

Mirrors and Reflections

Mirrors and reflections.

Mirrors. Solid. Hard. Cold. Exposing. Uncompromising.

Intrusive.

reflections. fluid. malleable. naked. exposed. compromised.

Mirrors. With real voices, real eyes, real identities.

Voices laden with judgment. Eyes with penetrating gaze.

Judgment exposing every blemish, mercilessly. Mocking.

Taunting.

reflections. with real voices, real eyes, real identities.

voices absorbing judgment, diminishing with each exchange.

eyes haunted by relentless torment. bodies hastening to

conceal any imperfection.

Mirrors. Exercising power. Raping Their reflections.

Re-shaping and molding Their captives into new enslaving forms.

reflections. twisting, straining to accommodate demands,

to protect against further compression, further violence,

submitting to survive.

reflections. shrinking to fit the right measurements.

narrow confining dimensions. all beginning to look the

same.

dehumanized, lifeless forms of correct shape.

reflections. all the same. same deadened eyes, hushed voices,

pipe-cleaner existences. afraid to see, speak, move

for fear of collapsing out of form. women girls me.

Mirrors. Gleaming. Razor-sharp edges. The gleam of He

who stalks, preys, executes.

A mirror adorns her bathroom wall and the door to her bedroom closet. If she peers into picture frames on her bookshelves, she can see her reflection. Though not as clearly as through the glass doors of the building where she works or the shop windows dotting Yonge St. Sunglasses, silverware, car windows, instabank machines, tv and computer screens, phone booths, toilet paper holders....She knows every Mirror in her path. And in extraordinary detail. Which ones capture her entire torso. Which reflect the colour of her complexion. Which provide accurate proportions and which distort.

In her world, she is pursued by Mirrors. She is possessed by Mirrors. Mirrors seductively coaxing her to Their sides. Tempting her with the promise of adoration and approval. Asking but a nominal fee: The sacrifice of her uniqueness. When and how did her life come to revolve around Mirrors? When and why did she begin to consult these Mirrors with such frequency and feel and need to know them so thoroughly and base her self-worth upon Their feedback? For how long will she hungrily, compulsively seek Their approval at such a cost?

From where does the Mirror draw His power to judge and dictate?

Where do her hours lost, trains missed, worlds unseen, go to mourn?

Mirrors and reflections.

He and she.

Molder and molded.

Judge and judged.

No. I say No.

If I am to be molded, I alone will claim the power of Molder.

I will challenge the power of Mirrors.

If I may choose to refuse to look in these Mirrors, walk by and ignore Them. Create my own mirrors. Or I may decide to rise in active revolt. Smash the Mirrors, shatter Them in defiance. Both are acts of courage. The first is certain to elicit disapproval and alienation, the second to draw blood. Both will leave scars. The scars of change, the pain of difference, the loss of what was.

But blood is a sign of life. And so is difference. Wounds and loss speak of living. Scars scream survival.

I may choose to destroy and/or to change. But this choice demands responsibility for what is to follow.

I choose to create my own mirrors. mirrors that need not be hard pieces of glass... cold, intrusive, exposing. Mirrors can be razor-sharp foes, but they can also be gentle friends... spirits, plants, teddy bears, visions or anything I so choose. The choice is mine to make. I choose mirrors that can reflect love and compassion for myself. mirrors that nourish and encourage growth and expansion of my being, rather than diminishing and deadening. mirrors that permit and reflect differences, variation.

I choose paper and words for my mirror. To reflect my ongoing transformation and inner truth. As the writings accumulate, I claim more space for myself in the world. And I am no longer invisible.

Gail Novack