed. She folded a paper plate in half and gave it to me to support my arm with, using the other hand. Obviously, she didn't believe it was broken, either.

Hours later, I was in the back of our family car, still holding that paper plate under my left arm, still nearly perfectly silent. On the way home, my parents drove me to the hospital, where it was found that I had fractured the two bones in the forearm (radius and ulna) plus several of the small wrist bones -- eight fractures in all! For better or for worse, I never thought about those girls in the hayloft until days or weeks later. I never saw them again, or at least not that I recognized... and I never found out if my father ever hurt THEM, or if they were true PRINCESSES -- which was my name for the type of girls whose daddy's actually care about and PROTECT them and don't even let other people hurt them.

Head Injury

When I was seven or eight years old, we moved off the farm into a rented house. I am not sure how long they had planned it, but we were on our way toward moving to Texas, where I would eventually meet my Mate.

But first, I sustained a closed head injury -- my skull actually had a crack in it that must have been all the way through in places, because after weeks of healing, I would “play” with it, replacing constant, buzzing pain with the more endurable SWIRLING pain-in-motion that happened when I literally PUSHED on the broken part -- whoosh whoosh, whoosh whoosh!

Much of this is already written about in the FRAGMENTS section. Suffice it to say that one day on the edge of the playground in third grade, I was struck twice on the head with a baseball bat. I had projectile vomit, signaling a concussion. It took a HUGE amount of effort, but I got my body back up close to the school building, where I collapsed. My mother must have been called because she eventually showed up in her red Chrysler Cordoba to take me home.

I never went to a doctor, but my mother actually took care of me a bit, coming into my bedroom sometimes and running a humidifier so much that it left black spots on the ceiling. I never went back to that school -- we just moved to Texas and I started back to school halfway into the following schoolyear. Or at least that is how I remember it. Things are QUITE fuzzy for me until I was well into FIFTH grade.

When we first got to Texas, I was still hurt badly enough that my father was no longer raping me. However, he soon used my head injury to his advantage, no longer having to pull me out of the shower to control me. Instead, he would just grab me and hold on by my shoulders, neck, or chin, and put his hand right on the spot where my skull was still fragile, perhaps still a bit fractured. He would remind me that THIS is what happens when I don't do as I am told. NEXT time, it would be WORSE!

Since I honestly could not imagine what could be WORSE, I relented. Some of the FIGHT had gone out of me when my head got hurt. Daddy finally BROKE me! From the age of nine, until I returned from Terrell at the age of fifteen, my father could abuse me with MUCH less resistance on my part. And I formed new personalities to keep the SHAME of it hidden from my everyday self.

Meeting My Mate

When we moved to Texas, I was eight years old -- unless I had turned nine already -- hard to tell, when you are recovering from a broken skull. Regardless, by the age of ten I had healed up enough to appear normal to the outside world, and I was in fifth grade. My mother was working at a portrait studio, and my father was working for Texas Instruments.

By the age of eleven, I had started to rebel ever so slightly. I was regaining strength of mind and body (head) and was becoming more ANGRY at my father's abuse. It didn't occur to me to be grateful that the OTHER abuses I had endured in Michigan had stopped.

By the time I was twelve, I had launched myself into full rebellion. I was smoking marijuana with friends, listening to heavy metal music, and was even drinking alcohol on rare occasions. I had started talking back to my parents, and felt like I was ready to move OUT.

As a side note, I stopped growing at the age of twelve, fully grown into my current five-foot-eight-and-a-half size. LOL.

So when my parents put me into a "drug program" to try to straighten me out, my Mate who was there thought I was older than his fifteen-year-old self. If you ever meet him, he will invariably tell the tale of the first time he saw me, with my legs sticking out from under a desk, where I had angrily placed myself, annoyed with having to be there.

But I did not notice him until one thing he did that made me notice no OTHER dude afterwards! In the first meetings, he was just part of the group, indistinguishable in my mind from all the many people there -- always older than me -- who would ask me questions and say "I love you" randomly, as was their custom.

From his perspective, my Mate says he REALLY wanted to talk to me, but that I was always surrounded by other people, happily chatting away. One day, he took the initiative to get me AWAY from everyone else...

Something in him must have broke loose, cuz he picked me up, put me over his shoulder, carried me out the door, down the hall, out the big doors to the outside, around a corner... where he put me down on the ground and said, "I'm gonna MARRY your ass!!"

My Mate will be the first to tell you that he NEVER meant to say THAT, LOL. It just came out. He never meant to pick me up and carry me outside. He just DID. He thought he was gonna be in BIG trouble now, making off with me like that. Some of the other people came outside to see if I was okay.

From my perspective, it was the single most INSANE thing that had ever happened to me, and I was HOOKED from that moment forward! I had lived the most INTENSE and crazy life, even by the age of twelve that I was then... and here was someone maybe even MORE intense and crazy!

When he was carrying me over his shoulder, I was laughing uncontrollably. When he put me down, my eyes were blazing bright. When we went to future meetings, we would sneak out, go up on the roof and get high (yes, at a drug meeting)... and whenever I was at one of those meetings and he was NOT there... or I couldn't find him... I was EXTREMELY discontent. What was I even DOING at this place, except to hang out with HIM?!

Unfortunately, due to some shyness or fear or lack of social skills, I NEVER let him know how much he REALLY meant to me. Because I wouldn't have sex with him and because he wasn't the type to FORCE me, he thought I didn't really want him. But we were always the best of friends.

I honestly believed he meant what he said -- that he was going to MARRY me... I never doubted it -- but I did NOT want to be OWNED by anyone!! I just tried to bide my time, hang out with him as much as I could, but maintain my own fierce independence.

Stoney

I met Stoney by accident -- because of an accidental slip-up on my part, that is. I had just had my ribs broken by Jackie, a dude who "raped" me at knife-point, one who smelled so DAMN good and made me want my own little Irish redheaded man, lol. [story in hardcore version of book]

Of course, that hadn't worked out well for me -- I ended up with a broken rib or two, because I never did learn my lesson... Even at the age of thirteen, I STILL fought my aggressors and caused myself to suffer MORE bodily damage than if I had just "played along" and not resisted. But in reality, I don't know if anything except a rare form of TERROR -- or some very specific drugs -- could ever STOP me from fighting.

It is simply a matter of HONOR to me, somehow. If I just let anyone have their way, when it is something I strongly do NOT want -- then in my mind, I have failed MYSELF. If I do not stand up for what I believe in, who will? If I do not give the message of a definite NO on my part, then I simply cannot respect my own self. So I fight.

Well, THIS particular fight with a rapist (whom I had previously thought quite sexy) had resulted in a broken rib or two. And I was still in the early stages (first ten days or so) of learning how to not let ANYONE see that I had a broken rib.

Ah, the subtle art of protecting the wound at all costs, never allowing anyone or any object to come close to that vulnerability -- one that makes you HURT unbearably, even just to take a deep breath!

My parents wanted me to go to some new "drug program" besides the one at which I had met my Mate, my awesome now-husband whom I had first met the year before, when I was twelve.

Now, here I was at THIS drug program meeting -- or whatever type of "therapy" thing my parents were testing at that time -- not sure, as I was too distracted with keeping myself ALIVE and my broken ribs undiscovered, to even HEAR whatever message was being preached at this place, lol...

During a break, when the other people went to the food and started talking quite LOUDLY amongst themselves, I wandered over to a window as far from the group as I dared, and stood looking out, wishing with everything in me that I could be ALONE and not have to pretend-smile and fake-listen.

A tall slender dude with somewhat of a mop-top haircut in a dirty shade of light brown made his way over to me and said something to me that I just blew off, snickering politely at whatever he had said, but wishing he would just go AWAY. Instead, he drew closer. TOO close. I tensed, but tried not to give any indication of my weakness.

“It’s broken, isn’t it? Right there, one of these ribs.”

I drew away in astonishment.

“No!” He said hurriedly, “No, I won’t touch it, I promise. I just know a thing or two about broken ribs.” He made an attempt at a reassuring smile, but it turned out more like an uncomfortable smirk.

I didn’t know what to say. He was sweet. He had a warmth about him, and I was drawn to his patient understanding, and to the almost pleading strength in his eyes. I didn’t say anything, except maybe a choked-out “Yep”. I couldn’t speak around that lump in my throat. I couldn’t even tell for sure which I felt more strongly: the urge to cry with relief at being SEEN, feeling accepted and understood... or complete terror at the fact that I HAD been seen and known for what I was HIDING!

But Stoney didn’t need me to decide anything. He didn’t try to use his knowledge to gain anything. He didn’t even seem to WANT anything, besides just to stand there next to me, looking out the window at first, then going to sit on a little padded bench, where I sat next to him, and felt PROTECTED in some weird way, almost like someone ELSE was going to perhaps stand up for me. Maybe even, if another person from the group came over, maybe this new guy would deflect their attention AWAY from me! Maybe he would put his body between me and them, and talk to them FOR us, until the person went AWAY! Maybe this “Stoney” as he introduced himself to be, was some ANGEL sent to help me, to give me a BREAK of some kind!

My parents tried a number of different things to “fix” me when I was in my preteen and early teen years. Oddly enough, they never tried being HONEST about the last decade I had spent being raped and tortured. But lucky for me, when I responded well to one of their proposed “treatments” it was like they went all-out to help me to help them... or something like that, lol.

So when Stoney came up to my mother at the end of that meeting, saying he had been going there for a couple years and would enjoy “teaching” me more of the program’s ways at home, my mother jumped at it. She talked to his mother, and they arranged a time for me to visit their home. At first, I blew it off as just another set-up, where my parents arrange for me to go to some stranger’s house, and too often I end up getting raped or at least not remembering what happens while I am there.

But Stoney’s house was legit!! His mom picked me up, and Stoney was in the back seat. I was allowed to sit back there with him, and he even reached out and grabbed my hand and squeezed it, winked at me, and then let GO. Once we got there, his mother offered me some fresh-squeezed orange juice, and while she was off getting it, Stoney whispered to me that he noticed how much better my ribs were doing. I know I must have given him QUITE the look, for emotions shot through me with a startling intensity, and he jerked back with a bit of a startled look on his face.

I couldn’t believe this was happening to me. I didn’t KNOW what was happening to me. If this dude was legit, then maybe I had someone actually ON MY TEAM, able to fight WITH me instead of AGAINST me! He might not be just like every other human who seem to be oblivious to the PAIN of daily life, but he might even be Garbage People like me, and know what to DO about it!!

On the other hand, he might be setting me up. Any moment now, his mother might come back with MORE than just a glass of pretty orange juice. She might bring with her a pair of big men who want to tie me up and do painful things to me for hours. She might have slipped a drug into that drink that knocks me out and I might wake up tomorrow, not knowing WHAT had happened.

Stoney smiled at me. The right side of his upper lip curled up into a half-smirk, and he winked at me. Something in me melted. He sure was cute. And SWEET!

Stoney and I spent only three weekend afternoons together, but in that time we completely revealed our secrets to each other. I told him about all the abuse I was still enduring from my father, about my head injury that still affected my every movement, and about the tortures I had suffered as a child. He listened patiently, saying little but often shaking his head and more than once looking at me intensely, with tears in his eyes.

Then it was his turn. He told me about his father who was seldom home but who all-too-often came home DRUNK and demanding to see each member of his family, immediately -- even if it was four in the morning on a school night. Stoney was the oldest, with two younger sisters. His mother was a drug addict, almost never made eye contact with people, except when she “sobered up” to go to her children’s school events and drug meetings like the one where I’d met Stoney.

Slowly, over the course of our second afternoon together, Stoney let go of his most horrendous secret. He could NEVER please his father, no matter how hard he tried, and EVERY day his father was home -- sometimes more than once a day -- his father would beat him, rape him, then beat him some more.

Yes, Stoney was QUITE accustomed to broken ribs. He was an old pro at dealing with not only the pain, but the trickery and emotion-numbing involved in trying to HIDE broken bones and other wounds from ALL people, his mother and sisters included. The last time he had been caught by his gym teacher with big bruises on his torso and doubling over in pain in the locker room, his family was investigated, and Stoney was beaten so badly that he didn’t even go back to that school. Just like me with my head injury, his family moved to another state to avoid questioning. Today of course, this would NOT happen, right? Instead, the State might just take the child out of the home first, ask questions later. But this was the mid-eighties, and awareness of domestic violence was in its infancy.

The third and final weekend afternoon I got to spend with Stoney, we were alone at my house. My mother may have been in her room part of the time, but she pretty much never spoke to me or came around me unless she wanted me to put my laundry in the washer or help carry in groceries or something.

I had little respect for my mother, and honestly did not consider her presence in the home as anything worth regarding. We used each other, me as an excuse for every ailment she had, and her for a source of transportation or purchasing of shampoo and such things. Sorry to say, this was pretty much the extent of our relationship for most of my life.

That lazy weekend afternoon, Stoney and I hung out, mostly in the living room and adjacent landing between the front door and the dining room and kitchen. He was distant, had a constantly wrinkled brow, and the worst pain in his eyes perhaps that I had ever seen. He didn't even tell me the extent of his troubles. I just knew he had reached some type of turning point and was looking at things from a new perspective.

As I chattered on, hoping to cheer Stoney, he sunk deeper and deeper into a gloom of despair. This was beginning to remind me of Tommy! I thought if I just acted cheerful enough, for long enough, Stoney would snap out of it and see some light on the horizon, some HOPE that could be held onto.

He told me about the most recent time his father had raped and beaten him, how it was just DIFFERENT this time, like he could NOT take any more of it. He either had to kill himself, or kill his father. It HAD to stop! He would alternately hug me and cry on me and tell me I was the only bright spot in his life... and then say harsh words to me about how I was too forgiving, too carefree, and gave my father waaaaay too much credit.

I felt bad, wanted to do SOMETHING to cheer him, was running out of options. I remembered how my father had brought me to a place where this young teen boy was to receive a "birthday gift" which was ME, causing him to cum in front of his elder males -- a rite of passage. I remembered how HAPPY and PROUD and RELIEVED that boy had been. I tried to give Stoney the same thing -- but he shoved me away, screeching at me, calling me names... and he was COLD and SILENT the rest of our time together.

I don't remember the details -- or the excuses -- but for whatever reason, my parents decided Stoney was a bad influence on me. They said I would NOT be seeing him again, and I would NOT be going to those meetings, either. Still a bit sore at his cold treatment of me, I huffed into my room and called Stoney, as my parents had instructed.

I honestly don't know what I expected from Stoney. But his reaction was NOT what I ever could have expected. He was crying, sobbing, sounding desperate. He said I was his only hope, and if he couldn't see me again, he was going to end it all. I was in shock. I had been thinking he was MAD at me, didn't even LIKE me!

I softened, responding to his needy, pleading voice. I wanted to help him, but HOW? Eventually, we agreed to meet secretly at the mall that next weekend. I couldn't call him from home again, according to my parent's new rule, but maybe I could go to a friend's house and call him some time. Either way, we would meet at the mall. Saturday.

But Saturday came and went and I never could get a ride to the mall. I tried to call Stoney several times over the next several days, but his house phone just rang and rang... until it didn't. Until a police officer picked it up, sounding annoyed as he asked me who is calling.

I was politely informed that Stoney had driven his father's car off the road, and had been pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital.

