



Dear Editor:

I came into social work in a roundabout way. Disillusioned with corporate business, I searched for an opportunity to become involved in human services, so I pursued an undergraduate degree in psychology. Through this pursuit, I became employed with the Department of Social Work at California State University, Long Beach, where I was introduced to the field via immersion. I found dignity and inspiration and individuals who shared my ideals. Teased about being a "psychology major" by some of our impassioned social work educators, I soon realized that I was *home*. I have been fortunate to work with exceptional mentors.

As a beginning social worker, I am optimistic and idealistic. I maintain a belief that to foster hopes and dreams in others, you must have a grasp your own dreams. My dream is to see a world where minds are open to equality and diversity and where all individuals can live in 'harmonic convergence.' In my mind, these are ultimate goals for social work. Through articles published in *Reflections*, I see this as a common theme. Altruistic qualities are prevalent throughout the field, whether of educators sharing insight with their students, or practitioners promoting healing and change. By providing opportunities for stability and adjustment, we are one and the same.

I wrote the following poem prior to starting the MSW program, and though it is based

on my enchantment, it symbolizes the pedestal that I have placed you all upon.

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Dear Editor:

First, thank you very much for sending me a copy of the Winter issue. After completing it, I cannot tell how impressed I was with your journal. It is such a refreshing breath of fresh air from the typical academic journals that I feel have become overweighted with empirical studies; an emphasis that

~ Saga of a Social Worker ~

Distant ringing defers fitful slumber
visions of a child
sobbing silently
implode her essence

Human indignity
rests on her shoulders alone - it seems

She dresses with a sense of urgency
and desperate intention
to spare the world of anguish and anger

The night somber
as she thrusts through a city
some would prefer to forget

Uniformed blue permeates the room
a child cowers in the corner

Shining dark eyes stream -
pain
drips
down
the muddled mask

Where is justice ~ for assaulted innocence?

Eyes cloud with stories of a hundred years
look up
to see a face full of kindness
a savior?

The room is hushed
soothing words pass
trust flows between them
and
nurtures
a smile that fades peeling paint

The small grubby hand clutches hers
the maze of blue divides

to allow passage
for the savior and the saved

a lifetime of promise
prematurely stolen away
is offered again in the light of day

returned as a gift
wrapped with
hope for tomorrow

takes away from the fundamental and essential ways that human beings experienced life and learn. I am not given to idle flattery, as any one of my students will gladly testify, but you have a real jewel here. Some of the narratives, especially those by Holody and Aaen, resonated with me. I was touched, informed and transformed. And in the spirit of the Journal, it made me reflect on my early chird as a deaf child who found it hard to communicate and to find people with whom to communicate. It way through books, especially biographies, that I was able to find soul

mates. Today, as a social work educator, my methods may appear atypical to colleagues. So I was pleased to find soul mates in the narratives of transformation and teaching. I plan to add some of the narratives to course syllabi, pressure the library to subscribe to *Reflections*, and order a subscription of my own.

Also, my reading of the issue reshaped my thoughts on what the special issue on disability should be about. I am thinking of themes—such as recognizing disability as diversity, or (borrowing the title of the recent book by my friend, Simi Linton) *Claiming Disability*, and/

or seek narratives about helpers who have come out to claim their disability.

Again, congratulations and thank you for introducing a much needed force for those of us teaching and practicing in the human services.

Tom Bucaro, D.S.W., (is Director of the Social Work Program at the College of Staten Island, CUNY, Staten Island, NY.)

[See page 84 for more information regarding our forthcoming special issue on disability.]□



Corrections: In the last issue, we incorrectly stated the credentials of Janet Black, who was special editor for *Reflections* Special Series: Teaching and Learning [*Reflections*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Spring 1998) pg. 33]. Janet Black, MSW, is interim director of the Department of Social Work at California State University, Long Beach. We also misspelled the name of contributing artist Laetitia Burns on the table of contents page. Finally, regarding Kathleen Millstein's "Kaddish for Joe" which we presented last issue [*Reflections*, Vol.4, No.2, (Spring 1998) pg. 5], we regrettably omitted four footnotes which had originally accompanied the text. We have reprinted them below.

Original footnotes for "Kaddish for Joe," by Kathleen Millstein

[*Reflections*, Vol.4, No. 2 (Spring 1998) pg. 5]

Kaddish¹ [title]- 1. Kaddish is the Jewish mourner's prayer. It is an ancient Aramaic poem that contains no reference to death. The present text of the prayer dates back to the middle of the ninth century where it was recited by teachers in "praise to God" at the conclusion of Talmudic studies. It is recited as an expression of faith on the part of the mourner that although she is distressed, she still believes in the worth-whileness of life. Family members, other than sons or daughters, are required to say kaddish for 30 days after a death. It is a prayer that is not said alone, but in community as represented by a minyan of ten adults.

Kaddish for Joe² [title]- 2. My thanks to Mary Gilfus and Judith Perlstein for "travelling" with me and to my friends in the Philosophy Study Group, to Hope Hale Davis and my classmates in her Radcliffe Seminar and Helen O'Neill for their constructive comments and support.

"...I was offered a window into his world and a mirror on our relationship..."³ [pg. 5, ¶3]- **3.** The image of windows and mirrors comes from the work of Emily Style, co-director with Peggy Mac Intosh of the National S.E.E.D. (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity) Project on Inclusive Curriculum, Wellesly College Center for Research on Women, Wellesly, MA.

Shiva⁴ [pg. 5, ¶3]- 4. Shiva is the Hebrew word for seven and refers to the seven days of mourning prescribed by Jewish law and tradition.□

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