

101C. Others could come in because she was still arguing with them and she was determined not to let them see me. There was also a husband outside the door who had come from the fathers waiting room when he heard the commotion because his wife was the only other patient on the labour ward and he was asking worriedly if it was his wife who had died, and the sister was hastily telling him that it was not his wife and that one of the nurses would take him to see his wife to see that she was perfectly alright and that nothing had happened to her. She told the other Doctors outside the door that the labour ward had its own resuscitation equipment and that they were used to handling such emergencies. She said to them that there was no emergency that the staff on the labour ward could not handle themselves and that the Doctor who had come into the room would see that I was alright but the rest of the doctors outside the door were most dissatisfied about it. The Doctor who had come into the room came towards me but he did not look at my face or talk to me even though my eyes were open and I was looking at him. He just treated me as if he was only interested in my body with no thought for the person inside it and when I saw him quickly getting his stethoscope ready to listen to my chest I knew that he was going to touch me and I was terrified of him. A feeling of fear and terror came over me because he was a man and I was lying on the bed with no escape from him as he came towards me because I was too ill to speak or move. As he went to touch me the feeling of terror became too much for me and blackness blasted through my head again but that time I just knew nothing and I do not know where I 'went to' because

102c all I experienced was total blackness.

The next time I opened my eyes it seemed as if I had only closed them for a moment but I saw at once that so much had happened that at least twenty minutes must have passed and I felt annoyed that I had missed everything that had happened. Lights were on everywhere and things had been moved around so that everything was in a total mess. I felt indignant that anyone had dared to make the room so untidy while I was present in it but I saw that at least the builders mess was being cleared up because two nurses were sweeping it up with a dustpan and brush and were putting it into a large black plastic bag. There was a row going on while they did it because a Doctor that I had never seen before was furiously asking the Sister why I had not been put into another room instead of this one seeing that there was building work going on in it, and the Sister was furiously blaming the nurses for it, while the two nurses were not saying very much about it. There were Doctors, nurses and pupil midwives going in and out of the room that I was in and there were Doctors in white coats everywhere. My bed had been moved further away from the wall and it was at an angle as if it had been done in a hurry and no one had bothered to put it straight. My bed was surrounded by several large machines that were making a loud vibrating noise and there were empty medical packages and bits of rubbish that had just been littered all over the floor. A screen had been placed across the doorway to afford some privacy but anyone could see straight past the curtains of the screen which

103c. was not very nice and the screens were in the way as people tried to hurry in and out of the doorway. I resented the fact that there were people going in and out of the room that I was in and I felt that they ought to go somewhere else and take their noise and confusion with them. I felt that it was thoughtless of them to have come into the room that I was in and it was not for some moments that I realized that I was the cause of the emergency. I felt terrible that there was nowhere that I could go to be quiet and alone and I felt that no one, not even the doctors and nurses taking care of me, should ever have been able to see me while I was only in a night-dress. I knew that people had touched me while I had known only darkness because I could feel their dirty finger prints all over my skin and especially around my chest and I knew that someone had seen me undressed for the first time since I was a child and that was more than my pride could stand. I could not understand what all the fuss had been about over me because although I knew that my breathing had stopped I could not understand why the two nurses who had rushed to help me when they heard the rattle in my throat, had not just turned me on my side and lifted my head backwards to help me breathe. I knew that the Petredine injection had worked many times more ruthlessly than it should have done but because I had been so tired it had even put my brains to sleep so heavily that I had even stopped breathing, and I felt irate that the Doctor could have been so stupid as to give me something that would make me sleepy when I was already so tired. I was annoyed that no one had warned me what it was going to do to me so that I could have refused it properly. I had never been in hospital before and I had only been expecting the injection to have the strength of an aspirin tablet, not

104c. what it had done to me and its strength was still taking effect in that I still could not move very much and I was so sleepy that I soon slipped back into the darkness of unconsciousness after only a few moments of being awake.