I didn't speak Stoney's name again until five years later, shortly after my oldest son turned a year old, when I checked myself into a mental hospital because I kept blacking out, finding myself in places I did NOT remember having gone to. I suspected I might have this crazy thing called "Multiple Personality Disorder" -- LOL. :wink:

I confided in a few new friends in the hospital, telling them about Stoney and a few other traumas I had survived. One of the dudes immediately told me he was going to kill himself if I didn't go out with him -- NO JOKE -- and he persisted in this claim until I relented. It didn't work out well for either of us: he became physically abusive, and some of my male friends beat him up for it.

Therapeutic Camp

I honestly do not know what my parents expected after allowing me to be routinely abused for the first decade and a half of my life, then suddenly deciding to give me new rules and expectations. It seemed like they expected me to be not just “normal” but exceptional, completely unscathed by all that I had endured.

At the age of twelve, I had gotten into “sex, drugs, and rock and roll” but I hardly drank any alcohol, came home at a decent time almost every single night, and the only “drugs” I did was marijuana. I did minor chores and kept my grades above a C, with mostly A’s. I did listen to heavy metal music, but I didn’t blast it while they were around, I used earphones. I did, however, start smoking cigarettes at the age of twelve.

For whatever reason, my parents decided I needed more help than either they or the “drug programs” and other organizations could provide. They took me for an interview with a place called Salesmanship Club Youth Programs, at which half of the therapists thought I needed help, and the other half thought I did not. Still, my parents were willing to pay the money, so I was sent away to live in the woods for eleven months, about two hours from our home in suburban Dallas.

It was during this time of “family therapy” associated with that camp program, that one or more of my sisters accused our father of sexually abusing us. At first he completely denied it, as did my mother. When enough had come out that he couldn’t legitimately deny it, he claimed he did it because he loved us and didn’t want us to fear men. Seriously.

Looking back, I honestly cannot tell if that camp experience helped me or not. I definitely learned more outdoor skills, and got more nature-soothing than I otherwise would have, living at home in the suburbs. My Mate and I kept in contact, through a few visits when I came home briefly, and a little bit of writing letters back and forth.

He famously wrote me one letter on the back of a cigarette carton, and in another he added some oregano, hoping they’d think it was pot and confiscate it, lol. Neither of us had much respect for authority, having early-on learned that most adults were basically unreliable and untrustworthy.

Back to Michigan

The first words I remember my Mate ever saying to me were, “I’m gonna MARRY your ass!” after he had picked me up, carried me outside, and sat me down on the ground. I had fought him ever since, for I never doubted him, always assumed he WOULD marry me, and I didn’t feel READY to be OWNED, lol.

But the last time I came home from that camp for a “homestay”, he came over to my house and after that particular visit I finally DID feel ready. I was only fourteen, but I felt like I could accept him “over” me now. I grew excited, and he started to occupy more of my thoughts. Of course, I was too naive to actually TELL him all that!

My parents had other plans. They had come to the conclusion, at some point while I was in that camp, that the reason I was “on drugs” (i.e. smoked marijuana on occasion) was because I had fallen in with “the wrong crowd” in Texas, so the only cure was to move back to Michigan.

I found out about the move when I finally came home from camp for good. My parents had sold our house and moved us into a rental once again, and all our stuff was basically packed and ready to move ASAP. I wasn’t really allowed to see any of my old friends, but I insisted on talking to my Mate on the phone until the VERY last minute, when we pulled out of the driveway.

We still laugh together, remembering how I went in and out of the house so that I could have every last minute on the phone with him. My mom would tell me “it’s time” and I would hang up, bring the phone out to the car... and then when she went BACK into the house to do something, I would bring the phone back in and call my Mate again.

This happened several times until we finally DID drive off, on our way back to “Detroit” (actually about 30 miles north), which I considered “the scum of the earth” after having lived in a NICE suburb of comparatively beautiful and CLEAN Dallas.

I cried almost all the way there, heartbroken that I had FINALLY chosen my Mate, finally accepted his “claim” on me... and been ripped away from him by parents who seemed to be determined to CHANGE me without ever apologizing or even admitting to their part in my traumatic life.

When we first returned to Michigan, we stayed in my brother's new wife's house, for she had moved in with him and hadn't yet sold her own home.

Surprisingly, my parents gave me a CHOICE: either live in a place where I could have a horse, or live in a place where I could graduate from the same high school that my siblings had graduated from, a decade or two earlier (my brothers and sisters were all 9 to 19 years older than me).

I chose the latter, and while we waited to get into a house in that town, I stayed with my other brother and his wife, in the house I lived in when I was born. I slept in the same bedroom that I had been in as a child, which STILL to this day has the same carpeting and paneling on the walls, lol.

In fact, the house is largely unchanged, and my Mate and I have been staying there, on the property (but not in the house), the entire time I have written this book, except for parts of the last couple weeks, when I withdrew for "writer's solitude". You would THINK that I would be uncomfortable with being at this place that my Mate calls "Ground Zero", that I would have flashbacks and fears, but I do NOT.

I DID have to have my Mate be in the shower with me the first time I returned to the SAME tub and bathroom where my father used to pull me out of the shower and rape me, starting at the age of five... and I was drawn for a time to the basement, where I had been cruelly placed behind the cellar shelves, in order to reenact my experience of being buried alive... (I have been able to resist that urge, not go down there.)

BUT, for the most part, this property feels like HOME to me, for it was not just a place of trauma and abuse, but even MORE it was the place where I "met God" and where I would run to nature and to my concept of my warm, loving Creator or "He who OWNS all this" -- for healing, for strength, and for perpetual renewing of my JOY.

Even back in 1986, when I first returned to Michigan after "graduating" from that therapeutic camp, I was not traumatized by returning to this beautiful property where I had lived during the first seven and a half years of my life. It was, and always will be, a peculiar, irreplaceable part of HOME to me.

Sophomore Year

My first day of ACTUAL high school (as opposed to the makeshift “school” at the camp) was pretty dramatic. I had lived in a modern suburb of Dallas, had a rather thick Texan accent (although my Mate argues otherwise, hahaha), and my wardrobe consisted of spandex, miniskirts, and animal skin print clothing. I wore a lot of make-up with thick black eyeliner, and I had poofy eighties-style, teased-up hair.

In vivid contrast, nearly everyone ELSE in my small-town high school (where my sibs had graduated a decade or two earlier) wore jeans and t-shirts... except when it was cold, when they wore jeans and a sweatshirt.

My first morning, I was in a bathroom stall smoking a cigarette, when another girl came in, to do the same thing. We struck up a conversation and before I knew it, she was dragging me out into the hallway and shouting at the top of her lungs, “You gotta hear this girl TALK!!”

To this day, I STILL have people come up to me on occasion, saying, “Hey, FRAN??” and I honestly do NOT know them. Everyone seemed to know ME from Day One, because I was the new chick from Texas with the wild clothes and southern accent... but there was just no way that I could ever remember each one of the several hundred or so of them. My bad.

Awesomely, my Cuz (favorite cousin) still lived next door to the farm where I had lived my first 7 1/2 years of life, and at which I was again staying during the beginning of my sophomore year. He was a senior at our high school, and one of the BEST parts of that year was that he started dating an old friend of mine who actually remembered me from elementary school... and SUPER-awesomely, they are STILL happily married to this day, and have three grown sons together!! :D WOOT! :D

My Cuz is one of my favorite people on this planet, always will be, and when I came back to this place this year (2021), I sorely missed his presence as I went wandering through the fields and forests surrounding our two old homes, especially the land between the neighboring houses. But alas, life moves on, and he now lives a distance away. At least we can have some nice visits. :D

Besides my Cuz, old friends and acquaintances from elementary school, and an endless parade of curious people who just wanted to hear me “talk funny”, the first weeks of my sophomore year were also filled with having to choose a boyfriend... although I am not sure WHY I felt I HAD to choose one.

There was one other new student, a tall, skinny, long-haired dude from a big city (I forget where)... and you’d THINK we would end up together, but we didn’t. Instead, apparently to the surprise of everyone, I chose a short little redhead dude who was very sweet, rather emotional, and generally fun to be around. Everyone called him Red, which works great for the anonymity of this story, lol.

Red had a fun little light blue jeep, and he immediately took it upon himself to drive me not only back and forth to school, but also out to the house where my parents were living, so I could stay there some weekends.

I still quite vividly remember Red introducing me to his best friend AND me introducing him on the phone to my Mate in Texas.

I handed him the phone, and it looked like he was going to shit his pants right there in my parent’s kitchen. Apparently, my Mate threatened to tie him to a tree or something, if he ever hurt me.

He brought me to his best friend’s house, and when this flaxen-haired dude came bounding out to see little Red’s new girlfriend, we BOTH stopped short and did a double-take. DAMN! That beautiful man is now tragically deceased, and I would like to say the world is a little less warm with him gone.

After the initial month or so, my sophomore year at Richmond High was largely uneventful, punctuated with many outdoor parties, sometimes with live bands, my first job, and the continuing of my father’s sexual abuse, which I fought to HIDE from my everyday selves, lest it destroy me. It continued, however, to destroy any HOPE of a relationship with my mother, who forever seemed to not only resent me in her life and home, but perhaps even to despise me.

Summer of 1987

Inevitably, sophomore year ended, after a pretty fun prom that allowed me to see both my Cuz and my date, Red (also a senior) dressed up fancy and enjoying the dance along with all our friends and acquaintances.

As soon as summer started, my thoughts turned to my Mate, back in Texas. Amazingly, without too much of a fight, my parents allowed me to catch a plane and make a return visit! My Mate picked me up from the DFW airport, and drove me around in my FAVORITE of his cars: a black 1971 Chevy Chevelle with an AWESOME sounding 454 in it! LOVE!

He had arranged a place for me to stay, in a little building in one of his friend's backyard. It was awesome to be with him, but I wasn't the same person I had been a year earlier, when I had decided I was ready to be "owned" by this dude. The more possessive he got, the more I rebelled.

An old friend of mine threw me a "coming home" party in her garage-size bedroom. I flirted with a few dudes, trying to assert my independence from my Mate, but when he started flirting with the girl I considered to be the UGLIEST at the party, I was INSULTED! (To his credit, he thought her to be the best-looking, lol.)

To this day, we still argue lightly about that night, but the facts are that I was so pissed off at him for unknowingly comparing me to HER, after having been so annoyingly possessive of ME, that I went home with a random dude that I didn't really even know. My bad. Totally. At least he had awesome posters of all the different styles of Ford Mustangs all over his walls, lol.

Somehow, my Mate and I got back together within a day or two, and I talked him into driving me out to visit a friend who had moved a little distance outside of the main Dallas Metroplex. She knew about a party in a town nearby, and once I got it into my head I wanted to go, NOTHING could stop me.

Terrell

I HAD to go to THAT party, THAT night. I was willing to hitchhike to get there, if I had to. But I DIDN'T have to, because my Mate was there, with his sexy-voiced black Chevelle. The car broke down, perhaps even twice, but still we made it there. I was THAT determined, and my Mate was THAT protective, and that faithful.

I don't remember the details, but my Mate ended up fighting some dude in the back yard of that party. I have NEVER been impressed by guys fighting, always more attracted to shows of humility than bravado.

After the fight, my Mate was TIRED. Looking back, we are convinced he was drugged, so they could get to me. He wanted to lay down in one of the beds in one of the upstairs bedrooms. I went with him, but was far too hyper to stay with him. I bounced around, unable to sit still even a moment, and eventually I left him there, promising to come back. I intended to, but I never did.

Downstairs, the party was raging, and I turned into my usual "dancing girl" self. People kept handing me drinks, and I would taste them, guzzling one or two, but otherwise I was still too hyper to hold still long at all. Until I wasn't.

I figured I must be getting drunk. I hadn't experienced that very often, and didn't know enough to realize this was MORE than JUST drunk. Things just seemed WEIRD. I thought about going back up to lay down by my Mate, but this dude in this cool-looking car was shouting to me, waving me over, telling me to hurry up, that everyone was going to ANOTHER party.

At first, I balked. I told them No, I couldn't leave my Mate. I looked up towards the top of the house where I had left him, and it seemed SOOOOOO far away, so impossible to reach. About four different people were all saying that my Mate was already AT the other party, and one girl laughed and said, yeah, she thought she saw him leave with her best friend.

They were offering me a ride. To a party where my Mate was supposedly waiting for me... or not. He was supposedly already there WITH another chick. I got in the car, wedged in among three other "hot chicks" in the back seat.

I don't remember the ride away from the party, except for the dudes in the front seat passing back some type of joint, and all of us girls taking hits. There was laughter, and loud music... and then there was nothing.

I woke up or "came to" in some type of dungeon, some underground basement or cellar or something. It was dark, and it smelled worse than anything I had ever experienced. It took some time for my eyes to adjust to the low light and for my ears to make sense of the constant sounds of sniffles, sobs, and whimpers all around me.

At first, I just thought I had passed out and it was morning at this weird new party. I tried to stand up, go looking for my Mate, maybe even kick the chick's ass who dared to leave with my favorite dude, probably in my favorite car, too. Anger and jealousy made me get to my feet, but my body had other ideas. I slammed back down onto the hard concrete floor, stunned. My legs didn't WORK!

A door opened, and light streamed in, blinding me. Suddenly there were a bunch of cries, coming from girls on the floor all around me. I couldn't make out their words, but I definitely felt their TERROR! Instinctively, I drew my body into a fetal position, pulling my knees up to my chest as tightly as I could manage.

Then there were MEN, all shapes and sizes, most making weird warrior-grunt-pride-macho-conqueror noises, as they grabbed onto whichever female body they desired first, and without any preamble or hesitation, started raping them. I didn't know if it was real or an hallucination... until a man grabbed ME.

That first time, I was too stunned to move, and too weak to provide much resistance. It hurt, sure, but it all seemed too unreal to BE REAL. My body felt detached, far away, like a residual part of a dream that I once had... when was THAT? Has this happened before? The only thing that seemed truly NEW were the sounds... the sheer NUMBER of SOUNDS of females, crying, that seemed to come from all around me, in nauseous waves that rose and fell, much slower than the man's thrusting somewhere against my body... WAS this my body? Those SOUNDS...! WHY were there SO MANY girls crying? I vomited almost at the same time as the first rapist finished with me and threw me to the side.

Perhaps an hour later, most of the men who had entered the “hole” had left after raping whichever girl or girls they desired. A few men stood around a central figure, seated on a throne to the left side of some type of makeshift stage, lining one wall.

I couldn't see clearly, with only flickering candles up on the stage, and also due to the residual effects of whatever drugs they had given me. Still, I could see a long, low stone trough, like what cattle would drink out of, in front of the stage area.

There were girls about my age EVERYWHERE except up on that stage. Most were whimpering; some were rubbing their faces or parts of their bodies; some were holding themselves and rocking back and forth, muttering or crying softly.

I didn't feel anger, and had very little fear. None of it seemed really REAL, and that feeling persisted the entire time I was in that “hole” -- perhaps two or three weeks.

There was a cycle to the days in that Terrell cult place -- even if there was no REAL time for us girls held captive there. The door would open, letting in blinding light. Men would walk in, sometimes bringing new girls, sometimes just raping the girls that were already there.

There was literally a pile of dead girls in a back corner, to one side of the makeshift stage. Every so often, big ugly men would come in to retrieve the corpses and haul them out. I tried to keep track of how MANY of these removals occurred, thinking perhaps this signaled night time. Alas, it was just too unreliable and infrequent for me to actually use it to determine the passage of time.

