

ONE>

I

When I was about two or three, my mother, who sometimes had trouble coping with all four of us, used to close me up in a room and lock the door.....Well my sister said that she didn't really lock it. It was just a very heavy, door, wood and the door knob was too high up for me to reach at two.

I used to call to her. MOM, LET ME OUT...PLEASE MOM. I cried until my eyes were red and puffy. I screamed for her. MOM, LET ME OUT. After some while I learned to just be quiet in there and wait.

I visit Mom in the nursing home now. Funny we get along so much better now that she's a little senile. she still criticizes my appearance though

"Janie, take your fingers out of your mouth.

Now I go there and she's seated still at her place in the dining room, in front of a formica table. though it's long past lunch time. They wheeled her up to the table along with some of the other patients, all in wheelchairs, all taking a little snooze right there. got her head way back, breathing through her mouth. (Breathe) Let me out!

I go to that nursing home to visit her. I feel a sense of duty when I visit her, but I want to leave as soon as I get there. The other patients, the smells and sounds of senility. (bang on table)

LET ME OUT. YOU CAN'T REALLY LOVE ME

I go to visit my mother every two weeks. That's the guilt quotient. I don't go two or three times a week like my brother. I go when I start to feel guilty, every two weeks fine, and then I call when I can. Look at her, she's senile now. and so frail, transparent skin, If I look closely I can see her blood pulsing beneath the skin but I don't look. I don't need to look. (Breathe)

Mom LET ME OUT Banging!

I come up to her. she doesn't see me. she is asleep (BREATHE) (Reach out to her) Mom Mom You all right? It's Saturday I'm here to visit you... she wakes up sees me and smiles. her yellow teeth gleaming in her skull

"Hello, Janie dear, she opens her eyes a little wider and looks at me more closely "what have you done with your hair?"

MOM LET ME OUT

I brought you some cookies.

"I don't like nuts Janie.

These are vanilla, mom. Let's go back to your room and we can talk.

I wheel her back to her room. I'm trying to get up the courage... this time determined to ask her why..I want to know things about and my past. About how things were growing up. So I finally get up the nerve.

(BREATHE.)

I say "Mom, remember you used to lock me in that room when I was a little girl. Why did you do that mom?"

"Jane, It was dreadful of me. but you were difficult, you were not an easy child"

"But mom why did you shut me up in that room.?You must have known it was wrong"

"I know .I remember the first time I did it. It was Christmas and you were getting in to all the wrappings. I put you in there. I could see you through the glass door. I knew you were all right. But you cried so your eyes were red and swollen by the timeyou came out.I always thought it damaged your eyes and that it caused you to wear glasses. I thought it might have given you the multiple sclerosis"

So she felt guilty, Well, But I wasn't satisfied with that explanation.

How long did you keep me in there?

Two or three hours, no more.

How old was I mom.

Two or three years old, no more.

Did she know what she was saying?

But mom, it was wrong. It still hurts.

There I said it.

But mom what I really want to know is

Do you love me? Because if you loved me why did you do that?

Oh, Janie, can you ever forgive me.

What was that? What did she say. Oh, Janie can you ever forgive me.? Is that what she said I stopped... and I thought maybe this is all I'm gonna get. (Bang on table) And I'm afraid she's gonna die before I find out whether she loves me or not.

Mom, how often did you close me up in the room?

Oh, I don't want to talk about this any more.

So we made small talk... about how rotten the food was there, how the nurses mistreated her, how her bowels gave her so much trouble. Mom, I gotta go. LET ME OUT.

I left the nursing home. I had a long drive home. And in the car on the way home I thought about my disability and how much it hurts me and I wish I could make her see my struggles. I want to be able to talk about it with her. You see I don't think she notices it. She doesn't realize how hard my life is.

Then driving along I remember a conversation I had with my sister about Mom and did she feel responsible for my disability because

I COULD HAVE INHERITED THIS . LET ME OUT.

But my mother never talked about her miscarriages, or my brother dying young, or about my disability. She just got constipated and they had to give her enemas.

Mom was afraid we would all abandon her the way she abandoned me she was afraid she would fall going anywhere,, afraid she wouldn't have a bowel movement. I thought about mom's fears of life, and her locked rooms. When I got home, there was message on my answering machine. It was the nursing home. My mother had had a stroke and they had taken her to the hospital.