The next time I opened my eyes I found that I was lying on my left side and a nurse was standing behind me on my right. She was cleaning me up with Hospital Sanitary Towels as I emptied my bowels onto an incontinence pad in full view of everyone in the room and I felt appalled with shame that anyone could see me. As I looked behind me I realized that the pinkish brown faeces were coming from my vagina and for a moment of bewilderment I wondered if having the baby had torn all my insides apart because there was blood in it. It was a horrible feeling to think that something had gone wrong and to wonder what on earth the medical staff had done to me to cause it, and because I was too tired at that moment to speak I had no way of asking what was happening to me which made it worse than ever for me because it was me that it was happening to and even though I was so sleepy I was so aware of what was happening that it was a horrible feeling not to know what it was that was happening. I also wanted to ask for some privacy because there were no screens around me, the door to the corridor was wide open again and someone had also opened the window of the room that I was in, which made me feel even more worried that apart from all the people on the labour ward who were looking so disgustedly at me, there might be people outside the ward who might be able to see into the room as well. Everyone on the labour ward kept

105c. Looking disgusted at what I was doing and my pride reached its lowest humiliation because it was totally unthinkable that anyone should see me like that. I did not realize that the darkness that I had just experienced had been unconsciousness and that it was that which had caused me to loose control of what I was doing. I had never anticipated that there could ever come a time in my life when I would not be able to control what I was doing and the lapse that had just occurred was so far beyond what my pride could accept that I never forgave myself for it. Years later I found out that if a mother started to pass pinkish - brown faeces like that in labour, it was a danger sign that the baby was in distress and needed a caesarian section, which the labour ward staff should have seen and acted upon urgently, but at the time I did not know that and by the time that I found out that it had not been my fault, too much time had passed and I had blamed myself for too long ever to be able to forgive myself for it.

I was in a lot of pain and each pain seemed to hurt me so much that it pulled me out of the darkness of unconsciousness when it reached its peak but at the same time I could not surface from the darkness properly and I had a strange sort of muddled heavy headed sort of headache as if I was only using a fraction of my mind. One time when I surfaced out of the darkness I found myself praying out loud "Holy Mary, Mother of God pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death" as if it was not my voice that was speaking so forcefully. I had no recollection of the words that I was saying because I neither knew what they meant nor where I had heard them before and I was repeating that one sentence over and over again like a record that had stopped. The houseman stopped everyone in the room and told them "listen to what she is saying: "HOLY MARY MOTHER OF GOD PRA7 FOR US SINNERS NOW

106C

AND AT THE HOUR OF OUR DEATH." and he told them that he had heard women call that out again and again before they died. He told the nurses to see that I got plenty of painkiller because as he said "this one's only young and I've got a feeling that she's not going to make it." I did not want any more painkiller and I stopped what I was saying and tried to think of the words to tell him that I must be allergic to the painkiller and that I did not want any more but the effort of speaking was too much and I drifted off back into the darkness again.

The next time a pain roused me to surface out of the darkness I looked at the clock to see what the time was but I did not know why I wanted to know the time and although I saw the clock above the door and could see the hands of the clock and the numbers on the clock, I found that I could not put what I saw together with what I wanted to know in order to tell the time. I could not remember the name of each of the numbers on the clock even though I could see them clearly and so I sleepily asked a different nurse who had come to stand beside my bed, what the time was. She told me but I still struggled to connect the answer she gave me with what I could see on the clock. My mind was crystal clear but it was blank because no thoughts would move across it and although I could understand exactly what the nurse said to me I could not get it to stay in my mind or remember what it was that what she was saying actually meant. My hearing and sight were brilliantly clear and even though I felt sleepy my mind was

107c. painfully alert and that made the fact that that I had just 'forgotten' how to tell the time even more irritating. The next time I regained consciousness for a few moments I asked the nurse what the time was again but I still could not put the nine - something answer she gave me into my head and keep it there long enough to connect it with any of the numbers on the clock that I could see above the doorway, especially since the hands of the clock were not exactly on a particular number but each hand was between two numbers and because I felt as if I did not know if I was coming or going I did not seem to know which of them to refer to just then. There were also three hands on the clock and I could not seem to take my eyes off the red second hand of the clock that was continually moving quickly round the face of the clock and keeping my attention fixed on it.

I wanted to ask the nurse beside me how much time had passed, and what time my contractions were occurring at and how long they were lasting for because she seemed to be timing them and I wanted to know as well. I wanted to work out how my labour was progressing but I could not seem to think of the words I needed to ask her those things, the ideas were crystal clear in my mind but I could not think of any words to fit to them and because I had always been strictly taught to think before I spoke I found that I was just struck dumb to any speech and because I did not ask anything nobody told me anything either which was awful. I drifted into unconsciousness because I was too weak to resist the pull of its gravity but when the next pain seemed to wake me up I found the words to ask the nurse the time again which she quietly told me.

