

Denise Wood's

MOVING

A Transactional Analysis
of Man-Environment Relations

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Raleigh, North Carolina 22 December 1974

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22 December 1974
Raleigh, North Carolina

for Ingrid
on Christmas

11 August: Sunday 2:00 P.M.

I wanted to write poetry this afternoon.
Instead, I ended up hanging curtain rods,
And poking holes in a freshly painted pegboard.

For a while I was vexed.
Soon I realized:
Curtains on the bedroom windows;
Far more potent than any poem.

Homer Gone

On our walk, Homer disappeared.
I just turned around, and he was gone,
Vanished in some strange backyard,
To snuffle the sun and gambol with the pups.

I was pissed
And went and watched the trains pass by
And counted every car till I was dizzy
When in the corner of my eye Homer was,
Circle running, mild lost, and I
Whistled and he came and we went together
To the far-flung field
Where I threw him sticks until my hurt was gone.

Questionanswer

Last night a man asked me
Why one of my paintings was left mostly bare,
While all the rest were completely colored in.

It was a legitimate question I suppose,
But still I knew not how to answer him except to say:
Because one of my paintings was left mostly bare,
And all the rest completely colored in.

Funny Field

In this field my dog must leap and bound:
To go forward one inch he has to rise a foot
Bouncing through the tangled undergrowth
Like a kid's stone skipping on the water.

What to do? Sit here on this log and write?
Or rush with Homer through the afternoon?
In the end I choose to play with Homer.
Fewer are my verses, but richer is my life.

I must go and find another stick.

Norfolk Southern Frieght

I was throwing sticks for Homer when the great frieght came,
Norfolk Southern 4:00 heavy with limestone and grain.
I listened to its whistle splashed along the valley walls
And its heavy chuffing.

I will not make it to the bridge in time. No use.
I bend to find another stick, but wait! a red light bids it pause.
I must go now and count my cars.
"C'mon, Homer. Let's go..."

Silly Business

Writing poems is like taking pictures,
once seen, unnecessary to record.

Why then do I bother
With this blather of words?

Modern Poetry

To keep this tone of elegaic melancholy
Is a snap.
I can squeeze my ennui like a lemon,
And fill a thousand glasses with its bitter juice.

But I'm never half so sour
As when I sit to write a poem:
Sad is passing sweet in words.

On Crow Hill

On Crow Hill the grass was sere and high
Where we came surprised into this high place
And the view forever and this Sunday walk.

Clanging the hills surrounded: Tatnuck,
Newton, Prospect, Winter, Stratton,
Burncoat, Green and Wigwam down beside

The long lake silver-golden in the summer
afternoon: Millstone, Chandler, Oak and
Union, Vernon, finally Packachoag.

Our hearts went out in this blueberry warren,
The scent was rich and heavy in the air:
Now and then Homer's head would show above the grasses.

Suddenly: two grouse exploded from the underbrush!

It's a Chemical Reaction That's All

When the bitches are in heat
Homer is impossible.

Is our sacred love
so simple?

My Dog

I would throw him sticks
till the cows came home.
(If we had cows.)

But he never throws me any.

Is that fair?

Moving

Last month I knew the names
of all the buildings
on the north side of Main Street
in Worcester Mass
and I would call them as I walked
naming them as friends:
Boynton and Commerce and Slater and Day.
Some on the south I would name as well
like Park and Albion...

These, all I can remember now
one month moved to Raleigh.

The 4th

We lay on Chandler Hill
near its top
just beneath the place
where they set them off.
With my head in the grass
I could turn and through the crazy blades
watch the full moon loom slowly into life
over the edge of the hill.

In the distance over Auburn
heat lightening emblazoned the sky
shivering what was left of the dark
into large soft fragments.
They fell around us like flannel baby blankets
smothering us in their care.

The sound of the rockets
ricocheted off the endless hills of Worcester
rolling off into the heated distance
like the sound of muffled drums.
Showers of phosphorous
faded just above our noses.

How nice to play war
in Worcester in the summertime.

Making Do

I would like, this afternoon,
to sit on the back porch and read Eliot
preach the virtues of the Metaphysicists,
but I have shelves to make for Ingrid
to sit her pretty pots on
and make room for her
in her sunny kitchen.

