

Abandonment

As a child, abandoned by mother, frightened and alone, this description of trauma describes the early childhood years and the reunion with the mother, who was a victim of schizophrenia.

I was just a child- five years old. Mother and I had gone to the neighbourhood park, as we often did. I loved the park, the swings, the slides, particularly the jungle gym. I was given free reign. It was a lovely Spring day and mother seemed happy. There was no indication that she was suffering from severe schizophrenia.

Mother usually sat at nearby picnic table, reading a magazine while I played. After tumbling through the jungle gym, I wandered back to the table, but mother wasn't there, she'd vanished. I'll never forget the panic I felt. My heart turned to stone. The park became an abstract place of a million horrors. Finally, a nice woman rescued me and took me to the police and I was taken to my Grandmother's. My father had been killed in Korea.

I was raised by my Grandmother, who was very strict and unloving. She was iron. It was as though she was retaliating for being stuck with me. I never felt close to her because she never expressed warmth. And when I'd ask about my mother, I was told to put it out of my mind. There was never any reassurance. So, I grew up feeling confused and lonely and abandoned.

My visit to the hospital was a wake-up call to reality. I'd never experienced such a place. I wasn't prepared for the cold, sterility of an institution. Mother was in a ward with several other patients. She had aged, of course, but, in spite of it, she was still a pretty woman. It was a touching reunion, and for the first time in years I felt complete, connected, and loved. It was beautiful. We talked for hours, learning about each other, sharing stories that filled in the gap of lost time between us. When I left, I was walking on dreams.

When I returned the following week, she wasn't there. She had wandered off again to her alternative life on the streets. There was nothing legally they could do to hold her. When I finally found her, she was living behind the bus station downtown. She was filthy, reeking of alcohol, digging for food in the dumpster. Seeing her like that...it was the most devastating, heart-wrenching moment of my life.

From *Artichoke*
By Joanna Mclelland Glass

Lily Anges is described as "very dear, but not quite right. She is never been sent to school because she don't fit. Around here we say Lily Agnes is fourteen going on forty-five." Lily Agnes is explaining why she will not give up her bedroom to a summer guest.

A young girl's room is a very private place. It's where I keep my personal belongings. It's where I have my private thoughts. And even though we're not religious here, my room is, for me, almost like a chapel. Grandpa and I adore each other- but that doesn't mean we could share room. Nearly every night I sing myself to sleep. And it was Grandpa who said, "Lily, you have a very interesting voice, but it is – untrained." And you must remember that Grandpa snores and sometimes smells medicinal. In my old book of Emily Post she says that nothing must be spared the guest. She says he should have a good mattress and both a soft and a firm pillow. He should have a brand new cake of soap, mouthwash and a good clothes' brush. He should have a light at the head of his bed and two or three books should be provided. These books should be chosen more to divert them than to strain the reader's attention. He should have an ashtray, a calendar, and a clock that works. In August, even though there are screens, he should have a fly swatter.

Those things require a generosity of self. I could manage them, with grace, for two or three days. I could manage them with a chip on my shoulder for a week. I can't manage them at all for the whole summer. *(pause)* If there is any way to prevent it, I'd rather not leave my room.

Got A Quarter I Can Have?
From *Encore! More Winning monologues for Young Actors*
By *Peg Kehret*

Got a quarter, mister? Got a quarter I can have? I live on the street. You heard me. I'm on my own and I sleep wherever I can find a space. Sometimes I'm lucky and get one of the beds at the shelter. Sometimes one of my friends has a place to stay and lets me stay there, too. Sometimes I sleep on a park bench or, if it's raining, under the viaduct. It's dry under there and the wind isn't so strong.

Yesterday some do-gooder lady from the social service department talked to me. She asked me if I wanted her to call my parents for me- tell them that I want to come home. I told her she must be out of her tree. Life on the street ain't to hot, but it beats life at home. I wouldn't go back there if you paid me. Got back to what? Getting beat up over nothing. Watching my old man drink up his paycheck and then take it out on Ma and my sister.

The do-gooder lady told me it's dangerous for me to live on the streets. Hell, I know that. But it was dangerous at home too. At least here I don't have to watch out for anybody except myself.

You know makes me laugh? It's when I see ads for clinics and diet pills. "Lose weight fast." "Take off unwanted pounds." Hundreds of people are so overweight that they'll pay money to try to lose a few pounds, and here I am, standing on the corner, panhandling for quarters so I can get something to eat.

I can tell what you're thinking. You're thinking, "I'll bet he (*she*) does drugs too. All kids who live on the street do drugs." Not me, buster. Most of the street kids are into drugs; but I'm not getting caught into that trap. No, sir. Drugs do bad things to your mind and my brain is all I've got. This brain has kept me from starving and from getting mugged. It's kept me out of prostitution. A lot of kids get into that because they need the money and then they can never get out. Not this kid. I'm too smart for that.

Math Maniac
From *Flip Side*
By Helen Henderson

(individual is facing Upstage talking to self as if pretending to do an imaginary problem on the blackboard). OK, let's see. You have to carry the five and add three. Divide the remainder and now convert to a decimal. Ta da! *(Turns around to face audience and bows)*. I can't seem to get enough of Math class. It's my favourite subject without a doubt. It didn't use to be though. Last year, I was a certified Math idiot. Honest! I could add four plus seven and get twenty-eight which everyone should know is not the correct answer. Heck, last year I wasn't even smart enough to count on my fingers!

I think that I was math deficient at birth. My mom needs a calculator to figure out how many kids she has *(holds up three fingers)* so I guess it's a genetic thing. Thank goodness my dad has a vague idea about how to put numbers together or else I would've failed math in every grade by now. *(pause)* Come to think of it, though, Dad could've been my problem. Math always got horribly frustrating when Dad tried to explain it. He'd take all this time sharpening my pencils, adjusting the kitchen light, and rounding up enough paper to build a gigantic fleet of airplanes. By the time he got around to explaining the first problem, it was nearly bedtime. Each problem had to be written out on its own piece of paper and each step written clearly and legibly under the last step. With all that preparation, I should be Einstein by now! It should also go without saying that he never explained it the same way as my teacher. He used some ancient method that he learned one hundred years ago when he was in school. Too bad for me that I live in modern world. They teach Math different now. Dad was very patient, but I just couldn't get it. I think I spent more night s crying about Math than I did about baby things as a baby.

But all that changed this year. This year I have Mr. Wayne. When I'm in his class, it seems he is turning a switch on in my brain. Everything is so easy. He explains the problem step-by-step and BAM! An explosion goes in my head. The planets align, the angels sing and all is right with the world. OK, maybe it's not quite that exciting, but it's pretty close. I feel like a genius. So far my average is 110%. We get our report cards next week and I think I'm going to have my first Math A ever. Math isn't quite as scary now thanks to Mr. Wayne. Hmm. I wonder how he is at teaching spelling.