

Donna Clark / NOISES FROM QUIET ROOMS

Quiet Rooms: Cement rooms stainless steel toilet and sink. No windows except to inspect. Yellow acrylic paint. Easily cleaned. 1-1/2 inch steel door with windows into hallway. She had to scream to have the door left unlocked. Eight by eight feet. Camera encased behind plexi.

Sickness based on trying to conform to being white middle class heterosexuals with two-point-five children in the suburbs. Forgetting how this hasn't worked in our past. Resistance in remembering another way. We just aren't all that clean. Forgetting because we who seem to be this ideal have become complacent, complicit in our own oppression.

Trophy Finger Inch

Roses and spice and everything nice. Tattoo. A lock of hair. "Thin-skinned" she was called when she tried to speak. Duplicitous.

We were most in love when we plotted to resist together. When I went into the hospital Mom and I snuck an ounce of brandy from a jam jar. "Don't tell anybody." A shared secret. Resistance to the rules. Earlier we laughed as Mom insisted on a cigarette unable to speak due to heavy surveillance in the tiny quiet rooms. She signalled from a well-lit corner for me to pass her a smoke. "Nobody will know." "What can they do?" she said, "kick me out?" "No Mom they'll kick me out and then I won't be able to visit you." I phoned everyday just to ask questions, asking questions, being available to answer questions to help define Mom with and against the hospital. My story of her story. Because they couldn't find her records. They couldn't construct her history or rather she was someone without a history.

Collateral damage.

Bless our families. Innocent women and children.

Aunt Vee was too organized for her; she preferred Uncle Bud because he was willing to go for a drink.

Your resistance is costing the taxpayers seven hundred dollars a day.

We can't find your history. We don't know who you are; you'll have to stay. I spy with my little eye.

Daughter reminds mother to be 'nice' if she wants out.

Meeting with the psychiatrist:

My aunt, sister and I refused to reveal any symptoms. Our melodramatic performances were not going to be performed for her. We presented a singular seamless story. Give her work, that is what she wants and her psychosis will disappear.

They just take notes and do nothing.
I can tell them anything, Mom said.

I was afraid they would break her in. Make her really break down. Break her will. Break her anger. Keep kicking, Mom.

Overreaction by police like Oka and the Squatters:

They said she had barricaded herself in her apartment and was going to jump off the sundeck. She has never been suicidal or a danger to anyone. She is capable of working. Within four weeks of being hauled off she was working full time again. She is not a victim.

Talking about Mom makes her normal.

We aren't stuffing her full of pills. People do talk to her. The doctor was defensive; she had been in this situation before. Battling monsters. We can't find her records. We don't know her

name. She is on a mild dosage. Defensive: not in complete control.

I don't understand how she is going to get past this stage by not being allowed to smoke. Not being allowed to do anything. Locked in. Surveilled. Humiliated. How could she ever calm down enough to get out? ... It was costing the taxpayers seven hundred dollars a day so they couldn't keep her there too long. Thank God for budget considerations.

Not even good drugs she told me: They gave her two shots and she said she only needed one. She knew how things worked. She complained about a family member: She never really gave a damn about me — just a do-gooder. Liberal guilt and/or familial obligation?

Freud meets Stats Can meets Nancy Fraser:

We see people fall ill who have met with no fresh experience and whose relation to the external world has undergone no change, so that the onset of their illness inevitably gives an impression of spontaneity: Low income unattached women fifty-five to sixty-four have near impossibility of entering the labour market and inadequacy of our pension system average income \$6500 with main source being social assistance. The welfare system does not deal with women on women's terms.... It has its own characteristic ways of interpreting women's needs and positioning women as subjects (victims).

Women as unpaid caregivers: her to me and now me to her.

Handmade gifts, goodies and tree decorations.

Are you Elaine's daughter? She thought she had the right to know everything about my Mom. She then moves on to another and asks her to look at her, as she bends down, stoops to her level.

And what are you doing for Christmas?

Oh baking
Oh the kids
Oh the snow

phone Jill
phone Laura
phone Nancy
Invoice to Stan

Absence of clutter, clean, visual impact, all traces of domestic labour obliterated in ideal bourgeois homes. Home literature as voyeuristic peeping. Home is not a display cabinet. Sugar and spice and everything nice — the condiments, extras, details, decoration.

Since WWII sexual and emotional problems as the most devastating problems for which women's lives? Sexual intrigue, scandal and gossip. Confess & shave.

The things you leave behind on your way up. Membership has its privileges. Sublimate the damn libido. A quiet room.

They moved to Canada. Both grandparents tried to forget their past after the war. Going to war was a way for them to separate themselves from their past. Oh Canada.

Bureaucratization of eros. Sublimation is inseparable from strategies of cultural domination. Gold in a lacy undergarment.

Insistence on difference based on inclusiveness:

Crucial to this attitude is the acceptance of the other in oneself, one's dreams, desires and fantasies. Love. Sublimation. Transcendence. Sublation. This is very different from the verb to shop and *todo la jupa de pollo*. To raise up onto the table: to deal with at the level of the body in a democratic way.

To induce in the person a state of conscious and permanent

visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. A big woman is considered to be the sign of a healthy and strong person in my family. Physical strength in women is highly prized by my grandmother and aunt. They are big and strong women.

There's only so much room at the top. We can replace the players but the structure is the same. Membership has its privileges at the expense of the body. Noises from a quiet room.

I want to have the strength from remembering how my mother, my family resisted, even in what seemed like impossible situations, through humour, pleasure and alternative ways of exchange. Remembering resistances to live out in the present. Understanding my own position to form alliances with other marginalized groups while still acknowledging differences. To make a lot of noise.