As the days wore on, my body and mind got weaker and weaker from lack of food, countless brutal rapes, and the desperate lack of WATER. Us girls were NEVER fed, and the only liquid they gave us was tainted with the drugs that kept us sedated.

We could drink freely from the trough by the stage, if we could drag ourselves over to it. I forced myself to take in this liquid as often as I could stand it, despite having seen the men urinate into it and add the mystery drugs to this “water”.

Surviving Terrell

Although my mind and senses were foggy, I still felt like I had a distinct advantage over all the other girls. Nothing special about ME -- I simply had ALREADY endured so MANY rapes and administrations of sedatives, from such an early age, that this particular situation was not the life-changer that it was for them.

The cult leader -- the man who sat on the throne -- was called Daimon, Deimon, something like that. DEMON, basically. But just like the depictions of Lucifer before his fall, this man had an irresistible BEAUTY that was sexy and alluring despite his position of "head bull" over countless female lives sacrificed on his floor like sexual cattle.

Inevitably, Daimon noticed me, and how many times I drank from the trough. He began to watch me. After I had been there perhaps ten to fifteen days, Daimon commanded his men to bring me up to him on the stage. They dropped me at his feet, and I immediately sank into the lush white furry rug that was there, silently using my old "superpower" to grow STRONGER through this "connection" with this lovely inanimate object.

Then, Daimon handed me WATER. He spoke to me, softly, remarkably self-conscious, with the faintest hint of weakness. His eyes seemed to penetrate the depths of my soul, and I feared that he would be able to read my life story, and perhaps know all my secrets, including my secret strength.

But... WATER!! Who cared where I was, or what would happen to me next? I had real, pure, CLEAN WATER to drink, there at Daimon's feet!! He smiled when he saw me guzzling it -- a smirky, prideful half-smile that made me suspect the water was tainted. But it was not.

For two, three, maybe four days Daimon kept me at his feet. When he left the "hole" he commanded his men to leave me alone, and they did -- for the most part. When he returned, he'd stroke my hair, reminiscent of T'hara. He continued to give me pure water, and I grew stronger and more alert.

Daimon never spoke many words to me, but his eyes spoke volumes. It was like he wanted me to read in HIM his own life story, and to see him beyond what anyone else could know. I was alternately intrigued and repulsed, perhaps even both simultaneously.

There was a sacred dagger which Daimon always kept nearby. The first time I saw it, my own familiarity and love of blades got the best of me, and I reached for it, impulsively. He gave me an angry look, then softened. He let me take it, let me remove it from its sheath, let me caress the metal and admire the craftsmanship.

Daimon's men had grown silent, watching me. But look where we WERE! Men were at SUCH an advantage here, the women ALL subdued and all just worthless trash that invariably died, stunk, and had to be thrown out. We were certainly nothing to be FEARED!

I played with the knife for only a few moments, returned it to its sheath, and politely handed it back to Daimon with a warm smile of sincere appreciation.

The rest of the time I was up on Daimon's stage, I often drew out the dagger and played with it. It began to be something expected, like I was some type of psycho who just got off on holding the thing. I learned its weight, its sharpness, and the way to get it out of its sheath quickly, without any sound or motion that would attract attention.

Daimon continued to search my eyes, pet my head, give me water, let me play with his "toy" dagger... and I of course began to PLAN, to HOPE that I might just be able to survive this place.

It didn't take long before I had my chance. During one of the mass rape sessions, I was up on the stage with Daimon and only one other man. The rest were on the floor, humping. The door opened slightly, and a man yelled down. I saw TREES outside!

I turned into a wildcat, seeing my old FRIENDS, and a chance to RETURN to them, to FREEDOM! I plunged the dagger into Daimon's chest and he looked at me, stunned.

Most of the men kept humping away, oblivious. The guard on the stage was instantly upon me, but Daimon put up his hand and said "NO!" and waved him back. I stood up, tears in my eyes, adrenaline pumping through my veins, and like a madman raced for those TREES!

Daimon LET me GO.

Escaped!

I was FREE! It didn't matter that I was pretty much butt-naked and half-dead from weeks of dehydration and abuse. I had actually ESCAPED! I was not going to be one of those girls carried out of the hole, lifeless. I had survived, and I was going HOME!

The Texas ground was dry, mostly grey dirt with stubbles of sunbaked plants here and there, little patches of yellowed grass. I stumbled my way forward, always going UP and toward the sound of rushing vehicles, but trying to avoid any that came too close.

It grew dark quickly as I stumbled along, stopping almost constantly to rest, my head spinning, crazy-dizzy and weak. I found the source of the rushing traffic -- some sort of highway. I walked along the embankment, stopping to rest awhile under an overpass.

I probably dozed off, because it was nearly pitch-black when I peered out from under the overpass, gazing ahead in the direction I had been headed. My body seemed to be giving up. My arms felt limp, and when I tried to stand, I fell back down repeatedly.

When the first rays of dawn started to light up my surroundings, I panicked. I reasoned that if I didn't move NOW, daylight would reveal my naked body to the world and I would be CAUGHT!

I started moving forward, falling with almost every step. It was HARD to walk on this tilted ground, but I could see another overpass ahead -- if only I could make it THERE! I slipped and tumbled away down the incline, almost to the edge of the road that ran parallel to the highway.

I tried to pick myself up, looking ahead to that overpass to give myself HOPE. But in my daze, the overpass had changed form. Suddenly all I could see was the wooden train-bridge-thing with the man of entrails dangling from it. I threw up -- empty, fruitless wretchings that produced nothing -- and I didn't have the strength to lift my own head.

An unknown amount of time later, a man approached me. He rolled me over, spoke incoherent words to me, and I thought I was back in the schoolyard, hearing but not hearing, seeing but not seeing, after my head injury. I felt myself lifted, carried. I heard the friendly sound of a diesel engine, and I literally fainted with relief.

The Trucker

All my body wanted to do at first was SLEEP. The cozy, comforting sound of the huge diesel truck engine helped me remain calm, and I slept for who-knows-how-long in the little bed area behind the driver's seat. For some number of days the Trucker brought me food and water, tried to talk to me, but required nothing of me.

Then he wanted MORE. Once I started sitting up, he got me some clothes but started touching me. Worse, he started playing mind games with me, trying to convince me that I was "just a piece of garbage he picked up along the side of the road one night". He told me I was too damaged to ever go home, to return to school, to live a normal life.

I must admit, after all I'd been through, it was tempting to believe him. I had always thought I was just Garbage People -- in direct contrast with Princesses -- girls whose fathers loved and protected them, and who weren't abused and tortured like I had been since I was in diapers.

The Trucker brought me to an abandoned-looking property where a few mostly empty old work trailers sat. He locked me inside one of these and left me alone for awhile. When he returned, he brought several crusty old books, having learned that I was smart and liked to read and learn.

He started insisting that I was all he had left in the world, and we were "family" now. I started insisting he take me HOME, to Michigan, so I could go back to school and see my friends. Eventually, I won out and he DID take me home, dropping me off in my little hometown of Richmond.

Some of the FRAGMENTS describe how I gave the Trucker hell, making myself an undesirable inhabitant of his lovely truck -- one that was simply too much trouble to hang onto. LOL. :wink:

Junior Year

When I DID return to school, I was a complete MESS. My entire junior year was spent partying HARD, and my grades were at an all-time low. I didn't care much about ANYTHING in life. My old boyfriend probably barely recognized me, and my father certainly never even DARED to rape me ever again. Or, at least not until I was a married mother of four...

Junior year I also had a miscarriage. I cared so little for my own body and had so little self-respect, that I basically hooked up with an older man who could keep me stoned and even supplemented the buzz with cocaine, which I actually never got addicted to -- my favorite part was the pleasant burn in my nose, not the high.

I'm not sure how much of it was due to damage sustained while being a sex slave in Terrell, but when this man had sex with me -- my gift to him for the drugs, keeping me numb and making life bearable -- it HURT!! I did my best to not let him see me wince and cringe, but one time it started hurting soooooo badly that I had to run to the bathroom.

I sat on the toilet in his ensuite bathroom, while he waited for me to return. The pain was horrendous! I felt like maybe I had to pee, but there was only blood. I wiped myself and for whatever reason, looked at the tissue. On it was a tiny blob of gelatinous tissue with a little fan of material that looked like a river delta of blood vessels.

Stunned, it didn't sink in until hours, days, even weeks later, exactly what had happened. At the time, I just flushed it all down the toilet -- literally -- and went back out to finish my "job" of letting this man use me. That was one of the last times I saw him.

At the time, I had a male friend who lived in the newly renamed Eastpointe, Michigan, who also spent time at his grandmother's house in New Baltimore, which was closer to where I lived in Richmond, Michigan. This dude became my H.M.B. -- my Heavy Metal Buddy.

He and I had a good friendship as buddies, neither of us wanting anything more from each other beyond fun and good times. We made a pact to introduce each other to our friends, hoping we would find someone we liked as a boyfriend/girlfriend among them.

Man, did I get the raw end of THAT deal, lol! I didn't like ANY of his friends, but the very first girl I introduced to my HMB, they hit it off! Now we were suddenly a threesome, with me as the spare wheel. I felt miserable, yearning for affection.

One day the three of us were partying in the back of a little corner store in downtown Richmond -- a local hangout with a pool table. I asked my friend who the dude in the tight red pants was -- the one with the nice ass! She didn't know -- JT or something.

This mysterious sexy dude sauntered over to the jukebox, played Metallica, and I was hooked, line and sinker! We were inseparable for about a month after that, and now there were FOUR of us, evenly paired. We partied hard, and I ended up pregnant, this time for keeps.

My baby's father went with me to the clinic. When I walked out and told him the test was positive, he probably spoke less than a dozen words to me the rest of the time I knew him. He didn't even make eye contact with me until one of our mutual friends got onto him, forcing him to at least address me.

This was early September of 1988, and my senior year had started... I'll go back to that...

Senior Year Dropout

When the school year started, I was deep into the complete abandon of sex, drugs, and rock-n-roll, living as a foursome with my new boyfriend, my HMB, and his girlfriend -- who basically left us to actually ATTEND school, lol. I was the only one with a car -- the FIRST car I ever had, big enough that I called it my "limo". And I was the chauffeur for the group.

I went to school my first day of senior year, and got my books. But it SUCKED being away from my dudes!! The next day, I RETURNED my books and dropped out. I had already become an emancipated minor -- was legally able to move out of my parents home and be responsible for myself -- so I figured I could just go back to high school in the town closer to where we were partying.

Instead, I found myself pregnant and rejected. My mother meanwhile had started counselling, and her therapist literally told her that I was her problem, get rid of me and she will be cured. So there was NO WAY I could live with them.

No problem! I didn't want to have my baby in the Detroit area anyway, I told myself. I wanted to go HOME to Dallas!! I sold everything I had to get money for an airplane ticket, and started talking to my friends in Texas. One of them said I could live with her and her boyfriend for free while I got a job and got on my own two feet.

This friend picked me up at the airport, and on the way to her apartment, it was revealed to me that yes, I could stay with them... BUT, I would have to become part of their threesome with her, her boyfriend... and a girl whom my Mate supposedly had gotten pregnant and whom I fiercely resented because she had given HIS baby up for adoption! (We later found out that it was NOT his kid.)

No matter who it was, I was NOT going to be part of their little orgy! I didn't even stay there one night. I had them drive me to a mall, where one of my OTHER friends picked me up, taking me out to a town close to Terrell, where I had been a sex slave just one year prior to this.

Trouble in Texas

It was here, at this friend's house, that I started having morningsickness so very badly -- and so very constantly -- that I slept all the time just to endure. One night I was sound asleep in my friend's bed when her parents came in, turned on the light, and started throwing my stuff around, packing my suitcase for me.

"We do NOT like the way you are treating our daughter!"

"But I am PREGNANT!" I pleaded, to no avail. They drove me back to Dallas, dropping me at a hotel and paying for that one night, giving me approximately eight hours to LEAVE the place... somehow.

As soon as it was time that people MIGHT be awake, I literally called every number in my phone book -- more people than I would have in a contacts list, today. But I was SIXTEEN -- all my friends were either at school or at work!

The only person I could get ahold of was the one that picked me up from the airport. Of course I could have joined their little threesome, but I flat-out REFUSED to even go to their apartment. Okay... well in that case, the friend knew of a man who was a single father and needed a babysitter. I accepted.

The next morning, at this man's house, I woke up and NO ONE was there. A few random cans of soup and such were in the cupboards, but little else. Where was this child I was supposed to babysit? I guess the father took him WITH him... strange!

That night, as I lay sleeping in the man's bed, alone, I woke up and heard a familiar sound. The man was masturbating on the floor next to the bed, watching me sleep. I stayed motionless, and eventually he left the room.

The next morning when the man and his son left, I took a shower and made a second attempt to call every single number in my phone book. This time, I reached another friend -- but she didn't have a way to come get me. I took a taxi to her house, spending about half of the rest of the little bit of money I had left.

It was awesome to be with THIS friend, because she was a single mom with a toddler, so she REALLY understood what I was going through, with all my morningsickness! However, I couldn't really LIVE at her house, because she still lived with her parents.

Still unable to reach anyone else, I left all my stuff at this friend's house and walked several miles in the rain, down the median of a highway, to my Mate's house. I surprised him. We literally hadn't spoken since I left him in that bed in Terrell. He didn't know what had happened to me -- not until about two decades later!

By this time I had completely blocked the memory of what had happened in Terrell, but I had this distinct feeling that I had done something unforgivable to my Mate. Besides, I was pregnant with another dude's baby, and I saw my Mate as a proud Indian brave who would NOT tolerate such a thing.

Amazingly, he STILL got the Chevelle running for me! I spent the night in his parents' garage, sleeping in the back seat of the Chevelle, hidden. In the morning he took me to the mall, where I fell in LOVE with a blue-eyed siberian husky puppy, and DREAMED of having a cozy domestic life with my Mate, just him and me and that puppy.

But I could NOT bring myself to tell him I was pregnant. He drove me back to where my stuff was, and after he left I found out my friend had stolen ALL the rest of my money. She didn't admit it, didn't apologize, just kept using her drugs -- ones she didn't have BEFORE my money went missing.

Wow! I felt like Texas had rejected me and I had nowhere to go but back to Michigan. I called my parents, and they arranged to have friends of theirs down there come pick me up and take me to the airport in the morning. After that was arranged, my Mate called my friend's home phone and demanded, "WHY didn't you TELL me you are PREGNANT?"

I was devastated. My Mate drove over to say good-bye. He didn't really try to console me, nor did he condemn me. He just told me, "You need GOD!" and drove away -- in my favorite car, with a BIG piece of my heart.

Back in Michigan -- AGAIN

When I got back to Michigan, I found my baby's father but he STILL didn't speak to me or make eye contact. Some friends of mine told me he was now going out with a thirteen-year-old girl.

Because I was my mother's PROBLEM, according to her and her therapist, I could NOT live with them. A local organization that called themselves "an alternative to abortion" had a "Shepherding Program" that arranged to have pregnant teens live in private homes until they had their babies.

I was taken in by a kindly woman with whom I am still friends to this day. Not for a moment did I ever consider abortion OR adoption. This was MY baby, SUPER precious to me, and I would raise him by myself. To be honest, he actually saved my life. My big plans were to graduate high school, move to California, and party 'til I died. Literally.