108C. That happened several times and just when I seemed to be making some sense of the nurses answers another nurse cut in sharply and told her not to keep telling me, then she turned to me and asked me sharply what I kept wanting to know the time for and she said "Don't tell me you are starting that nonsense, we don't want any mental cases in here!"

I could not explain why I wanted to keep being told what the time was for and I was trying to make sense of it myself. I could not explain how important that clock was and the sleepy questions that I was asking were so important in trying to get my brains working again that to try to stop me asking them could only delay the time before I started to recover. I also had such an awful feeling about 'time' and it took me almost two years of struggling with words in my mind to explain what I had seen so awfully clearly when I was looking at that clock and trying to work out what the time was, and that was that I was trying to synchronize the time of this world that I had been shot out of and so quickly brought back into, with the time of the vast heavens that I felt as if I had spent so long in. I knew what it had felt like and I could remember it so vividly but I could not explain it just then and when I finally tried to put it into words all I could say was that I had seen how the time of this world ticks past in years, hours and minutes at such a quick pace that it is a weak kind of time and things in it are so easily destroyed, but the clock of the vast heavens that I had seen ticked away at such a very much slower rate that made

109c. it so powerful that it was indestructable. I had seen the face of the clock of the vast heavens while I had been in the beautiful dark star lit sky of space and in seeing that clock I had also taken a long and understanding look at eternity, and because I could think of eternity in terms of that clock I had also got it into its proper perspective because I had seen how whole centuries of our whole time on earth only fitted onto the smallest measurement of time on that vast clock like specks of dust on the still glass that protected its beautiful face.

The Medical staff had given me more drugs after the Pethidine injection while I had been unconscious because I could feel where the needles had pierced my hands and feet and although those drugs had stopped the feeling that I could float out of my body they had made me feel very ill indeed and as if my brains in my body had no power left to think things out for themselves anymore but that it did not stop me thinking at all because my soul had a brain of its own and it was beginning to flicker into life. Instead of being out in eternity where it wanted to be, my soul had been forced back into my body and it was struggling to put both sets of time that it was working on into place. The most awful thing then was that the medical staff looked at me then and because they saw me too ill to move or talk properly and because they heard me continually asking the time they considered me to be confused and to have much less understanding than they did but it was actually right then at what was visibly the lowest ebb of my life that I actually passed the highest level of intelligence that they would ever know on earth because I

110c. had seen the face of the clock of
eternity and the time of eternity
had begun for me while I was still
alive because the brains of my
body had failed me and the brains
of my soul were taking over to
enable me to carry on living my
life out. The staff who were looking
after me on that labour ward were
looking at things in terms of their
own little world of their lives, their
own interests, their profession and
themselves who they thought so
much of, but I had seen into a world
that they hardly knew existed and
because I could now look at things
in terms of the huge clock that I had
seen I found myself looking at the world
in enormous perspective. The result of
what I had seen was like having looked
at something so terrible that I found
myself speechless, unable to think and
unable to move, even though I must
have been very close to that state even
before my breathing had stopped. In
the condition that I was in, of being
unable to do anything or even speak
and think properly, I was termed as
being 'brain damaged' but since I
had been through it myself, where
as the medical staff had not, I would
say quite certainly that what I was
going through was pure 'shock' and
not 'brain damage' especially as my
mind was remembering everything
that happened in such precise detail.
It felt as if my brain had deliberately
switched itself off completely to prevent
any damage, and that it was shocked
like a clock that had stopped. It was
not working but it was not damaged
because even though I could not use
it to think and I appeared to be very sleepy
and confused, my mind was actually
very alert and I was remembering

IIIc. everything as it happened in stark detail as if I would never ever forget it and with a different way of understanding that I had never possessed before. Even though I could not explain it at the time I knew that the brain of my soul had taken over to help the brain of my body when it needed a total rest and I found that the brain of my soul had a different understanding of things that I found was beyond words for a very long time. My whole body felt as if it was totally shocked and it should have been treated for shock. I needed warmth, quiet, reassurance and no more drugs until what they had given me that had stopped me from breathing had completely worn off and had got completely out of my system to stop it fighting anything else that I was given. If I had been treated like that it would have helped me to get better but I was not allowed any of it and all the time that I was being treated while I was unable to refuse it, I felt that it was the treatment itself that was actually making me worse than I should have been. The first thing my mind wanted to do was to forget what I had seen in the darkness and as it did so I would have begun to recover and speak and move again but the way I was treated seemed to push me backwards from letting that happen, even by not answering my questions about what the time was because even if the nurses could not understand it those questions were still very important to me. Somehow the way that they were treating me stopped me forgetting my time in the darkness and so I brought what I had seen into this world with me and I found myself having to take longer to get better while I learnt to live with two standards of time and with one foot in each of both worlds but even though it was horribly painful it kept open a door between this world and the next for me

112c. so that I could not only go through it whenever I fell asleep but that the things of heaven could come to me even when I was wide awake.