Homer Mounted

Homer will mount anything his size
or smaller; like cats or dogs from small to medium,
or young children, both boys and girls his size.
These he cannot straddle, but instead grasps their
waists between his forepaws and then humps on.
We are embarrassed when he does this and cry out and
knock him down, but the little kids shout:
"Look! Homer's dancing."

Then I am ashamed.

Castle Hill 1

These days when I go to my crazy park up on the hill
Little Paul is waiting there for me and my fine dog.
Sometimes with Homer he dances and sometimes sticks throws,
And sometimes sits by me and words reads from my books.
These days he's nuts on wrestling and puts me in a thousand holds,
Which I get out of gently but not obviously, and then
He makes me hold him in non-Half Nelsons tightly while he squirms
for freedom most unwillingly: like I once did when tight in my own
Father's arms I struggled for release unwillingly because
He knew of no excuse for holding me but wrestling and seldom that.

Not without love Paul comes today from swimming in his yellow trunks
And they are sunlight bright against the canopy of green as overhead
I throw him in his body tan and he is laughing and I am laughing
And we require no excuse for our joint being because it is good this
Afternoon high on this hill beneath this glorious sky of brilliant blue.

Growing Up

When we first saw him frequently,
He stood with his hands behind his back,
Awkwardly.

After he had been with us a while,
He stood with his right hand on his hip,
Awkwardly.

Still later when he hung around,
He stood with both arms at his side,
Awkwardly.

Each time he made these major changes
He made each change less and less
Awkwardly.

Very Much Alone Together

I am very much alone together with my wife and dog
here in mad Raleigh here in mad North Carolina,
For the end of love is being alone and my love is ended
now for many things I loved Worcester and of Worcester
and in Worcester and by Worcester holy heartfelt
Worcester Worcester Worcester Worcester.

For my love is not ended and I am alone from Worcester
severed and I love still things Worcester and Worcester
and of Worcester and by Worcester and in Worcester
but I am from Worcester severed and I am alone in love.
And it is alone in love from me severed and they are in love
alone and from me severed and they beat their wings against
the air against the air I beat my wings and the song is silence
welling in the lovely loneliness alone in love in love alone.

Simpler to have never gone this way, simpler to have hid the
hungry heart, simpler to not in Worcester deeply loved,
simpler surely but impossible for the love light was bright in
Worcester's eyes shining afternoons from Vernon Hill from
Union Hill from Packachoag and College Hill from Chandler
Hill and Oak Hill and Burncoat Hill ringing and
shouting and madly chasing me in love with this crazy song
of love of life this sweet song of sweet afternoons with the love
light shining bright blazing fiercely in the blood red afternoon
of our day of love whose end is being alone and my love is ended.

But it cannot be that my love for Worcester is ended for it cannot die
for it abides always but I am still very much alone together
here in mad Raleigh with my wife Ingrid and our fine dog Homer.

O my hungry heart!

Oh Yeah

Sometimes when I have typed my usual long line

I see
in my
mind's eye
those
skinny
lines so much
beloved
of some,
not me
least of all.

Then
doubt
over-
comes
me.

But my electric machine
so clean

runs away with my fingers and sometimes carries me beyond the page's end right off beyond

d
the
bell.

But Still

I get so much involved

with format..

Sometimes

it
clearly
rules
the
roost.

Sometimes

it
doesn't.

But still I sometimes

wor
ry.

Settling In

At first, when
we'd just come
to this new house,
Homer, my dog,
was nervous
and asked often
to be taken home.
We'd just pat his head
and tell him that this
was home.
Gradually he came
to take us
at our word.
But I,
now I
wonder when
we're going home.

Reaching Out 1

Here I am in my new house
bright with flowers,
When we eat dinner in the late afternoon
the sun shines on my plate
orange through
the bamboo shades
and the new wax
on the floors is brilliant.

But at night
when I walk into a room
and reach for the light switch,
it is the switch in Worcester
that I do not find.

Here in Raleigh
I fumble still at this late date.
I fumble in my past
here
in this present.

Reaching Out 2

I have a friend here
here seven years
who talks of Raleigh
calling it Ann Arbor
still not here at rest.

I do not feel so bad
to call it Worcester
here for seven weeks.

Dear God

He will say I don't remember all the things
he did for me when I was younger than I am.
He has said so. On this he blames our very real
estrangement.

My memory: photographic some have called it,
those admire it. Others get upset crying
"You never forget anything!" when I
force them back against themselves.