Instead, I waxed domestic. I hadn't realized just how NURTURING I was! Becoming a mother was the best thing that had ever happened to me. It was difficult at times, but so very worth it!

Eventually, I moved in with a sister and her husband, in a log cabin built by Henry Ford. I tried out all different kinds of jobs, but my little son refused to eat or sleep for the sitters. I had to pay rent somehow, so I got on welfare. THAT meant the government went after the father, and of course he denied being the father. A court-ordered paternity test proved that he was.

When I saw him, when we all three had our blood drawn, he said I had ruined his life and his chances of being a dancer -- whatever THAT meant -- he still wouldn't TALK to me, nor make eye contact. Years later, he signed over paternal rights to my first husband, and to this day I have never heard my son express any desire to find him.

Near my son's first birthday, I wrote a letter to my Mate in Texas, telling him about my son and also saying that if I didn't hear back from him, I would take it to mean he didn't want anything to do with me, and I would never bother him again.

We didn't have ANY contact for 19 years. He intended to write me back, but says he was in full-on party mode and just forgot. LOL. :wink:

Neck Injury

It's hard to believe, but I was once again violated as a full-grown, married woman and mother of four, in the early 2000's. However, providing certain details would point to my aggressors, and that is simply not my aim in writing this book. Therefore, I wish to focus more on the result than the event itself.

Not toooo surprisingly, there were new drugs available in the 2000's than I had been subdued with during the 1970's and 80's. This is obvious to me by the way the memory plays out, with only vague recollections and suspicions regarding the first part, and a growing clarity of memory as the drugs wore off.

My first husband, my four children, and myself had traveled across the state to visit my parents. I do not know exactly HOW the drug was administered, but I "came to" under the power of my father -- the first time in two decades, since before I got back from Terrell!

Skipping to the parts I remember FOR CERTAIN...

After initial violations, I was eventually held down by my father while another man repeatedly penetrated me with a metal object. I suspect I MAY have been pregnant and was given an abortion against my will. I do know that a decade later, an OB-GYN commented on how messed up I was internally -- even HE was surprised how badly I was damaged! And this was NOT the case three years before, when I'd had my daughter.

However, the absolute WORST damage was to my neck. Once again, this was in part due to my own stubborn rebelliousness and fighting spirit.

As the drug wore off and I FELT the pain of the forced procedure, I thrashed my body around as best I could, trying to make it STOP! The top of my head and other body parts were being held firmly in place, so the best I seemed able to do was to buck my shoulders, trying to dislodge my head.

I do not remember the end of the procedure, nor how I got back to my parents' home, but when I awoke in the morning, I was laying on the livingroom floor, surrounded by my sleeping children. As I lay there on my back, just starting to regain consciousness, I realized I couldn't move!

I started crying softly, not wanting to wake my children. I didn't want to alarm them, but I was scared I may be paralyzed, and I knew for certain I could NOT move my neck. There was a strange electricity sensation surging through it -- one that still comes and goes, to this day.

Eventually, an ambulance was called, and the EMT's put me in a neck brace and took me off to the hospital. Needless to say, they asked me what had happened, but I told them I just woke up that way, unable to move my neck.

Laying in the emergency room with the neck brace on, I was surprised to see my father's face above me, hissing at me.

"You TELL them you are FINE! You hear me?! Tell them you are fine and you are ready to LEAVE! Or WE will have your daughter! You hear me?!"

And he left me to figure it out for myself: MAKE myself get up, walk out of that hospital... or forfeit my daughter to my father and whomever he chose to have her.

What could I do?

Somehow, I managed to talk a nurse into removing the neck brace, making up some story that I no longer remember -- making myself look like some fool or prankster, so I could just LEAVE.

That untreated neck injury is something I still live with on a daily basis, from various levels of vertigo and inability to look up above me, to those strange electricity-type sensations in my neck which freak me out every time.

I do not like to admit it, even to myself, but in the back of my mind, I suspect that one day I could all too easily return to that state of paralysis or something similar, without any warning, through any type of car accident or other jolt to my neck.

I really only think of that, when I hear/feel those electric sensations. It is something I can ALMOST HEAR, pretty indescribable, always a bit terrifying, literally unnerving, lol.

Divorce and Healing

My first husband did not protect me from my father. I should have realized he would not, by the way my father called him his ANGEL from the earliest days of our relationship. But before we were married, he had stood behind me in the mirror and he was so much taller and BIGGER than me, I truly believed him when he said he wouldn't let ANYTHING get me, or come between us.

However, ALL humans are fallible, and it is NOT my place to judge anyone. I cannot know what went through his head, nor what games my father played with his mind. Suffice it to say, I was not in a place where I felt safe enough to really start the emotional healing process until I got a divorce from him and was safely back in Texas with my Mate, almost two decades after we had last seen each other.

A bit before my Mate and I got married, my personalities or "alters" started to come out, and I began to relive almost every single event that I have described in this book, plus many that I either do not now remember or else have just left out for some reason or another.

My Mate lost many a job or opportunity, in order to stay home with me on the worst of my days of healing. He was patient and kind, simply allowing me to sit or lay next to him, asking me question after question, until I had exhausted the flashback and dealt with the memory in great detail, usually from the perspective of the personality(s) who had lived it.

I never ran AWAY from my flashbacks, never sought to avoid memories as they surfaced. Instead, I made it a habit to run THROUGH them, forcing my memory to reveal every detail as thoroughly as possible, so I could face it and move ON.

Mostly I experienced FEAR, but sometimes I felt ANGER or even RAGE. Still, I am a very forgiving person by nature, and have always made it a top priority to let GO of the past, and walk forward in FREEDOM, not carrying any baggage.

My Mate made friends with each of my many personalities, and gained the trust of almost every one of them. My children got to see some of my "Little Ones" at times, and I was honest with them about my past, without revealing the worst of the details to them.

I am Many

It has now been a bit over a decade since I started the intense healing process with my Mate. Several years ago, I started to notice a new pattern. My Mate would ask me, "Which one are you?" but I rarely had a clean-cut answer. More and more, I was not ONE but SEVERAL parts of myself simultaneously.

Sometimes, two or three would merge, and I would be a unique combination of those. However, this was not a permanent arrangement. I could still be each one individually, or I could be the combination of multiples, on numerous occasions. It was kinda fun to be sexy Sasha one night, feisty Tamara another... and Tamasha in between, for example.

Eventually, I began to develop a more stable personality that is generally hyper and typically bubbly-happy. Only within the last year or so have I begun to trust my own self to be STABLE enough to hold down a "real job", working in public caring for semi-independent adults in their homes or in a facility.

It works! I have proven to myself and others that I CAN be a professional adult, using my experience and my post-graduate education to work full-time and be completely reliable and not even call in once in order to deal with my own issues. However, I remain a true introvert and sincerely do need a LOT of alone time with my books and my plants, lol.

In fact, I have written this entire book while working full-time caring for adults in their home. At no time did I feel too LITTLE (as in, being one of my Little Ones) to care for them, a fact which surprises and amazes me! It helps that I work mostly midnight shifts, while my clients are sleeping. Still, I TRUST myself to remain stable and in full control of my mind and emotions. It is awesome!

However, it is still FUN to let my Little Ones out to PLAY, especially outdoors, or with my Mate! I enjoy the best of both worlds now -- I am a stable adult, but I am also a playful child with a limitless desire to LEARN and EXPLORE and CREATE... and best of all, I have HOPE for a bright and joyous future!

God is Faithful. :D

MY PERSONALITIES

I thought it would be fun and entertaining for the reader to meet some of my most distinct personalities. Some are able to write; some are basically no longer existent. Others are still around, but do not write.

I am aware that most people with DID (Dissociative Identity Disorder) or Multiple Personalities spend decades in therapy, with the end goal being full integration.

While I have checked myself into a mental hospital before and have gone to a few therapists for a number of weeks (months, in the case of that therapeutic camp), I personally choose to do my healing in private, with my two husbands -- Real Husband (Isaiah 54) and my Mate.

Full integration does not appeal to me. I honestly do not WANT to get rid of all my Little Ones, nor does my Mate want to lose them. It is ENOUGH for me to be as stable and in control as I seem to be these last few years, and perhaps I will continue to be even MORE stable and full of JOY!

Now, let me introduce you to myselfes...

Tamara

You can pronounce my name like most people do -- I don't have to teach you how to do that. BUT, if you really want to get it right, say each of the a's in my name like the short o in NOT: Tah-mah-rah. I'm not really picky on my name, so if you wanna put the emphasis on either the first or the second syllable, either one is okee-dokee with me.

TAM-ah-rah
TAH-mah-rah
Tah-MAR-ah

The last one is my REAL name, but like I said, I'm not real picky on that. It's just that Tah-MAR-ah rhymes with T'hara -- the wolf-mommy I had as a small child -- and I can relate to her, because I am the protector of the bunch of us. But my Mate has called me TAM-ah-rah for so long, it seems okay with me now.

In fact, in that special "language" or set of words that my Mate and I share and few others understand -- "Tamara" is a person (me, of course) but is also a self-descriptive term. To TAMARA is to act very aggressively protective, especially in defense of personal boundaries. Anyone who is acting this way may also be said to "pull a Tamara" or to be "Tamara-ish".

My Mate has earned my trust and respect over the years, and I really like him now, but I didn't always like him and he wasn't always MY mate. I claimed Stoney as MY mate... but he died, of course. I once made some art to help me get over the loss of Stoney... maybe some day I can get it out of storage, if I ever get my own place.

I started liking my Mate when a part of HIS personality came out more and more -- a highly aggressive, motivated, SEXY part that gets shit DONE and takes care of business, in more than one way. We butted heads and he stood UP to me in a way that few people do, male or female. While my Mate tries to keep that part of him subdued and hidden from most people, I secretly CRAVE time with this "beast" part of him!

Sorry but I'm not real big on writing, especially when trying to stay separate from Sasha, who IS a writer. We tend to be a united front a LOT, at least within the last couple years. We can make another page about THAT...

There's just not that much to say about me, outside of my aggressive, protective nature. I tend to be more serious than the others, and even though I don't really feel like an ADULT, I am the one who makes SURE that adult responsibilities get done.

The Little Ones -- the younger parts of me -- really do look to me for help and protection, and I think that's kinda cute. I get ANNOYED though, when they ruin things for me, getting all scared or weepy, making a big deal out of trivial shit and making me look bad. Frustrating!!

Anyone who sees me in a WEAK state like that has NO IDEA just how strong I am for real. I mean, just look at all I've survived! Do you think that ANYTHING we confront in the future will compare to the stuff I/ we have ALREADY been through? Yeah, I guess that's the reason I am the calm one of the bunch. AND I kinda NEED to be, to give everyone a BACKBONE!

Sasha

I am like a CL song: I just wanna have FUN! I have fun with whatever I am given... from a moment with a retired biker lady, exploring her little garden that lines her driveway... to a wink from a breaking-down man with Alzheimer's... to the simple AWESOMENESS that is just about any American-made car released in 1967, lol. :wink: Especially the sound of its ENGINE! :double:wink:wink:

I don't know why God made ME, and I don't even know what you would classify me as... part of one human, part of a bigger ONE... the details of those kinds of things pretty much don't rightly matter to me (as my Mate would say, in his crazy Texas man way, heehee).

Let's see... what you wanna know about Crazy SASHA? Well, I think one of my FIRST memories... MY memories, as in I was OUT, in charge, making decisions and talkin' to people... was at the 8th grade dance in North Garland, Texas.

There was this DUDE I thought was FINE, and he was at the dance... I had barely caught a glimpse of him from across the place all night, and the female friend I had gotten a ride there with was fixin' to leave... and I just pulled out my very best dingy-blonde Marilyn-Boop parts of me and sauntered over to where I had seen him last...

...but I don't think I ever saw him again, that night or later... sad but true. BUT, I really SUPER enjoyed that hunting-men type of FEEL to myself, and I felt STRONG and FREE and a lil' bit more ME, so I decided to keep on keepin' on and build a lil' life for ME in this timeframe...

... but I REALLY came into my own, kinda-sorta, when I got behind a CAMERA, for my Mate, while I was still in Michigan, with my body's kids, and he was in Texas... of course. That was in 2009, after my parents died.

HAHAHA, I can't believe I am actually ENJOYING writing -- I have honestly NEVER tried this until tonight -- or at least not without TAMARA on board, hahaha!

Okay, back to who Sasha IS... MAYBE... heeheehee.
I FEEL things maybe more than MOST of myself, and I truly CRAVE to help other people enjoy more sensations, too.

I am VERY comfortable with the general and awesome things that my body feels, unlike most of myself that tends to run AWAY from such things due to a generalized overload of NEGATIVE experiences.

Maybe you can relate to me.
I don't speak well, but I'm FREE.
SASHA blows you a kiss, on my knee, heehee. :wink:

I relate to most parts of me that:

- find guys/dudes/men infinitely interesting
- actually RELATE to women in a way that often makes the most self-confident and GENUINE of them feel validated, even EXCITED that someone GETS them
- enjoys the sound/feel of BASS, especially when coming from the sexy body of a late 60's to early 70's all-metal vehicle, or other ones, bigger, like TRAINS and even loud concerts and even, even, even... you'll laugh... FIREWORKS from a far-off distance!! (Man, have I got STORIES...!!!!)
- enjoys INFINITELY AWESOME AND INTENSE sensations, no matter the source, and especially those shared intimately with the CREATOR!!

Wanna know MY dreams for this project? ANY project, really? Just simply for people to derive some small measure of encouragement from my efforts, from my time. So you yourself can visit the garden of my endeavors and feel somehow more energetic or clearer-minded or inspired or just not so damn ALONE. Yes, YOU. I feel ya, my Dear Reader.

[PAGES more Crazy Sasha writing, in the full edition, "I am Many"]

Tamasha

The stalwartness of Tamara, plus the sensory awareness and love of using WORDS from Sasha -- that is me! However, to be honest, much of the time one of the Little Ones sneaks in there just a bit, and I let them. Usually.

I am like ice cream -- and I let the other ones add their little flavor sprinkles as much as they want, unless I am on a mission, or don't WANT them out, lol. I guess Tamara is like vanilla and Sasha is chocolate -- and the swirl of us two is a good foundation for a variety of flavored treats, heehee! :wink:

We make a good TEAM! Strength + Freedom!! :D

I still have in my notes (I use Evernote), the FIRST time I wrote as Tamasha -- but I called myself Tamish that time, hahaha. It was FUN! It's like having BACK, but feeling FREE and light and chattering and unfiltered and unhindered and REALLY not caring what anyone thinks -- how refreshing!!

Since then, it is usually me -- or me plus Little Ones -- who write, and even that form the foundation for my "everyday" personality, when I am not at work or otherwise having to be responsible.

In fact, most of the time, increasingly so over the last couple 2-3 years, it is ME who IS my "everyday personality". Or at least until I started working full time -- toooooo MUCH time, if you ask ME!! I do notice that I tend to be overly SERIOUS -- not like me -- whenever I feel like I HAVE TO do something -- like work.

So, maybe I'll write about that OTHER ONE later -- the OTHER "everyday personality" whom Gypsy used to call the Big One. It is pretty rare that I take on that weight -- cuz I like to stay FREE!

But just so you know, at LEAST Tamara ALWAYS has the back of all of us, so if that everyday Big One gets too heavy, it is almost always Tamara alone -- not Tamasha, sorry -- who DEALS with it. I think she is bigger than the Big One, heehee!