The next pain that roused me to open my eyes was sharp and when I looked I found that the nurse who had been telling me the time had gone and yet another different nurse was standing beside me on the right hand side of the bed. I found that I had been turned onto my back and I was lying flat on the bed which had been pushed firmly back against the wall, the room had been thoroughly tidied up and all the machines and trolleys had been taken out of the room. I could not seem to keep my eyes open for more than a few moments at a time and then only when the pain was at its worst because it was the pain that seemed to rouse me to open my eyes. Each time I came round to consciousness I found that the pain in my abdomen had almost reached a peak and I was too late to breathe with it because I needed to start breathing at the beginning of a pain or else I could not seem to gain control over it. I seemed to slip into the darkness of unconsciousness as soon as the worst of the pain was over and then come round again when the next one was at its worst so that all I was experiencing was darkness that I was terrified of and then savage pain that I could do nothing about. It felt as if the Pethidine had made me so tired that I could not seem to catch up with the pains because I was always too late to control them. I felt as if I was drowning in the darkness everytime a pain subsided and unconsciousness pulled me back into its darkness because I was too

113c. weak to resist its pull. I fought to regain consciousness so that I could sit up and breathe to control the pain but as hard as I tried I could not seem to move. Labour was hard work and I was quite capable of breathing to control each pain but I could not fight my way past the effect of the Pethidine to work to control my labour and I felt devastated about it. The drug had taken away my ability to be in control of my body and because I could not work with each pain to lessen its effect the pains thrashed against my abdomen as if I was being beaten with a whip.

I deeply regretted having accepted the Pethidine injection because it had been offered to me as a painkiller but it had not touched the pain at all and I felt as if the labour ward staff had cheated me by not telling me that this would happen. They had asked me if I wanted something for the pain but having the Pethidine injection had meant that the pain was all I felt with no relief from it at all. The injection made me so sleepy that the pain only roused me to suffer it at its worst without being able to do anything to help myself so that I felt each merciless beating in its full strength with no means of self defence and the time that should have been spent as a rest between each pain passed as an awful fight against drowning in the darkness of unconsciousness that I found myself sucked into, so that the level of suffering was so much more severe and extreme than it would have been if I had been left to control my own labour with no drugs. The injection had left me unable to sit up, control my breathing, talk to anyone or even move to change my position to ease the discomfort that I was in and it made me feel as if I was being pushed

114C. and pulled from pain to darkness
and back again all the time in
agonizing slow motion. The injection
had also completely taken away
my ability to switch off the feeling
in different parts of my body as I
had always been able to do so that
I did not feel anything if I was hurt.
Suddenly at the most vital time in
my whole life, when I was experiencing
labour pains, that piece of my own
self defence had been cruelly snatched
away from me and I was helpless
without it. I also began to wonder
if the sensations that I had been
feeling since ten to one on the day
previously had actually been more
painful than I had experienced
because my body had been sub-
consciously dulling them for me quite
automatically since my body could
behave most unusually when it felt
like it. Although the pains had
become sharp when my waters were
broken by the doctor, the pains had
become sharper still, once I had
been given the Pethidine injection
that had made my head so sleepy.

