

HEARING DISABILITIES

for about \$3,000 direct & indirect costs
a baby is born

this mother leaves the hospital & seeks her cheque that she feels she's entitled to

of almost \$1,000 a month
with subsidized Pharmacare

but it isn't quite what she wanted, needed, could benefit from.

she's assigned a social worker who costs society a few hundred a visit

at some moment due to 900
or more sociological & psychological reasons

this child is taken by the courts & placed in foster care where our costs go up to

\$1,400 for fostercare, \$500 continues for mom, & half that again for ongoing social
workers visits.

this child grows up & costs the criminal system & drug rehab system about what her
mother had been

costing & at age 17 she has her first baby, at 19 her second, at 22 her third...

three generations of recipients of societal care are now proving we've done something

that hasn't been working & we've done it over & over & now AIDS has been added to
the evolution

& hepatitis & crack & multiple diagnosis & global crisis & that original mom might live
to be 99

& four generations &

we haven't learned from history. what would happen if we listened to learn from
*her*story?

QUARTERLY REPORT

since January where'd they go?

some have moved on somehow to somewhere
with or without tracks.

one's gone – so gone for sure to a crack shack.

one's installed in jail (this may save her life for another month).

one's moved in with a John she's sure she's repulsed by-
but for sex, cooking, cleaning she's got food, bruises, a roof over it all.

one's in detox.

one's been confiscated by her hateful sister; trapped as a nanny, obligated
to be grateful, available 24/7 & assigned a bed in the basement.

one's in a mental health facility.

one's in a tent by the river.

one's in hospital ricocheting from uncured to incurable.

one's gone searching to repatriate with her distant children.

one's gone to reserve, her abusers, her myths.

one's in a spiritual healing center.

one's in a church's philanthropic embrace.

one fell in love & it might work, this time.

many are still here. still.

many are unknown in there whereabouts, where withal, wear & tear.

two are in pauper's coffins.

everyone's looking to fix or find their teeth.

May 1st: the streets are warmer if not friendlier.

THIS AIN'T KANSAS OR RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

Carrie, this petite doe-eyed girl
had parents who neglected her.
mother would leave her for days
caring for scraggly siblings. no food. no money.
no apologies. when around
father would force her to bed
while she cried so when the nun started
sexually abusing her too Carrie was that much more
alienated & dead-eyed.
unalive victimized girls don't easily find alcohol but *hard* hustling women do.
unloving lovers bought her things. objectification
& commodification distracted from feelings .
when children were born she had no idea
how to respond to their cries, their urges,
their ever reaching needs, neediness, needs & when
her own daughter was sexually abused by that
step dad who'd found his way into their numbed lives her
dead-eyedness returned entirely.
Carrie's one of the ones who've addicted themselves to Jesus now.
this substance is working for her as are the pods & pile ups
of social workers listening to her
shrivels & snippets of sadness, rage, disassemblment, denial melting, chopped &
blocked images melting.
my joy warms & rises while listening to her
declare she's now 80% healed, setting limits,
saying no, avoiding mean people,
feeling her tangly gangly feelings & intuitions without guilt.
there are hurricane days
when she craves to speak again to her dead
siblings, parents, child,
the once goodenough husband
but she can't travel to their gravesites on
\$490 a month welfare. she can't
even afford to phone the son & grandkids
she knows live somewhere in Sault St. Marie.

→

recently & most awesomely her doe-eyes
& undyed hair shine:
she's collecting fluffy-plush stuffed toys, a bedroom full of books,
a closet full of comfortable reasonable clothes –
she's knowing it is never too late
to now begin & live a happy childhood.
Carrie's knowing that as her 65th birthday happens this month it's all that much more
intensive, substantive, imperative & impressive.

GOLLUM. GRAMMA.

she was an entrepreneur, owned a jewellery store. she says.
does have a pair of earrings that appear to be real gold.
she weighted 170 pounds before crack, before divorce, before homelessness.
was a much-wanted 1940's baby,
raised in a strict catholic home, taught to be a good cook, knows how to sew.
how long ago did the nim-binning grey-grunge grow right into her nails?

in the previous millennium she had a yard to tend,
flowers with names & needs, children who respected her,
an admired role & place in the community.

did she always judge others so critically- pick pick put down put down?
did her 90's crash-burn-fall turn her into a bizarre hoarder?
dozens of bags & boxes stacked, tumbling, squished...

does she nag-pick-nag at others so they'll hurt her?
is this something like self-mutilation; an outsourcing of her abuse?
months witnessing her: now i note the zig-zag-zig of her & *feel* it less

the first times she wept to me about her purse being stolen,
her face being beaten, her body being marked up – she said
she'd *no idea why people were so mean to her* –

now i see when crack's crazying her pavement grey eyes,
causing her stealing, insisting her mouth fill with lies,
crack is her is her choices & wretched consequences.

like other too-long-here droopy-faced women
her half dozen teeth are infected (she sells her painkillers sometimes)
the worrisome weepiness, the raspy frightening cough,

the illnesses tolling the limits of her...
she hurts when she's forbidden to see her grandchildren.
her dog was long ago rescued by family,

any one who knows her knows that most of her 'her-ness'
has been eroded, confiscated, replaced by addiction.
among those crazy bags & boxes stacked around her teeny ill-kept room
she giggles & assures me she's been collecting
cute stylish gifts to send to her kids & grandkids for Xmas &
like a magician, she swirls & flags them for my viewing pleasure.