Angelique

Angelique was one of a trio of “teenagers” that were primary personalities, back in the 2010’s when I was going through the heart of healing. The other two were Tamara and Sasha -- that is why I have included her here.

However, this is the “Big One” or “everyday Fran” or “stable personality” writing ABOUT Angelique... and any of the others that choose not to write at all. Sorry you cannot hear their voices, but many of them just have no desire to come OUT and be out ALONE or fully SEEN.

Angelique DOES push herself forward about TWO things, however. LOL, she IS the most Princess-like part of me because she fairly DEMANDS gifts, and she DOES demand comfort.

When Angelique pushes forward, it is usually to express her discomfort in our surroundings -- often in regard to our Mate. For example, he needs to move his foot so I can sit back comfortably... or he needs to aim the fan more directly on me, if he wants his proper “affection” time, heehee.

Once in awhile, Angelique has one of US speak to “the Big Man”, i.e., my Mate, requesting either a specific GIFT or that a gift be given SOON. Have you ever read about Love Languages? Well, Angelique is the only part of me that gives and receives LOVE through gift-giving. Most of the rest of me responds instead to words or touch, and Tamara is mostly receptive of “acts of service”.

Forehead Girl

I have one personality, very young, who responds ONLY to touch. In fact, she doesn't speak at all, but communicates solely through touch or a few little noises.

I am calling her "Forehead Girl" because even her NAME is communicated through touch alone -- and specifically, touching a particular place on my forehead, in a particular way.

So many times, I have tried to help this personality feel loved, seen, understood, appreciated... by taking my Mate's hand and SHOWING him her name, and how she goes WILD with delight when he touches my forehead, right there, just like that.

It doesn't really work. My Mate is all about "acts of service" and neither remembers nor understands her "name". He does remember to touch my head sometimes, knowing how much that means to me in general... and he gets better every year at giving me WORDS.

No one EVER said Soul Mates were perfect -- but it IS easier in some ways than any OTHER relationship I've ever had, except that with God himself, heehee. I wouldn't trade my Mate for anything in this world! :D

Gypsy

Gypsy is an eight-year-old girl that was my everyday personality after we moved away from the farm where I was born, into a house that we rented. She is a prolific writer and has an entire section called "Gypsy's Notebook". You can learn a LOT about Gypsy -- AND all about what it's like to have an 8-year-old mind in a 40-something-year-old body -- by reading [GYPSY'S NOTEBOOK](#). Enjoy! :wink:

Frannie Boo

Oh man, ya caught me! I had to look all over these 30-some pages, waiting here for me inside Adobe InDesign, trying to find my name... I knew it was here somewhere, hahaha!

I am shy and embarrassed to be seen. I do NOT like to talk unless it is about NATURE!! I wish everybody would just leave me ALONE and not ask me anything unless we are walking around, talking about the plants, or trying to sneak up on the rabbits or deer.

I will chatter endlessly, telling you everything I know... in HOPES that YOU might be able to tell me a thing or two, so we can enjoy the FELLOWSHIP of appreciating the awesome natural world!! HOW do people live anywhere on this gorgeous planet -- even in the big city -- and NOT notice all the amazing VARIETY that is outside??!!

To me, nature is LIFE. But, I gotta admit, the more I grow, the more I tend to be just as fascinated with people. WHO KNEW that humans are downright AWESOME?! From 9 minutes old to 9 decades old, we all have the greatest DIVERSITY of attitude, experience, knowledge, and understanding! We even speak differently, think differently and SMELL differently! I think I am beginning to like people BEST!!

OKAY, so I AM aware that it was my older brothers and sisters who named me. In fact, the whole name they called me is Frannie Boo Bachin' cuz my kid-name was Fran Bachman. I was smaller than all them big ones, so they called me Frannie Boo. A kid name -- and I bet I will NEVER grow up!

Twitchy

HaHA! It is soooooo weird to see my name in LETTERS, not just HEAR it!!

Yeah, but Twitchy does not really WRITE, so I have to do it FOR her. She is the ONE who DEALS with some events starting from my first few years of life, up in that upstairs bedroom with my sisters, and my dad coming up there to “tuck us in” each night.

Twitchy deals with my dad chasing me around the trees outside the bedroom window... trees that are now TALLER than the house by quite a ways!! :O

Twitchy is the main part of me who is scared of showers, and she is the ONLY one who seems to have remaining fears of this farm where I lived when I was born.

Twitchy did NOT have to deal with much of the abuse from people besides my dad, and only before my head got hurt. She does remember some of the most horrible tortures, in part -- probably because I had to cycle through so MANY different personalities, in order to endure those events.

My Mate and I gave Twitchy her name -- to her absolute delight -- during that time period when I was healing at top speed, back in the 2010's. We called her that because she doesn't stop moving, she is always at least twitching her foot. Nervous energy, I suppose.

Only rarely does Twitchy ever come close to the surface now, and it is generally in a bit of a panic, having been triggered by something that often I do not comprehend. It is frustrating.

Twitchy and the next one, Butterfly, are the two Little Ones I have the most difficulty with. Only because EMOTION can be so downright INCONVENIENT -- ya know?!

Butterfly

It hurts to write about Butterfly, and I really do not want to say very much. She is young and simple, but far from FREE like the rest of us. I truly wonder if this part of me will EVER be healed, and that hurts.

When she first started coming out and sharing her memories (again, back in the turbo healing time of the 2010's), she offered her name as BROKEN Butterfly. After gaining some HOPE through the process and in response to the gentle kindness of my Mate with her, she changed her own name to simply "Butterfly". Yay!!

Broken Butterfly's greatest fear was the coming of morning, the coming of fire-crackle-skin, the coming of my father or of the weekend... the inevitable COMING of pain and sorrow and the absolute DIFFICULTY of enduring such things, over and over until you honestly do not even HOPE that they will ever STOP.

That is why she was "broken" -- not because of ONE event that happened, but because they KEPT happening, and her SPIRIT was broken. Perhaps for good. She is the part of me that has the greatest need for reassurance, and has the hardest time holding onto hope.

Josephina, or just Jo

Jo was a BIG player during the turbo healing period (2010's), but she was the most ANGRY and BITTER by far, and it caused a lot of problems with my Mate. Sometimes he even thought she might be a demon or something, but she was not. She still had the same HEART as all of me -- she just held the most HURT.

Still, she maintained that it was her who always "trusted most" my Mate -- a phrase that meant a LOT to her, but that inevitably caused her demise. In a nutshell, my Mate couldn't really love or accept her, and of course is just human and let her down.

Jo let herself "die" -- cease to exist, never come back OUT -- in order to let the rest of me live peaceably and move forward in life.

Jo's last words were given as a prayer that my Mate be allowed to experience EVERY PLEASURE possible in this life.

Just Me / Just Five

Heehee, I really NEED the lightness of this one, after writing about Jo.

Back in those turbo-healing 2010's, I had personalities coming out all over the place, and my Mate would often ask, "Which one are YOU?" or simply, "What's YOUR name?"

Not HAVING a "real name", this personality would reply, "I'm Just Me" -- so that is what we would call her, lol. On a few occasions, especially when in tears, mourning an event, she would say over and over a bit, "I am Just Five, Just Five!"

Perhaps it brings tears to eyes, that so MUCH happened to me at the age of five -- or even earlier -- BUT it is a testimony to the Breath or Pneuma of God -- that LIFE He breathed into us to make us living humans -- that despite ALL that happened to me, even Just Me or Just Five feels JOY more than any other emotion!

For even when I was Just Five, I was still Just Me -- and me is FREE! Perhaps yes, because Fran means "Free One"... and also because I learned how to be "Little Miss Sunshine" when I was five, with Tommy... but I still would like to give ALL the credit to the Holy Spirit of God and my awesome King who saved me. The Truth HAS set me FREE! :wink: :D

Other Personalities

Yes, there ARE more -- or more accurately, there WERE more. Some made a grand exit, giving up their existence or individuality to “integrate” into the rest of me, or to “let go” and dramatically “die”. Others simply gave what memories and emotions and whatever else they had to offer -- and were never heard from again.

My best guess is that over the course of my life I have had over thirty distinct personalities -- parts of myself that served as “capsules” of memory, and/or of negative sensations (physical and/or emotional). Those capsules kept me SAFE, helped me remain FREE.

Without splintering into those thirty-something parts of my awareness, I would have been TOO aware of the dangers lurking in every corner of my life, from the time I was born and into adulthood.

Without that “compartmentalization”, I would have grown HARD and COLD -- perhaps even becoming an abuser myself. Instead, I have been allowed to experience a life of JOY -- one in which I am free to LEARN and GROW and help people, offering them a sincere smile to enrich their day, if nothing else. Heehee.

When I was married to my first husband, I tried to heal. At that time, I thought healing was getting RID of all my distinct personalities. I prayed for this healing, and even asked a highly respected famous female in the world of Christian authors and speakers to pray for me, at a conference she gave.

That woman whom I had previously looked up to told me, point-blank, that my personalities were ALL DEMONS. I instantly lost respect for her, and it served to drive a wedge even deeper between myself and those who attend church and call themselves “Christians”.

The feeling that woman almost gave to me is called SHAME. And I pray that YOU do not experience that feeling coming through God's Church, dear Reader. If you do, please know -- THAT is NOT MY GOD!!

I encourage you to actually READ the Bible for yourself. Get one of those copies that has the words of Jesus in red, and see for yourself what your Real Husband (mentioned in the book of Isaiah, chapter 54) is REALLY like, what He REALLY thinks.

Read the Psalms, written mostly by King David -- someone whom God said was "a man after his own heart".

Read the book of Ecclesiastes -- written by David's favored son, Solomon. This man is thought to be the wisest man who EVER lived -- by people all over the entire world, in many different cultures and religions -- and he repeats something over and over in that book:

Whenever that WISEST MAN comes to the end of all his thinking, he says, the BEST thing to do in this life is to eat, drink, and ENJOY the work given you to do! Of course, the same man, in the book of Proverbs, says the BEGINNING of wisdom is fearing (respecting/honoring) God. He also says that only a FOOL says there IS no God. Just sayin'. :wink:

Wanna know my personal FAVORITE part of the Bible? It USED to be Psalm 91, then the book of James... but once I found Isaiah 65, it changed my attitude and gave me more PEACE and HOPE than anything else ever has.

Starting with verse 17, He talks about ANOTHER timeframe -- separate from this one, but not eternity, because there is still TIME, signified by there still being births and deaths. He says His people will live as long as the trees... AND we will get to BE with Him and get to DO THINGS, learn things, plant things, build things!! JOY! JOY!

So... Who wrote the book?

Basically, in a nutshell, I do have one pretty-much ADULT personality that is now more stable than I have previously experienced. That is what allows me to work professionally, live independently (even ALONE, in different states than my Mate), and present a more-or-less uniform “personality” to the world at large, lol.

Some may call that “integration” but I do not IDENTIFY with that term. I do not feel “fixed” or “repaired” or “made whole”, nor do I desire to do away with all my Little Ones. It is FUN to be Free, and to be ME! I guess I have the best of both worlds now, heehee!

However, I do not have a NAME for this everyday self, other than Fran, and I certainly am not any more STABLE than your average human. I have good days and bad days, times when I act immature and times when I converse intellectually about topics most people do not even care to understand.

I can WRITE all perfect-like, following the protocol of AP Style or some other haughty standard... but who wants to?! At least for THIS book, I would much rather write conversationally, like I TALK -- loose, free, emotional... with *lol* and *hahaha* and even my characteristic *heehee*... and of course, Sasha’s little *wink*:

WHY so many personalities?

Someone recently described for me a scene from their own life where something bad was happening to them, and they felt like they were up in a corner, watching from the other side of the room.

I asked, "Now, can you imagine if that horrible experience were repeated, several times a week, for YEARS?"

Obviously, small children are susceptible to abuse because they are at the very least physically weaker -- and typically emotionally and mentally weaker as well.

The simple truth is, you CANNOT live with your aggressor and allow yourself to actively REMEMBER the aggression. You are forced to compartmentalize just to SURVIVE.

If you were beaten or raped by this person just an hour or two ago and now they are smiling at the kitchen table with the rest of the family -- or standing up at the pulpit at church -- or sitting there in your living room -- you will die of fright if you actively REMEMBER what they did.

So you DON'T remember. That explains the PRIMARY or main personalities -- but most people really only need a few of those.

Perhaps the reason I have so MANY different personalities is because I was subjected to extreme torture that lasted several hours, days, or for a WEEK or more, in the cases of Tommy and Terrell, when I was five and fifteen, respectively.

If you are being raped repeatedly -- for hours -- or if you are hanging there with metal shoved up inside you -- or forced to watch other people you care about being tortured to the point of death -- or buried alive or enduring something else that you WISH you would just die from... Well then, a little handful of personalities is just not ENOUGH.

Most of the personalities I have had -- over thirty in all -- were short-lived and dissipated once the memories they carried were dealt with between myself and my two husbands (my Creator and my Mate). Most did not really have much substance, and as mentioned, many did not even have a name.

WHY no “justice”?

Inevitably, people want to know WHY I did not “seek justice” i.e., sue my abusers in court or file complaints with authorities -- at least once I became an adult.

I can make excuses and try to pin it on other people in my life. I could say it's in part due to the constant presence of my father until he died on my birthday in 2008 (his dad died on HIS birthday, too -- on 7-7-77 or in my version 77.07.07)... I could say I was afraid that my children would be attacked if I spoke out... or whatever.

But the TRUTH is that there is just as much THREAT in publishing this book, as there was in taking my complaints to authorities, at ANY point along my path. Going public is MORE exposure than filing reports!

Forgive me, but I also sincerely do NOT believe in “justice” coming from government in a long drawn-out case such as this -- with so MANY different violations even within the first few years of my life. Perhaps there can be “justice” for a single rape, or even a single perpetrator... but THAT is not my story.

But the main reason for my leaving this mess OUT of the courts... is that is just not my way. I am all about acceptance and JOY... forgiveness, and letting GO of the crap that smears your life with stinkiness. I just don't have it in me to HOLD ONTO the anger necessary to see even ONE of these cases through to “justice”.

So you ask... what about all the other girls that could be “saved” by me “coming forward”? Sorry, I just cannot buy into that one at ALL. If you cut down one source of evil, three more will rear up their heads in other places, to replace the first. Evil WILL claim lives. I cannot SAVE anyone.

Besides... I guess I do kinda believe in vigilante justice and “protecting your own” more than the kind of “justice” that wades through years of bureaucratic red tape, waiting for action.

I know a LOT of good people, of all ages, who will take the details I provided in this book, and take things into their OWN hands, at the very least making sure their own family network stays safe.

FRAGMENTS

When I was going through the height of my healing during the 2010's, one thing I did was write, write, write. I had half a dozen different journals, outside of **Gypsy's Notebook**. In one of these journals, I would just write out a single scene at a time, capturing moments along with my thoughts and feelings about that one moment in time. I called these FRAGMENTS.

After each scene, I would go further by writing out what each of my senses detected -- what I could see, hear, smell, taste, and feel at that moment. This allowed me to expand my awareness of my surroundings and really get into the scene, like a mini flashback.

This gentle probing allowed me to approach each of these memories from the inside-out, giving me a sense of control AND self-compassion. For me, this made it easier to let GO, forgive... and purposefully add one more thing to the growing list of events that I have lived through, that did NOT break me, and that I would not allow to define me!