My body was certainly fighting
the Pethidine because it did not
like it interfering with its own way
of doing things and I could feel the
fight that was going on inside my
body. My whole body felt like a
dead weight as if it had been ren-
dered senseless on the outside of my
skin and especially in my limbs, but
there was a complete ring around
my abdomen at a safe distance
from my baby where the dulled
sensation stopped leaving every
nerve in my abdomen painfully and
acutely sensitive. It was as if the
drug was making its way towards
the pain but that every cell in my

115c. body was fighting in full strength to redirect the drug away from the baby. It was completely blocking the drug from reaching my abdomen in a complete ring around the baby but the drug was doubling back on itself and was being sent to places in my body where it could fight itself out and where it would not matter so much. It was going to the extremities of my body such as my limbs and my skin and was making them senseless instead of my abdomen but in short it was paralysing me. While my body was fighting to keep the drug away from the baby, my mind was fighting against the darkness that the drug kept trying to force on it and my chest kept wheezing painfully while I was struggling to breathe. All the time my body just lay there completely still like a dead weight and apart from the sound of my breathing and the sight of my eyes struggling to keep open there was little other sign of the terrible fight that was going on inside me. All the time that was going on could think quite clearly and I could feel every pain as it wracked my body in full strength, at times I could hear but I could not see and as I lay inside the shell of my body I could feel what was going on, like my heart beating in my chest and my blood coursing around my body, but because my limbs were lifeless I could not move or speak and at times I could not even wince my face in pain. Time and time again I slipped in and out of consciousness and each time I found myself too late to breathe with the pain that I was in so that I could only try to take advantage of the few moments that my eyes were open to attempt the impossible task of trying to fill my lungs with enough air to breathe. I was having a desperate

116c. struggle to attempt to breathe at all and my lungs seemed to be crying out for enough air that I could never seem to be able to get for them.

At one stage I felt desperately sick and thirsty and I managed to stay conscious long enough to get the word 'water' across to the nurse who was standing beside me. The next time I regained consciousness I managed to say it again and the nurse hurried off to get me a drink. When I regained consciousness again the nurse was standing beside me waiting for me to come round and when I did she put a plastic beaker that she had filled with water to my lips so that I could take a few sips. I found that I was lisp ing when I spoke and that I only seemed to be able to say really simple words like 'water' and 'please' and 'thank you' and I had so many thoughts in my head that I could not put words to which made trying to explain something feel as if I was trying to get a ship out of a bottle and I could not get it out because the bottle had a very tight neck. The nurse seemed to know that I was grateful from the look on my face and she would have done anything she could to help me.

I had the feeling that if only I could push the baby to be born then I could give birth straight away. I looked towards my abdomen and said 'push' to the nurse who understood straight away and told me to start trying. The drink of water that she had given me had seemed to have revived me and I managed to keep my eyes open long enough as I

117c. started to push with my abdominal muscles. I could feel the baby coming and felt that with a couple more pushes I could have given birth very quickly but the Registrar, who had been nasty to me in the Ante-Natal clinic because I would not consider having an abortion, was in the room and when he saw what the nurse had told me to do he shouted at me to stop it. He said that he did not want the baby to be born too quickly or I would damage the baby's head. I thought about the child's safety and although it took a superhuman effort I managed to stop myself pushing even though it was really difficult to stop my body from just pushing the baby out to be born because I was ready to give birth there and then.

I slipped into unconsciousness and when another pain brought me to my senses I found that my head ached as if I had a bad head cold and I was terribly thirsty. I asked the nurse for 'water' again and she put the plastic feeding beaker to my lips again and gave me another few sips of water. I was so very, very grateful to her as I had never before experienced such a parched dryness in my mouth and such a desperate longing for just a mouthful of water. The Registrar, Mr. Dunstone, looked across the room and told the nurse to stop giving me anything to drink. He said that I was not to be given anything by mouth incase I had to have a C. S. and he said 'C. S.' to the nurse as if he was trying not to let me know and that was why he had spelt it to her rather than say it. I knew that C. S. meant Caesarean Section and I struggled with my mouth to say the words 'Caesarean Section' to him so that he would know that I did under-

118C stand and that I wanted to know about it but he just looked annoyed that I had found out and he walked off without saying anything else. He certainly had no intention of explaining anything to me and I felt in despair that they did not want me to know anything that was happening to me. I was so afraid that I would wake up and find that everything had just been done to me without anyone even saying anything to me when I would rather have been told everything quite openly.