But those things about me that he likes,
these he claims, these he claims
like any ordinary fool, as if,
dear god, I could forget a single thing
he did to me when I was younger than I am.

Grapesmelling Kudzu

I have never lived
a place before
where the mighty metropolitan daily
ran editorials
on the olfactory virtues
of parasitic plants.

In Raleigh
the grapesmelling kudzu
is news,
best appreciated from afar.
Homer, searching for sticks,
breasts its waves, body kudzu surfing.

The kudzu's purple flowers
wilt quickly if plucked
from their hidden places
in this verdant ocean.
I could come to like this
crazy place.

And wear the kudzu
as a sign
of my own heart's wilting
in this crazy place,
of my own heart's wilting
in this crazy place.

I Came, She Came, He Came

Oh so shrill she came
panting in pain the mother,
like a flush of quicksilver
he came: Randall.
Oh so clear it became,
this great business,
this great business of man,
of men and of women.
To this great business
hot I came and hard,
and now we are
who were not before
come
to this great business.

Jesus, what a lovely kid!

Ishmael

I wanted to name my son Ishmael,
as a middle name of course,
and this one said: "Oh not
that my-name-is-Ishmael stuff,"
while this other cautioned a glance
at Genesis to get the scoop before I did
anything hasty
along the lines of Abraham and they
were both good people
as they go.

But I just wanted to remember
a Puerto Rican lad my godson
and our godsend Ismael by name
whom we called mostly
Toco.

And who made meaning once for me
of my merry madness.

Oh Randall My Son

Randall does not come into this world
unwelcomed.

They have called from
everywhere
to with us cherish
this great good news:
from Montreal in Canada
they have called and from
New Orleans in Louisiana
and from Worcester Mass
best of all they have called
to with us cherish
well this good news.

And letters have come
and from across the street
they have come,
wise and foolish
both and the stars
have trembled with glee
to with us cherish
this great good news.

And while I hold Randall
in my arms
farting sweetly
eyes unfocused
and coo softly to him
I think long on these matters
and cherish well
the great good news
of the world's unfolding
in unflinching wonder
at the fucking beauty
of it all.

Coming Down Hard

With a new born son
and a sweet sweet wife
and life ablooming
here for me in Raleigh,
this afternoon in the awe
of clouds and sun and
Homer running in the kudzu
I came to myself to admit
that I was here and that I
was here.

But this evening the phone rang
and it was Jimmy Collins calling
and the sound of his voice alone
brought tears to my eyes
and my heart wept for Worcester
and the sounds of home.

Red and Green

This morning the sun
was flying through my green
kudzu and it was ninety-three
in the sun but cool
in the deep grape-scented
hollows and I was glad
in my tropic wildness.

But then I spoke by phone with
Tom in Springfield Mass
who reported a maple
was brandishing scarlet
arms hard by Sturbridge
and that fall was in full fling.

I was confused.
In my green delight I had
forgotten to despair
my red desire, I
had forgotten to be loyal
to my older love.

Outside the still summer sun
danced madly and already here
so tender is the green,
so tender and so callous
toward my older love
of melancholy red.

Not Useless

What will I do with
my detailed understanding
of the mad map of Worcester's streets?
What will I do with
my nascent comprehension
of the ethnic insanity of Worcester politics?
I am in Raleigh and must learn it all again.

What will I do with my knowledge of if
he takes sugar with his tea and how much?
He won't drink tea with me again.

For Adja Yunkers

Brooding is an excellent word
that describes
a certain frame of mind
that I used
to tack myself into
behind a sheet of glass,
the better to watch myself
brooding.

The fall and the evening
were the finest times,
when I didn't have to force myself
too hard to become
reflective
of the sun's decline
or the years end
and it was easy then to
brood
on the passing of friends
or the passing of the day.

But all this is a luxury
I can longer not afford
in this fresh sungladdened
huge morning of the world,
my one and every,
where new suns rise on
each midday
and it is always
noontime at midnight.

O Marianne How Could You?

I remember well those nights
when in defiance
of the beauty of my life
I would watch the golden bubbles
rise in the bottle of beer
and lay my head in
the stinking puddles on the table
after all the reasonable people
had gone home to bed.
In imitation of the most correct gestures
I would put another quarter in the jukebox
and soothe my soul with
Gentle On My Mind or Baby Love
and yet another bottle.