A couple years later, when I was posting some of my writings on a now-nonexistent website, I revisited my Fragments and found some of them worthy of publishing... but requiring some explanations and elaborations.

Most of the Fragments I am including in this section refer to events I have written about in other parts of this book. I am hoping that they will provide a unique perspective on my own story, as well as encourage some of you to experiment with this self-exploration tool.

Each Fragment follows the same structure:

A paragraph or so describing the scene, from my own perspective.

Usually a word or phrase describing what each of my senses detect.

Explanatory material that I wrote a couple years AFTER I wrote the first part(s), providing details, context, insights, and other thoughts.

I have made an attempt to put these Fragments in chronological order of the event described, not in the order they were originally written in my journals.

IN THIS BOOK, I have included only a few FRAGMENTS. Most of them are just too "harsh" or "hardcore" to put in this shorter, "PG version" LOL. Those I have included may also have the more hardcore parts omitted.

FRAGMENT: Bad Men

Why are they touching me again? Why do they always touch me there? And hold my hair, twist their fist and spit when they talk, right in my face? Why? The bad men always have bad, stinky breath. So many have rough, picky faces, cold eyes, and big, mean hands. They break me without trying. Flip me over, hit my head on the floor, pull my pants down, scratch me on my backside. I fight. I bite. I know it makes it worse, makes them hurt me more, but I just can't help it. It's like the only way I have to tell them NO! NO! I am not for you, don't belong to you, won't be broken!

—————In the Background—————

I see the ugly pattern of old linoleum on the floor

I taste the ever-forbidden fruit of revenge

—————

And I am glad I never was allowed to really hurt them back, to get my revenge. I'm glad there has been so FEW times in my life where I ever retaliated, struck out, struck hard, really hurt someone BACK. As mentioned somewhere, I did manage to call BOTH my husbands "Bitch!" – for which I am remorseful. They didn't deserve that, even if they did. Because life is NOT about getting even, scoring back, settling any score. It's more like UNO – at the end, the winner is the one who is holding the LEAST amount of cards, the LEAST amount of regret and of grudges. It's like the law of the universe which too many people ignore is: "Forgive now, and never pay again." and likewise: "Hold a grudge and pay forever." I couldn't stop my 4-year-old self from scratching and biting the men when they triggered my panic-rage button. And I can forgive myself for that. But I wouldn't want to hold the card of guilt for those men any more than I'd desire to hold onto it for myself. In order to be light, to be FREE, we must let GO of any debt owed to us. No, it's not easy. But it does more for you and your health than you will EVER be able to give to those who have offended you, I promise!! :D

—————

FRAGMENT: Left Hanging

I can't feel my hands. Trying to see how much of my arms I can still feel. I think they're sleeping. I'm so glad they aren't tingling. But I'm kinda worried about them. My shoulders aren't sleeping. At the back of my neck, it feels like there's a big rock, a boulder from Mutual of Omaha nature show. It feels so heavy, and sore. I can't try to pull myself up any more. It just won't go. My arms won't listen. And I'm starting to feel very, very scared of what it will feel like when they finally let me down from here. I'm so scared of those tinglies! They hurt so BAD! It makes me wish I could cut OFF my arms! Please, oh please, just drug me again, make me sleep through that part!

-----In the Background-----

It seemed to me to be common practice for abusers to either drug and/or hang their victims to subdue them and/or to keep them out of the way. At least that was my experience. I was a fighter. I have a few isolated memories of seeing other children cowering in a corner, so afraid of the men (and even the women) that they were already out of the way. But I was a fighter. Even my own father had to smear soap in my eyes and pull me out of the shower all slippery wet, just to have his way with me. I'm sure if his arousal could have waited, and if it were more available, he would have just drugged me. Seems easier. I fought like crazy, even with burning eyes and slippery skin! So because I ran and I fought, they simply hung me up, with or without drugging me.

FRAGMENT: Just Put Me Under

The voices are too loud, I wanna go back under. If they hurt my body again, I don't wanna be awake. Why don't they just blow in my face again, make me go to sleep. Don't they know where I'm at, that I can't help but fight them now? It's been too long. Now I'm no longer under the barn. I'm comin' back out, seein' some light. Won't be long until I get the fire-crackle-skin, and I will fight like a demon to keep them off me. Oh. Ok. Now he comes. He slips something into my arm. I barely feel it. He rubs the spot, smacks me. He's getting me ready. Won't be long. I won't feel this one. I'll wake up MAD! But I won't remember. That's good. Real good. Thanks. Ouch.

-----In the Background-----

I see shifty, dizzying shapes and colors

I hear fuzzy, muffled voices and a distant radio

I feel goeey blood on my shoulder

I smell the biting, pinching sparkle-drug in my nose

I taste chemicals, a little blood in my mouth

When I was 4 to 7 years old, I would sometimes be taken to places where the men blew a sparkling, biting powder in my face. It stung my eyes and made me see things in a crazy way, all distorted and weird – usually horrifying! A man coming at me from across the room might look like a horrible demon emerging out of the fire to eat me. But that wasn't the worst part. THAT was after I had slept or passed out awhile, when the drug finally started to wear off and it left me with "fire-crackle-skin" – the worst physical/mental sensation I have ever experienced. It's like every nerve is on fire, in a creeping, crawling, agonizing way. Like when your leg falls asleep and you get pins-and-needles – only way worse and all over your body. More like liquid fire – and wherever something touches you, the fire concentrates there, burning so deep that you swear you should be seeing holes being burned right into your flesh! Even my husband, who did most common drugs made during our youth, could not identify what drug this was. Who knows? It was the 70s, lol.

FRAGMENT: Begging Tommy

Please. Please STOP! Stop trying so hard! Stop being such a soft and open guy! Can't you see it's just making it worse?! Every time you believe them, trust them, show HOPE, they just hurt you that much worse! I can't bear to watch, to hear you hurt again. Please, STOP! Can't you just lay down and cry? Close your eyes. Pretend to be dead, or sleeping, or passed out. I guess this is your first time, then. You don't know how it works. You're just turning 21. I just turned 5. And I know more than you!! Maybe no one has ever beat you before. I wish I could teach you. STOP!!

-----In the Background-----

I see Tommy on the ground, foamy blood coming out of his mouth

I hear the fleshy thuds of the skinniest man kicking Tommy in the gut

I feel the sting on my cheek where the fattest man struck me when I bit him

I smell urine and blood and sweat and salty tears

I taste the metallic taste of blood from my lip

I had only been at this place for less than a day. My father dropped me off here hours ago, so he could go on vacation with my mother. There was a woman and her Princess daughter here at first, but after I hid under the table for a long time, the women left. The men at first acted like they liked Tommy. I thought he was one of them. Then I watched as they gave him riddles, and started beating him up when he got them wrong, although I suspect many of his answers were right, but the other men were too stupid at math to know. They just kept beating on him. I couldn't take it, and I scrambled out from my hiding place under the kitchen table, to try to make them stop hurting Tommy. The closest man just backhanded me, sent me flying. I went back under the table, still wanting to make Tommy's beatings STOP!!

FRAGMENT: Man in the Tub

Daddy, are you coming BACK?! Have you left me here alone again, for DAYS again? Will these people hurt me, like before, with the army men? I don't like it here. They've got this man tied up to the bathtub spout, and his face is all bloody, and he looks pretty beat up. At least his pants are on, and he even has a belt, and it's buckled. That gives me hope. Maybe this man just did a LITTLE something wrong, and they will soon let him go, with a warning not to come back. Oh, I really, really, really hope I don't have to watch this man get killed. I'm getting dizzy again. Daddy, please, please, please come back and let's go HOME now!!

-----In the Background-----

I see bloodstained shower curtain

I hear chains, man clearing his throat

I feel like I really can NOT pee now!

I smell the man's blood and sweat

I taste fear and dread

I don't know exactly how long after Tommy this was, but it was long enough that I had recovered a bit, both physically and emotionally. We were in some type of run-down neighborhood that has since become part of Dreamland AND has figured in a few recurring dreams. My father left with some men on some type of business, but as always he never told me anything when he left except to be a "good girl". He didn't tell me if he was ever coming back, or when. I stood in a hallway for the first hour or two, trying to be out of the way and unnoticed. I could hear cartoons on the TV, and a few kids walked past me a few times. Eventually I had to pee super-bad, and I asked a woman if I could please use her restroom (wasn't I polite? I DID know how to be a "good girl"). She didn't say a word, didn't make eye contact, just pointed to a light bluish-green painted door at the end of the hallway that was a little bit open. I dashed to it, but saw the man in the tub as soon as I pushed the door open. I forgot all about having to pee and started getting overwhelmed with fear and dread, thinking the words above. My father came back several hours later, when it was dark. He didn't say a word to me besides, "Come on". I never found out what happened to the man in the tub.

FRAGMENT: Slaughterhouse

I hear the voices, closer now. Are they in the room? Can't see me from the door, too much meat in the way. I'm hangin' by the far wall, just another side of beef. Yeah! I heard them! Is it over? Will they take me out now, get me warm? Are they gonna wait too long, and be too late, and I'll just be a frozen Fran-cicle, all froze up solid by the time they come? Hurry up! Hurry UP! I try to open my eyes, but just one will crack open, a little. I can't feel my arms at all, but I never can, when I've been hanging this long. I don't think I can feel my feet, my legs, my butt. No, I can still feel the spot where my undies bent over, tight where they yanked them back up, too quick.

-----In the Background-----

I see frozen sides of beef, hanging on 3 sides of me, all in rows

I hear men's voices, coming closer, but not FAST enough!

I feel very little of any parts of my body

I smell the dusty smell of freezer burn

I taste faint saltiness of old tears

There was a rather smallish butcher's or meat processing place between my home and town, near one of the roads that led to our church. Even as a teenager, when I was blissfully in denial of most of what happened to me as a child, I felt a dread for that building as I passed it, traveling between town and the old farm. Not long before we moved away when I was 7, my mom took me to a house almost right next to there, to get my hair cut. I was a bad, bad girl that day, trying to be tough and protect myself in the presence of those "mean" women, thinking for sure they must be friends with the men in the slaughterhouse. Of course, all I could do is be sassy and not follow their directions immediately. Let them know I had FIGHT in me. Wow, my dad and his friends sure had a lot of contacts! I was taken to that building and abused – always so my dad could get money or a new contact – but someone who wasn't supposed to know about it showed up, and they had to hide me QUICK! They left me hanging in the freezer like all the other sides of beef (less valuable, perhaps), until I thought I was a goner. I still have an almost imperceptible, narrow scar on my hand, where the sharp hook sliced into my flesh when they hurriedly hung me up that day.

FRAGMENT: Head Injury

WHAT?! Stop touching me!! What? Stop shining that light in my eyes! OUCH! You are making my head hurt! Ah! That's worse. I think my head is BROKE! Why are you doing this to me? Where is my mother? Is she here? Where am I? Stop it! I don't know you! I can't see straight! Just let me go HOME. Yay! There's my mom. Can I stand UP? I don't know. Am I laying DOWN? Why are you in my face? I cannot understand your words. NO! That HURTS! Ok, ok! But I need to throw up again, I think. No, I said I cannot understand your words. There ARE no words! I can't hear, and can't SEE!

—————In the Background

I see people faces, lights

I hear buzzy bad noise, no words

I feel unstable, nauseous, disoriented

I smell metallic blood and dirt

I taste nothing

—————

When I was 8 (possibly still 7 yet), my father moved us off the farm and into a rented house. I didn't know it, but we were preparing to move across the country to Texas. I think perhaps he was trying to get away from people he "owed". I don't know if it had anything to do with me, or just with him. He did continue to pull me out of the shower to rape me on a regular basis, even in the new house, so I know he wasn't all remorseful of the abuse he put me through. I know he wasn't trying to "save" me – at least not from himself. On this day, I was on the playground and when I went near one corner, I heard a noise like a kitten lost in the woods. I wandered to try to find it, and was out of view of the teachers and such. Suddenly I was struck twice on the head, and I still can hear the sound of the man's out-breath while he exerted himself to strike me as hard as he could. I had projectile vomit (I like medical terms, sorry:) twice but did not feel real pain until I made it back closer to the school. Then I lay there (or sat there?), talking to people in my head (the words above) while the pain closed in. I imagine it was somewhat like a coma, or at least like I imagine one to be. I honestly could not tell that I wasn't talking out loud. I could see – but not. I could hear – but people just made loud buzzy hurtful noises, not words.

—————

FRAGMENT: Leave Her Alone!

Why the little girls, Dad? I can kinda understand why you go after me, now that I'm bigger, and my sisters, when I was very small. But you started taking me out of the shower when I was only 5 years old, raping me while I was wet and soapy and couldn't fight back so well. And now, it sounds like you are going after my little niece in the next room, while her mother is off at work. I feel so angry, I feel rage rising inside my chest, and I want to go get a big knife out of the kitchen, and go in there and make you STOP! You already abuse me every week. Why can't you leave my little niece alone?

-----In the Background-----

I see the bookshelves on my bedroom wall, blurry from hot tears

I hear my dad's "sergeant voice" and my niece's little whimpers, through the wall

I feel a violent knot of rage so fierce I feel like I'm going to pass out

I smell metal, like blood in my nose

I taste desperation for justice, revenge

This was a few years after we moved to Texas, in about 1983. When we moved there, one of my sisters had been living in Houston, but we moved to Garland. Eventually, that sister moved into our house, living in the 3rd bedroom with her little daughter, maybe about 3 years old. My sister worked nights, and would put her daughter down to sleep and lock the door from the outside with a little metal hook and eye. The bedroom was right next to mine. Luckily, this was one of the few times I heard any noises coming from that room, and I think my sister soon moved out with her daughter. I don't know if I could have stopped myself from actually murdering my father to stop him from hurting my little niece. I came very, very close to it the night described above. I think I "passed out" – switched to a different personality that immediately put on headphones and cranked up the heavy metal, sinking into denial. I think this was also around the time I ran away from home for the first time. That didn't last long – I had nowhere to go and was too naive to know how to live on the streets (yet).

FRAGMENT: Terrell Battlefield

Hope. What is hope, in a world of pain, surrounded by death? I figure soldiers on the battlefield must feel something like this. We're all just ghosts here, on this side. Awaiting our time to die. Why do so many eyes look at ME, though? I don't need your gaze, your pity, your lust, your awareness, your greed. I look away. I am no one special, just one of the girls. One of countless girls – lives – sacrificed here to your greed and your lust and your big-man-needs, as I used to call them, when I was 3. Now I'm 15. Dead. A dozen years later, and this will be the death of me. Never thought I'd live this long, anyways.

—————In the Background—————

I see shadows of girls in the darkness, lumps of life

I hear various sobs, groans, coughs, angry whispers

I feel despair tucking me in as if for hibernation

I smell blood, urine, cum, sweat, feces, death

I taste something salty and dirty – sweat?

—————

After I had been in the “hole” for several days – or what seemed like several days – I began to sink into a state of angry despair. I had already seen girls carried out, lifeless and limp – or else stiff and stinky. My ears were constantly tormented by the whispers and wailings of girls all around me, dramatizing our shared situation and our inevitable demise. I didn't see how that helped. I stayed quiet, except to encourage a new girl. I tried to spread hope, and I resented the whiney girls who would cry out, “We're all gonna DIE!” and other such useless statements. I had recovered from multiple rapes many times before, a decade before – but this was much worse due to not being in the QUIET SOLITUDE I was used to, even depended on (being the true introvert that I am!) for recovery. Besides, these selfish criers were making it more difficult for anyone to maintain HOPE.

