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Through-the-Mirror: Reflective Practice

Patti McClocklin

Patti McClocklin graduated from the University of Alberta and taught for 6 years in the Edmonton Public School system before starting her family. While managing a household and organizing the hectic activities of four lively boys, she spent many years as a school and community volunteer. As her children grew older she became increasingly involved in community building: organizing special events for residents and on behalf of non-profit organizations. Writing internal and external communications became an important component of that work.

Now, as a senior, Patti is pursuing MAIS with a focus on community and equity studies, an endeavour that has led her into the world of writing for both personal development and healing. MAIS has helped to crystallize her intention to do volunteer work with palliative patients in the future.

Through-the-Mirror

They are pearls, my life:

smooth, radiant,

priceless.

I've had them appraised

but the dealer proposed less

than I imagined.

I'll not trade them away,

sell them for the freedom

or lend them to just anyone.

They'll stay clasped at my throat,

embellishing t-shirts

and adorning satins.

But if you promise safekeeping,

once in a while,

I'll let you gaze in the mirror

wearing my pearls.

Reflective writing is somewhat like standing naked before the mirror. It is chilly, uncomfortable, a writer's imperfections raw and exposed. Particularly, Gillie Bolton (2010) says, "through-the-mirror" (p.10) writing takes oneself past the silvered glass right into the roots of emotional thinking — an unfamiliar, perhaps even illogical, terrain. Such writing submitted to a professor, or a cohort, is subject to scrutiny and feedback, comments that may unwittingly jar, poke and provoke, or feel just a little too intimate. However, as Bolton further indicates, "We have full authority over our writing at every stage, including rereading to ourselves and possibly sharing with a confidential trusted reader" (2010, p. 47). After a discussion about 'digging deeper', I realized that any 'holding back', on my part, was not unconscious denial but was, rather, a conscious decision to maintain a private stance. This poem arose from that acknowledgment.

Reference:

- Bolton, G. (2010). *Reflective Practice: Writing and Professional Development*. UK: Sage Publications