And I would praise my sensitivity
and wash my sorrow down with yet
another bottle.
I will not judge myself:
I disremember what it was that took me there
better than I disremember what I did,
now that I have a dog
that runs wild in the sunlight
and a baby boy that fills the night
with unsentimental tears
and a wife more sensible than sensitive.

Vines

I was angry
though I never let it show
when Wray my mother's father
had all the vines destroyed
on his thirteen prime acres
of Ohio maples
on the occassion of his
youngest daughter's wedding.
We had Tarzaned on those vines
and forts discovered among their roots
and had made them ours
and they were gone.

But this morning I spent an hour
ripping kudzu from the trees
pulling its roots from the ground
gathering its creepers into sterile piles
until my hands were green from the gore
and the air reeked with the fragrance of well-bruised leaves.

And I don't even have a youngest daughter
getting married
but simply wanted
a little cleaner space
to move around in.

The Visit

I am returning to Worcester
in a couple of weeks
on business of an academic nature.
The flight there will be delightful.
We shall come in low
over the Verrazano Straits and fly
up the East River beside the shiny buildings
and over Providence afar
I shall see Mount Monadnock
rise cold and lumpy against
a yellowing horizon.
Otherwise I am stupid with anticipation:
I have already planned too much
and will be made to see too many people.
In the short hours we shall say
nothing to each other
and I shall worry how we
could have ever meant what we did.
In the end I shall return home
gladly to Raleigh
to my home
to Ingrid and Randall and Homer
my fine dog
to my two pillows
and my own sweet bed.
How will Worcester seem
to me now
with my two hearts?
I shall not always be torn
and will come back to abide at home
gladly.

Rain

It has rained here
a day and a half
and though the sun is out
this morning the world
is soggy. In Worcester
when it rained things got wet
but here they grow slimy
and strange gelatinous masses
cover the log I like to sit on.
The sticks I throw to Homer
have almost deliquesced
overnight and none can I find
not soft to the touch.
My hand pulls back sharply:
I am not yet used
to these subtropic rates
of conversion.

The Value of a College Education

From thirty thousand feet
through clouds drawn
like a scrim across
my view
I can pick out a huddle
of bright orange school buses.

I am so glad to have
spent
the time I did
learning to interpret
aerial photographs.

The Same Old Story

I do not upbraid him
for his own good,
but because I love him.
But if he stays
this innane
for long
I'll stop.

And I don't
want
to.

Over the Susquahana

It is not the ponds
that wink at me
ten thousand feet below,
but the windows
of the houses
of the people I don't know.

They cry to me
and wave
like succubi,
but I shall not fall
for their seductive
flashes.

Clouds

I want to reflect
on my journey and its meanings.
I try to focus on faces
names and gestures
but it is no good.
We are thirty-four thousand feet in the air
and below me the
entrancing clouds
are making a big fuss
and I cannot keep my eyes
off them.
Seldom have I felt
so intimate
with anything.

O So Unexpected!

Our backyard is rich
in the song of a dozen different birds,
each singing on each,
contrapuntally complex
which I follow deliriously
beyond the dreams of Monteverdi;
and the dogwood leaves are
as ancient wood in the morning light,
gold and russet gleaming through
each mutual layer in harmony
together with the deep red berries.
The music of our backyard
still does not quench
this crazy pain
that this week has reached
a new crescendo,
my screaming heart
awash in anger at everything,
my face a wreck of pimples,
that tightness in my back
again come to keep me company
when nothing else is on my mind.

So absorbed am I
with my insane life in this mad place
that I forgot
that Ingrid, dearest wife,
sweetness and light,
love of my life,
was born this day,
incredibly,
thirty-four years,
thirty-four incredible years,
ago.

So, O very unexpected
did the thirteenth of October
this year stab me
in the heart.

The Awful Burning

The money they pay me is no satisfaction.
It has nothing whatever
to do with it.

In Barranquitas
in the afternoons
we would lock the house
against our friends
and read outloud
the novels of Jane Austen.
In Worcester
we'd take walks together
here and there
in the sun or in the rain
happy just the same.
But here I am so tired
that we do nothing:
I walk the dog to get it over
and read the paper to be through
and watch television
in the evening to forget
or to continue to ignore
my awful burning.

Notes

I make notes
to myself.
Later they mean little:
overhead a helicopter drones,
Sundays are always this way,
Castle Hill Park,
quantum mechanics,
Bernie and Sue,
flowers and wreaths.