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FRAGMENT: Trucker's Books

Books. He knows I like books. He nearly commands me to read the ugly books he has there, on his ugly little shelf. I feel a tiny part of me look up to him. Maybe he can be my new daddy now. He's giving me books! Isn't that a nice thing? Maybe I should stay with him. Maybe he's right. Maybe I AM too messed up to ever go HOME. Maybe I can't go to school ever again. I'm too scarred. Damaged. Maybe I will break, and hurt other people. Maybe my parents won't even let me back in. Maybe they moved. I could stay here, and just read his books and endure his raping. It's what I'm made for, what I'm good at, isn't it? Surviving rape. Years of it.

—————-In the Background

I see junky, stinky old books

I hear crusty pages turning, crackling

I feel as dirty and used as these books

I smell mildew and neglect

I taste bitter shame and despair

—————
It took a couple weeks with the Trucker to work my way out of survivor's guilt after escaping Terrell. I vascillated wildly between feeling like a worthless piece of garbage who deserved to be raped by any man or woman or beast, including this old man... to fighting him, biting him, shaming him, giving him hell, trying to get him to take me HOME like he promised! Only God knew at that stage, what decisions I would make and where I'd end up. I certainly didn't know.
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FRAGMENT: What If?

I really start to think about it. What if he's right? What if I AM too messed up to go back to school? Can people tell I've been raped probably hundreds of times, just by looking at me? Worse, can they tell I might even have KILLED for my freedom? And what if they are looking for me, tracking me? hunting me? What if my parents don't let me in, or moved away? What if they DO let me in, and then the friends of the powerful guy I might have killed (Daimón) find me – and KILL my parents, or my dog? or me? What if I'm pregnant? I don't think so. Babies need WATER.

—————In the Background—————

Most of this was from ideas planted in my mind by the Trucker, and some days I really thought he could be right. Most of us go through these "What If?" times, when we question our future, and even our present. Who are we? Are we good, loved, or just garbage that nobody wants? Sometimes, there are people around who help us find our way back from the brink of despair. The Trucker was doing his best to push me OFF that edge! Still, like I said, I am eternally grateful that I had strong and feisty personalities who stood up to the Trucker, gave him hell, and got my butt back HOME!

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FRAGMENT: Giving Trucker Hell

His hands are over my mouth, meaty and strong. But I'm sick of this! I want to go HOME! He promised! So I cough. He can stop words from coming out, but I can still make sounds. I'll make trouble for him, FORCE him to take me home! He shakes me roughly, a warning. Be quiet or...! My eyes are fire, burning him with guilt. When he finally lets go, my words are fire, too. I will make trouble for you until you take me HOME! You promised! He says the same things. I'll never be the same, after what I've been through. He "saved" me, and I should be grateful. I'm just garbage he picked up by the side of the road, nearly lifeless. My eyes still answer FIRE!

-----In the Background-----

I see the face of this old man, looking even older

I hear fading voices, at a distance now

I feel a rising surge of HOPE – maybe I AM stronger than him!

I smell the stagnant musty air inside this trailer he calls our "home"

I taste the faint hope of freedom on my mind's tongue

To be honest, I really did not have much to return to, in fighting to go "home". My father would never again rape me, but I didn't know that then. My mother would never express love toward me, never comfort me, never show any signs of acceptance or admiration for my character. She would, I knew, continue to blame me, shame me, and otherwise send me on weekly guilt trips. And I would continue to try to fly free of the shackles my parents had on me. So, I had a battle to return home, and a battle waiting for me AT home. I suppose I was strongest, like the moment portrayed above, when I realized that life IS a battle. And there are no clear-cut "sides". It's all about survival, I surmised. At the very least, at "home" I could be alone, listen to my music (heavy metal and Led Zeppelin), and chose what clothes I wore. I could talk to people I liked at school, hang out, and dream about a future that was NOT determined by this scuzzy old man who presently held me captive. No! He would take me HOME, or I would escape and WALK! I had put a dagger in the chest of a supreme ruler in a dungeon filled with his followers! Did this singular old man think he could hold ME captive forever?! Well, at least not when I was in my "right mind" – one of the aggressive, feisty personalities filled with vigor instead of defeat!

FRAGMENT: Adult Smult!

I don't know how to live, as an adult, in this world. Everything hurts, and my heart doesn't really act like those things are far away in time or place. They hurt NOW. It's hard to breathe, around this big basket of pain in my chest. It fills up my muscles, and I have to fight to relax. It tries to push all my adult-people-thoughts out of my brain, even though it doesn't really have clear thoughts of its own. Just images, emotions – squeezings of the heart, like false labor pains. What am I supposed to do to make this stop? Am I supposed to stop it? God, please give me a clear direction, how to CARE for myself!

—————In the Background —————

Daily struggle. Adult body. Adult responsibilities. Everyone looks at you and ONLY sees your 40-something body. You buy crayons, a kids' book, a pretty purple pen. They smile, assuming you are purchasing a gift for a daughter or niece – or even a granddaughter (yikes!!) – how nice of you. You bring it home in high expectation – someone small inside loves it; it's a gift they never, ever got! But it is ruined. Because the husband or the children come home, and they want dinner, or sex, or they want to know if you paid the bills, if you made any money today. And the daughter says she needs this, and this, and this... for her graduation! What? I am freaking 8 or 5 or 15 years old, and I am supposed to know how to do all these things – AND keep them all straight and orderly??! And I am not supposed to feel lost or stressed or anything at all because I was LAZY and stayed HOME all day, while they went to work or school? Many days, I AM lost. But I think, if no one expected me to be anything I am NOT, I'd be just fine. I am happier than almost anyone I know. I am still just an innocent, lighthearted child, spreading my joy and enthusiasm for life among you. That ought to be worth SOMETHING! Adults and their MONEY aren't the ONLY things of value in this life, are they?! :(

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FRAGMENT: Recovering Still

Sometimes the tears sting my heart all of a sudden. The sadness hits me upside the head and I can't see where it's coming from. What hurts? Where? I don't KNOW. It just HURTS! What am I supposed to do, when I can't seem to breathe around the ache? When all I have are vague but powerful sensations of LOSS, and my eyes fill up with tears for a reason I cannot even explain to myself? Luckily, this usually only happens at home, and usually at night, in the evening when things slow down. Sometimes, though, it happens to me around people. Then I feel SHAME and vulnerability.

—————-In the Background—————-

I hate it when this happens, although it seems to be getting less all-consuming when it does. I've always been fairly good at hiding my fear and deep sorrow when it comes on suddenly, in public. It is harder to justify doing that at home. That makes it difficult, sometimes, to determine if I am supposed to "ignore" these feelings and force myself to work and accomplish my goals for the day as planned, or to give myself leeway and do comforting things like read, watch nature shows, write, or listen to audiobooks or music. I look forward to possibly making an income from my writing and/or my art some day, so I can "flow" even on these difficult, emotional days – working OUT these emotions through words and images and not beating myself up for being "lazy" and "unproductive" and "weak". Perhaps there is some type of STRENGTH present in these awkward times of heaviness, when the past and present collide. I hope I find it! :D

—————-

FRAGMENT: Self-sabotage or Comfort?

It's so HARD, cuz I feel like I HAVE TO comfort myself NOW, because I couldn't THEN. But it's really just a lie. I feel good with the first sips or guzzles – I feel elated. I'm taking CARE of myself, doing something for ME. But then I can't STOP. I never hit that point of RELIEF and fulfillment that I was sure was just around the bend, waiting in the perfect next sip or bottle or can. But it's never there, cuz it's never finished. I always just want MORE. Then I haven't taken care of myself – I've made things worse! Now I've wasted hours, gotten nothing done, made myself lose precious sleep, and maybe even made my stomach sick. Not again!!

—————In the Background—————

I'm not a HUGE drinker, and I can regularly go months without a drop, but there have been times during the ongoing last years of intense healing that I have drunk rather destructively. And just as described above, it starts out as an attempt to comfort myself. Most of the time, and pretty much every time I drink lately, there are no real consequences, because I do not go overboard. But when you are sunk into despair and feeling like total Garbage People, what is stopping you from drinking yourself to death, if you can?! I'm sure that some of you reading this can relate. To others, this is as foreign a concept as hurting someone else, intentionally. And to be honest, there's not a whole lot of difference. It is ALL just bad decisions, made in a desperate attempt to FEEL better.

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GYPSEY'S NOTEBOOK

Gypsy is my 8-year-old everyday self, the part of me who lived in a rented house near St. Clair, Michigan as the 1970's morphed into the 1980's.

At that time of my life, my favorite things were my dog Butch and other animals, reading books... and Burt Reynolds, lol. I was not comfortable in school but enjoyed having a couple new friends who lived nearby.

During this time period, I got my tailbone broken in school when a fellow student pulled the chair out from under me, as I was flopping myself down into it, frustrated with the teacher.

My father was still pulling me out of the shower to rape me on a fairly regular basis, but much of the OTHER abuses had either slowed down or stopped altogether.

This timeframe ended when my head got hurt -- closed head injury that literally cracked open my head and took many years, even decades to heal. Like most injuries I suffered as a child, I did not go to a doctor for the broken skull bone. However, I HAD been taken in for the broken tailbone -- go figure!

While I was going through the most intense part of my healing, during the 2010's, I did a LOT of writing AND I had a lot of different personalities emerging to offer their unique perspectives.

Gypsy VERY much enjoyed having her OWN notebook to write in, from 2013 through 2015. She decorated it with letter beads and stickers, and had one particular purple pen she used to write with, almost every time.

In Gypsy's writings, the "big one" is my adult self at the time when she was writing and the "Big Man" is my Mate (husband). Some other names have been changed, and a few details omitted, for confidentiality. She didn't write much about the past -- mostly on healing, and life as Many.

[Most of Gypsy's Notebook appears ONLY in the full version of this book, entitled "I am Many"]

Gypsy's Notebook: 4-1-13

[only time Gypsy writes completely from perspective of past:]

I kinda feel like, if I'm not GOOD, I won't be protected, safe. I'll get hurt. I gotta watch it more, not play so free. Gotta keep my eyes open and look all around me, all the time – but not let anyone SEE me looking.

I write like my dad – all print. Isn't is weird, I kinda like him in some ways. He used to be nicer. Now he grabs me too much – more than he used to. He seems angry, mean. He scares me.

I get real scared when people get angry. I shouldn't. I gotta watch, be safe – not miss any chances to get out of the way, not get hurt.

When we moved to Texas, my dad seemed happier, not so angry. He smiled more, even smiled at my mom. Actually kinda made me a little jealous. He used to not like her so much. I still don't like her so much. She's always hated me. I'm bad. I'm mean. I make her tired, make her cry, even. But she cries anyways. Always so weak. I don't wanna be like her. She's like [Regina], a crybaby. Not me – I just get mad. But I do cry, sometimes. Mostly when I'm alone, thinkin' too much.

I like to write songs, always have – since I was real little. I make up silly, fun stuff for words. I even teach my dog, Butch. He just wags his tail, or keeps sleeping.

Yeah, I DO like Burt Reynolds. He's nice. I saw him on Hooper – he IS Hooper! He's got a real nice smile, and a laugh that makes ME smile! He says funny things, and does funny things. The Big One's new husband, he's kinda like that, too. Only when he's not mad at something – some tool or some person. But Burt got angry in some movies, too – I think, like "The End". I'll have to watch it again.

[here she starts switching over to talk about the present, 2013:]

I don't trust people very much. Can't really relax. Always people around. Don't get to go in my room much, and close the door. Even when I do, it's not really my room. It has a bathroom in it – with no door! And I sit in this tiny closet with this tiny dog. I like it better when I can sit in the big bed, and read. I like to read. Even the big books are okay, but I especially like the books with lots of pictures of animals, like birds – or ALL animals. There's one of those, too – a big book with lots and lots and lots of pictures of animals – every kind there is, I think!

[Gypsy switching between past AND present:]

I like some of the stuff around here, like the books and markers and craft stuff. There's lots of stickers and different colored pens. Even all different kinds of markers and crayons! And even a ton of different papers! I want to just have fun and do arts and crafts and read all day, but I know the other ones have to WORK. I wish we didn't have to do that. We are NOT all grown up women or ladies like my mom or Karen. I am just a girl. Why should I have to work? I'd rather learn – but I don't like school. People are mean, and I lose my place sometimes, forget who I am, or what I was doing. It's so much safer outside – the dog and the trees and the sky do not care if you forget who you are, or what you were doing!

I like to climb trees. I wish I could climb a tree to the top of the world, and get away from my dad forever. I know in my big head that he's gone forever – dead, they say. But I guess it's just hard to believe. I keep having bad dreams, and it's just like he's still around. I don't like feeling like that. I want to do some art, figure out how to feel better.

Yeah, I don't trust people very good. [Sophia] – who is my body's "daughter" is supposed to be getting ready for bed – she has school tomorrow, and it's after 10:30 at night! And the Big Man, the new husband, he's supposed to be waiting for her to go to bed, too – protecting her and stuff. But he's kinda like her dad – step-dad, they call it – so I guess it just makes my mind hurt. I just feel uncomfortable. I'm not supposed to have to figure these things out – I'm just a kid. How can I have a daughter?! She's like, older than I am!!

Now the Big Man is here. I have to take my contacts out and throw them away – weird! And go to bed. With him. Good thing he's nice. I don't wanna be here.

Gypsy's Notebook: 4-2-13

Okay, so last night was okay. The Big Man asked me to touch him, and I kinda jerked away. He reassured me. We talked. It was nice. I told him I didn't want to be – was afraid to be – touched. Told him about the big room with all the books, and the big fireplace. Told him about the room off to the side, with the hole down into the crawlspace. Told him how my house in Texas had a room in that same spot – scared me. And another house [ex-husband] took us to – Mr. Beckering's – that had a room like that, too. They all scare me. I hate them. Told him about Tony being in my room and [sister] wanting me to kiss him and threatening to put me down into the crawlspace if I didn't. He didn't come over really after that. I hated [sister].

But I shouldn't hate. That's mean. It's better to be nice, and stay happy, best you can. At home, I can climb trees and sing little songs. I can pretend, and invent little stories and games for myself. At school, it's hard – all I can do is focus on the learning and ignore the people. I really, really liked it when we learned about Endangered Species. I specially remember this one coloring page on a seal – Leopard Seal, I think. It was my favorite of all the pages of animals we colored.

I get tired of being trapped in this big body. I want to make art and play outside. But the big ones just think about how to make money. I want to teach them how to just pretend and have fun. They want to find a way to make money having fun. Even this book of MINE – they think maybe one day it can be a REAL book – for other people to read. I think I don't mind that so bad. But right now it is MY book, for MY thoughts, and it's not for them and not for making money. Just for me, and what I think about things...

Like those BOYS today...! I was driving – or, actually one of the big ones was driving, to pick up the girl [Sophia] (my “daughter” who’s older than me!) from school (HIGH school!) and we passed the middle school where a whole bunch of boys were running outside, for P.E. The big one (driver) was surprised when we saw those boys through MY eyes! I thought some of them were cute – and most of them looked really interesting. The big one (driver) took it pretty well – I think she actually appreciated being able to see through MY eyes for a minute. I wanted to stop and talk to those boys, have some fun, kick the ball around or ask them what they like to do. But my body is an old lady – a MOM! They wouldn’t see the 8-year-old girl that I am – not at ALL!

Sometimes it isn’t fair. But it wasn’t fair when my head got hurt, either. And there was nothing I could do about THAT, either. I got better. It took a while. My dad even left me alone for a long time. The bathroom was safe again. That’s good, cuz there was a bunch of noise in my head that seemed to get louder when I was in the bathroom – in a smallish space, listening, trying to be safe. I couldn’t do much to protect myself. I couldn’t even hear straight. It made me cry. Sometimes, I wished I would have just died. But I didn’t know how to make that happen. All I could do is keep trying, keep safe. I stopped climbing trees, though, cuz I was too dizzy. I even stopped singing out loud. The noise inside my head was loud enough. I stayed real quiet, and didn’t smile so much. Even reading or listening to music hurt my head too much. And stories wouldn’t stay straight. I couldn’t remember what I had just thought up – maybe a name, or one thing, like a tree. But I couldn’t keep track of anything that I had made up that would happen, in a story. My head would hurt. I would go lay down again. Tears would make my eyes hurt, and my cheeks itchy. And wet. I hate wet. Wet and noises – two very horrible, horrible things you just can’t get away from. Horrible. At least the pain is quiet – and dry. I can just lay there, follow the pain as it makes tiny little motions around inside my head. Once it stops moving and is just a loud hummmmm, I might get bored. I might reach my hand up and ever-so-carefully make the spot go WHOOSH! Push down on the ridge, feel it click against the other side. Feel the crazy feeling inside my head, like all the air rushing out an open door, then let it go and watch the pain move around again. Even if it got worse, at least it was quiet, cuz it was INSIDE me. I never got scared at what was INSIDE me.

Gypsy's Notebook: 4-21-13

Wow, everyone wants to drink alcohol and the pressure inside is pretty intense. Good thing it's Sunday evening – all we could get is wine, and they think that is just a waste. I don't really get it, but I feel the craziness pretty strong. Jo is scared, and lonely – even though she felt better this morning after talking a whole lot to the Big Man last night. But today the big one made a bunch of charts – wrote down all 258 different “products” – printable stuff we've made since 2004. I know there's a few that aren't on the list – but it's close enough. I feel pretty good about it, but the big one is worried that she will fail. That she won't be able to make her goal – get it all online by September 1st – or worse, that she'll work super hard, get it all up, and it won't make much difference – still not making enough money. She really worries about money a LOT. But that's okay. We worry about other things – being touched or forced to touch, being around strangers, being trapped, being beat up or put down in a hole, like a crawl space. She's big – she doesn't worry about that. She worries about doing her job right, and making money, taking care of the family. I think she is wanting to drink, too – so she can just take the night OFF, and relax. I think maybe I should stay out, and find something fun to do. Problem is, I'm kinda affected by the heaviness, too. I'm not as happy as normal, and things seem kinda blurry. I really don't know what to do – I don't want to make things worse. I let Jo draw last night, but it didn't really work. I don't know what to do. I'm starting to feel scared. I think this is called “burned-out”. I gotta find something to help us all out.

Gypsy's Notebook: 10-2-13

Hi there. I found my way back again. This notebook has been sitting on the shelf, like I have. The big one didn't hardly even remember my name for some time. I think it's because there's been littler ones all around, a lot of the time. They're pushy, because of all the hurts and fears they have inside them. Everybody just forgot about the Gypsy girl. But I got this book that's all mine. No one else has their own book to write in, special just for them. Well, not JUST for them, anyways. So I guess I'm a little bit special. And I have pushed myself out front in two ways lately – I got the big one to buy us a girls' book of puzzles and games that I wanted.

And I kinda went a little bit crazy, last time we took a shower. Me AND some other ones were nervous about it, and we talked to the Big Man about it. I thought we were doing very, very good by reading and taking care of us and trying to be brave and make the room friendly – before the shower. But the Big Man sounded like maybe it shouldn't be such a big deal because nothing's going to happen. I know he kinda meant to help, but it made me mad. So when we were in the shower, I let everybody remember that my dad used showers to control me, take advantage of me. He knew I would struggle and fight against being raped, so he'd wait until I was wet and soapy, then pull me out and slide himself into my naked body. I would try to push away, but I would just slip. My hands would just slip on the counter, the toilet, the tub, even the walls. I was trapped. So later the big one stuck up for me. That felt nice. She told the Big Man about my dad and my showers. He called it my Kryptonite.

Sometimes I wish I was an “only child” or an “only person” because all the other ones with all their problems make me look bad, and I can never be good. I can't just be Gypsy – or even Fran! Instead I have to be part of this big huge party inside one body, where everybody's problems all run together and nobody ever gets to be seen just as they are, alone – with their own set of problems AND their own strengths and talents and things that make them happy.

We have to let the big one get enough work done and take care of the house and family. We have to make sure we give the Big Man attention and be a good wife and friend to him. That's okay. I just wish we had time for more of the stuff I like to do, too.

Gypsy's Notebook: 10-3-13

I'm feeling kinda scared. But I gotta remember I'm not alone. God is taking care of me and He is growing things in my garden, inside my heart. It's things He likes, like knowledge and faith and self-control and love and kindness and faithfulness. He cares about me because it's Him who planted the seeds, and it's Him who wants to see them grow. I'm not garbage, because I am useful to God because I am growing things for Him. He likes that. So He comes near and touches my heart and encourages me. He makes me just strong enough to keep going, and not give up. I get real scared sometimes, like I'm not going to make it. But God won't let me fall and get hurt too bad. He'll be there if I fall, and He'll help me back up. I'm not alone. God is the best friend I could ever have!

Gypsy's Notebook: 5-26-14

Memorial Day 2014

Things got really GOOD there for awhile! I should have written then. But it's okay. I'm writing now, when things aren't toooo bad, and the GOOD time is still fresh in my mind. Even during those couple or few weeks, I didn't get much done on my "work" – the big one's "business". I didn't do really anything that would make MONEY. But I had a ton of peace and calm and lots of joy and hope. I was learning that prosperity and success come from "meditating night and day" on God and His ways. That's from Joshua 1 and Proverbs 3.

And it works! I was feeling very prosperous, and being very brave with art. I kept talking to God and thinking about Him, all day off and on, and even at night, too. I felt so peaceful and at ease, and just waited on God, trusting Him to show me what to do, and when. The Big Man has been working almost every day, so we had plenty of money. I didn't feel rushed or crushed, just flowing. I made good food for the family, and I was joyful, cheery, and supportive to the Big Man.

But eventually some new bad memories popped up – about Terrell. Then I drank more, did less art, pulled away from the Big Man a bit, got more self-conscious and was fearful more often. Then I started feeling down on myself, useless, ugly, fat, worthless. Failure. And I started worrying about things again – money and not making any. My son – will he graduate and go to boot camp? The Big Man and the daughter – are things okay? Do I still have a place here? Am I still good?

I lost it, the GOOD. Can I get it back? Maybe all I need to do is go back to thinking about God all the time. But talking to Him isn't as easy as it was. I feel dirty, bad, shameful. My mind knows He doesn't hate me, He didn't think I'm just garbage, and put me down a hole, give me to mean people. But my heart just feels so broken and lost right now. Like maybe I'm no good. I don't work hard enough. I eat too much, sometimes even drink beer or stuff.

I don't get much done besides reading, some un-publish-able writing like this, a little bit of art here and there, some work on Twitter, and housework stuff like cooking and cleaning. I shouldn't be worth much, cuz I don't make much contribution. Should I count all my cooking and cleaning and all the play times with the Big Man? Should I count all my reading?

I was doing so good, NOT worrying about what I'm supposed to be doing! Now I don't know if that can be the norm, or just a "vacation". Should I push myself to work? To produce a product – NOW? To fix things on my websites or add new things? All that feels DEAD to me right now – but most everything does. Will I just snap out of this, or do I need to do something, to make a change or break through some how?

I do know that ALL I really need to do is keep my eyes on God. Then everything else will work out fine. Trouble is, I still feel shameful and hurt, kinda wanting to run away from God so He doesn't hurt me, doesn't put me through more painfulnesses. AND I got the double-whammy of feeling far behind and needing to catch up – working hard to earn what I've already been given, let alone what I will receive.

It just doesn't seem possible that I can ever just be me, be free.

Gypsy's Notebook: 5-28-14

Hi again! I'm back soon. It feels good to write. I'm glad the big ones let me out, trust me. It helps that they already got 2 full hours of work in on 1 website – and it's only 10:30 in the morning. That feels good, too. Good work makes the big ones more calm, and it's happier inside. I'm hoping to do some art stuff soon. We'll see. I know we'll at least do some fun creative stuff today. It's getting more common. And most days I read from kids' and teens' books now, too. Sometimes it's just learning books about the world – science and history. I like to learn. But when it's story books, I write down the title and author and where I got the book, if it's mine or from a library. Then I write down stuff that happens in the story, how I see it. I have my own special notebook just for that. We call it "Gypsy's Book Reviews". I even have a [wish list on Amazon.com!](#)

[end of Gypsy's Notebook in THIS version

-- more in the full version entitled "I am Many"] :wink:

HEY, did you know that I have been **living in a mini van** while I have written this book?

-- You can read all about it on the next two pages --

LIVING IN A MINI VAN

It isn't ENTIRELY by choice... but once you STOP paying hundreds of dollars of rent -- plus utilities and related bills -- it is just difficult to justify returning to such a crazy waste! Who needs that much space, anyways? Besides, I sincerely enjoy living THIS close to nature!!

Let's see, how did this ever get started? Back in 2012, my Mate hurt his shoulder so badly that he was out of work for quite some time. In the same month as his injury, my web host and software provider went out of business and I restarted my entire online business -- my sole source of income -- basically from scratch.

We never recovered financially from that double-dose of misfortune. My business never made even half as much as it was making prior to 2012, mostly due to the fact that I was deep into the WORST of my healing process while I was SUPPOSED to be concentrating on rebuilding.

We struggled along for several years, borrowing money from family, working odd jobs together, and my Mate eventually working for a few different satellite installation companies, two of which never paid him for thousands of dollars worth of work -- one of them went out of business, and the other was a dishonorable man who just disappeared.

By 2014 or so, we started talking about getting an RV and just being "homeless nomads". Summer of 2015 we stopped paying rent in order to purchase a truck that could pull a camper. Of course, we got evicted -- and we began a new lifestyle that could be the subject of ANOTHER book, heehee.

By the time COVID hit in the spring of 2019, I was getting desperate to LEAVE Texas for the coming summer, but I had given up my car several years before, in order to live in a camper with my Mate. I had spent two of the summers with my sister further north, and I was anxious to find a way to do it again THIS year, despite the worldwide insanity called COVID-19, lol.

Another of my sisters, north of Detroit, was giving away a minivan, so I flew to Michigan and spent the summer living in my new minivan and working my first "real job" since 1992. My Mate stayed in Texas that summer, but in 2021 has come up with me -- his FIRST time in Michigan!

But this is no ordinary minivan -- this is the Fran Van, otherwise known as my Sunshine Cave. It has been modified with a wheelchair ramp in the back, and surprisingly enough, that has made it the perfect HOME for me! My sister helped me fit it out with a soft mattress that acts as my bed part of the day, and my couch the rest.

A special size lidded bucket fits PERFECTLY between the head of the mattress and the top end of the ramp, with just enough space left to one side of it for my feet to fit on the sunken floor. This allows me to SIT on the bucket -- either as a makeshift toilet OR as a chair where I sit surprisingly comfortably and can reach items in the front seat area OR in the back bed area.

When she gave me the van, my sister happened to have in her basement a narrow set of 4 drawers that fit PERFECTLY to one side of the ramp, and that gives me a place to keep some food and supplies. More of my items are kept inside a large suitcase that acts as my backrest, and even MORE stuff like art supplies and books are tucked into various cubbyholes throughout the whole interior of the van.

The ramp sits almost a foot lower than the rest of the floor of the van at the top end of it -- and reaches down well below the bumper at the back end. This means that even with the mattress, when I sit upright on my little "couch" or bed, the top of my head is about even with the BOTTOM of the windows -- or even BELOW them, if I am slouched down a little.

All but the front windows on the van are tinted, so when I am sitting inside on my little couch, not only am I mostly BELOW the windows where people never expect to see a person... but outsiders' view is also deflected by the tint of the glass! Even better -- I've devised a system to block off any window -- or all windows -- through a combination of easily hung "curtains" and other objects that stack up, to give me privacy.

I have MANY times sat upon my little toilet while only a few feet from total strangers in a parking lot -- and they never even suspected there was ANYONE inside this common little minivan! It just looks like one of dozens of other empty vehicles in whatever parking lot or park I am in.

I DELIGHT in my ability to have EVERYTHING I need with me ALWAYS.

What I REALLY Want... And how YOU can help!

Regardless of how this book project turns out, I sincerely want to keep building my website, and keep helping people any way that I can. More than anything, I want to keep learning and growing, keep sharing my BEST time with my two husbands (Creator and Mate), and keep spending as much time as I can enjoying the natural world.

I will continue to live in my minivan as long as it holds out, until it needs repairs beyond what I can afford or until I can afford to "upgrade". I have no desire to ever own a house, but if I ever got enough money, I would love to own a couple small pieces of land in a couple different states, preferably West Michigan and northern Texas.

Rather than a house, I would prefer to own a mixed-use building in a small town somewhere -- a building that has a storefront with a rather high volume of foot traffic, and space to live part of the year either above or behind the storefront.

In storage in Texas I have boxes and boxes of books and art supplies. I would enjoy sharing those with people -- hence the storefront. Ideally, I would like to be somewhat of a "Discovery Coach" -- my own term for encouraging people through a combination of life coaching, art therapy, music therapy, and healing through movement and nature exploration.

If people find my story interesting enough, I wouldn't mind traveling to share it with groups or individuals -- although I do prefer one-on-one interaction over group events.

I honestly do not care much about money beyond having my needs met and enjoying a few conveniences, and I have no desire to acquire wealth.

However, it would be AWESOME if my Mate and I could travel the country, meeting and helping people, perhaps trading our stories and skills -- digital and/or handyman/remodeling/restoration skills -- for time to park somewhere safe and "plug in" for free or low cost.

Therefore if you have a need that we might can help with... or if you would like me to spend some time talking with you or your group, I would enjoy hearing from you, to see if perhaps we can help each other. I do NOT use voice phone, but there is a contact bubble in the bottom corner of FranLaff.com where you can send me a Message or email. THANKS! :O>

Pay It Forward?

If this book moved you or helped you in any way, please consider “paying it forward” in one or more of the following ways:

- Send me a personal message --> use the contact bubble on the bottom right corner of FranLaff.com :O>
- [Become a Patron](#) --> Pledge \$1 or more per month to support me, my website, my “ministry”... my heart. <3
www.Patreon.com/FranLafferty
- Enter Amazon.com through the link on FranLaff.com -- If you purchase ANYTHING, I will get a small commission! THANKS! :D

If you think OTHER people might be inspired by or in any way helped by this book, consider purchasing multiple copies of the PRINT version from Amazon.com (link will be on FranLaff.com/10-05) and

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THANK YOU for reading! :O>
Let me know how I can help YOU! :wink:

SHARING  is CARING



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Pay It Forward?

Items in **bold face are either found only in the full version, or are significantly longer in that version than the "PG" one

Info & Updates on ALL versions of this book at:

FranLaff.com/10-05

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