The yellow grass is lovely
in the late sun
and Homer casts a long shadow
as he stalks a smell.
I shall make a note to keep
no more notes and conveniently
fail to understand what it was
I must have had in mind.

Sunday Morning Thoughts

Already when I walk to work
I am angry. Along the railroad tracks
the sun lies like a razor and the crunch
of my feet on the ballast
could be music.
But I neither see nor hear
anything but sullen faces
and tired voices
of partners in vicious dialogues
that I endlessly rehearse.

At school I am social.
I parcel out my few smiles carefully
where they will do most good.
For those I like I save my true face
and these I scare
with the depth and heat
of my dissatisfaction.

The burden
of having not screamed
in this nightmare university
weighs on me
and while my step is lighter coming home
and while I see more and hear now,
still I rehash conversations
saying to myself what I would have said
to them,
again and again,
the anger rising,
my face tight
tomorrow's acne revealing
what I buried today.

O! I am so unhappy here!
And worst of all
I do not feel that this will pass away
so easily this time. . .

Sunday Morning

This morning taking Homer for his walk
I cursed the trees,
blotched and motley,
partly turned,
here red, here brown, here green,
that make a mockery of fall
in this perverted climate.
In the empty lot
I found with search
a single stick to throw for Homer
and he bored wandered off
and ate garbage probably
while I furious returned home
cursing Homer, cursing Raleigh,
cursing cursing cursing

Las Noticias

I sit on my front porch
reading the newspaper.
I am not enthralled
with these daily events,
but feel the need
to be up-to-date.
I must be able to say yes
when someone asks, "Did you
see such-and-such in last night's paper?"

No one will ask me if I saw
where the lowering light
touched the leaves of the tree across the street
and I was enthralled
by my quickening pulse
in the crackling air
and the cascade of molten gold
that passes here for fall
on one tree at a time.

Here there is no battle for attention.
All the trees but one hang back
and let it go, and when its turn is over
one more tree will turn.
Each enralls me in its turn,
killing me softly with its turning,
with this autumn canon,
this seasonal rondo, mezzopiano.

I don't notice that the light has faded,
mezzopiano, until my dog comes
to call me in for dinner,
lost in the leaves and the light.

Foiled

I went out beneath
my pecan tree
to learn what my anger
might buy.
I sat down to vent my spleen.

But the damn pecan leaves
would not cooperate,
they just kept falling
on my paper
and the air
was full of them
dancing.

Difficult to remain
angry
under the circumstances.

Even though I know how to spell

I may still I hope lie
on the grass
even on a less than perfect
day and without an audience
and I may still I hope burp
without intent to shock
but just because I'm filled with gas
and like the feel of it coming up
my throat I may still I hope
fart and crawl in the dirt
and poke my pimples
and bite the dirt beneath my nails
and let my dog lick the inside,
on occasion, of my mouth
and pee and then buy an ice cream
cone without worrying because I
didn't wash my hands:
I didn't become a Moslem
when I learned to spell or
sell my birthright for thirteen paultry grand.

Here

The teacup is empty,
outside the sky grows gray and heavy.
When I stand at the window
I can watch it bleed into night
at the edges.

Watching from the backyard
I am chilly and the moon is
plain and bright. I huddle
in my jacket and in the thought
of the warm inside the house,
squatting fat and contented there upon the ground.
After dinner we shall play some Chinese Checkers.

I like it here, without all I had,
I like it here. This accounting of
moving is confused and painful,
but if I can think of no reason to move,
I can think of no reason not to.
And no reason not to be glad in the
hereness of this moment.

Accounting is a silly business:
who shall keep the tallies
and against what account?
I shall not live my life
as I keep my checkbook,
carefully recording what I get
and what I spend. I shall be
profligate and blow my wad
on the crazy grin
of my fine son
and the dizzy smile
of my fine wife
and the world run wonderful.

I like it here, I say,
as I take stock
and harbor up these moments
against my ease.

Thanksgiving

I like it here.

Tomarrow we shall head
west to the mountains
for Thanksgiving.

I am bold to wear winter clothing
and bring boots against the snow,
but it will be cold and we shall glow
with out own wonderful warmth.

I have much to be thankful for,
but wonder whom to thank.
While others thank their maker
I shall acknowledge myself
and the mathematics of my life
that has me acquired wife and son
and the wisdom to like it
where I am.