After the effort of talking I slipped quite deeply into unconsciousness. At times I heard people talking in the room and moving things about but it was difficult to surface from the darkness of unconsciousness because all the lights in the room were so bright. I seemed to spend ages drowning in the darkness of unconsciousness when all I could feel were agonizing pains across my abdomen. When I came to my senses again I found that the room was silent and so I thought it was empty. My eyes were misty and I felt as if I had been crying while I was unconscious because my cheeks were wet with tears and I wondered where every body had gone off to because the room was so silent. I wanted to sit up because my chest was wheezing painfully where I could not breathe properly and I was in the desperate situation of actually suffocating from lack of air. I was lying on my left side and I tried to use my right arm to lever my body and shoulders up so that I could breathe better. To my horror I found that my arm did

119c. not push against anything and instead of lifting myself up I found that I toppled right over. I only found out at that moment that I must have been moved off the bed that I thought I was on and without knowing about it I had been put onto a theatre trolley and just left on it. The bed had been so wide and the trolley was so narrow that when I had tried to sit up, I had just rolled off it. I had not seen anyone move me onto the trolley and so I still expected to find myself on the bed where I had been all the time and it did not dawn on me that anyone could have moved me onto a trolley until I rolled off it. As I toppled over a woman's voice from somewhere behind me in the room shouted "Grab her, she's falling!" and someone else behind me made a useless effort at clutching at my nightdress to stop me from falling as I rolled off the opposite side of the trolley from where they were standing. I saw the square patterned tiled floor come up to meet me very quickly as I fell very heavily straight onto my stomach. I was unable to move my arms to save myself and even now I still can not remember actually hitting the floor. For months and months afterwards I could remember the terrible sensation of falling and it was very much longer before I could think past the sensation of falling and venture to think into the blank space in my mind which logically ought to have held the memory of when I hit the floor. For two years I blamed myself for falling off that trolley and for the damage it did to my baby and I, until Psychiatrists had to explain to me that it was not such a crime to have wanted enough air to breathe and to have

I20C. tried to help myself to it in the only way that presented itself to me. They had to tell me that it was not my fault that I had wanted to sit up and they told me that if I had been that heavily drugged then someone else should have been looking after me. I had never experienced unconsciousness before and since I did not realize what it could do to me I felt that I had failed in self control not to have remained in control of what I was doing. I had never been in a hospital before and had never seen an operating theatre trolley before except on television and the Psychiatrists had to actually explain to me that there were sides that should have been fitted onto the trolley to stop me falling off it. They said that since no sides had been fitted to the trolley then it was entirely the hospitals fault that I fell and that it was the hospital that was to be entirely blamed for the damage caused by the fall and not me.

There was also a question of who it was that put me back onto that trolley because I definitely fell off it and whoever put me back onto it after picking me up off the floor did not report it as an accident. I was not aware of being put back on that trolley but I do have a vague memory that is in a sort of grey mist in my mind of one of the two women shouting quietly to the other to close the door before anyone saw and of them having a worried discussion about what they were going to do with my smashed watch. One of them told

121c. the other to pick the smashed glass up and wrap it up well in a blue paper towel and hide it right down in the black plastic bag quickly before someone saw. The two women were saying that the other watch on my wrist was alright and one of them said that she would like to know what I was doing with two watches on my wrist anyway. She said that one was a mans watch and she wondered what man I had got that off. Later on when I regained consciousness properly I saw my brothers watch on my wrist and I recognized it but I was not aware that mine was missing. It was months before I even remembered that I had once had a watch of my own and even though I could remember the incident of the smashed watch I could not connect it in my mind with the fact that mine was gone and that was when I had last had it.

When I next regained consciousness I was lying on a trolley that was being moved towards the door by two porters. I was covered by a white blanket and I thought at once that I was being taken to the operating theatre. Suddenly the two porters stopped the trolley and one of them called to a Doctor who was standing out in the corridor talking. The Porter told the Doctor that there was blood soaking through the blanket that looked as if it was coming from my legs. Several Doctors and nurses came into the room from the corridor where there was the loud noise of a television on, and the two porters walked out of the room even though they were told not to go. One of the Doctors looked under the blankets and then there was some discussion going on in which the two women, who had been in the room when I rolled off the trolley, spoke to the Doctor. Eventually it seemed to turn into a row

122c. over me falling off the trolley and the Registrar and two Doctors were arguing that I could not be put under anaesthetic after a fall like that. The Registrar was saying angrily that I should never have been resuscitated after my breathing had been stopped for twenty minutes he said that three minutes was the limit, He said that I had suffered some degree of brain damage and now this fall. He said that since my breathing had stopped so soon after coming into hospital I should have been left once I did not respond immediately because this was all going to come back onto the hospital. He said that he knew the coroner attached to the hospital and that he was 'very good' and that I should have been left. He was definitely talking about me and he said that they could not risk an anaesthetic after a fall like that. He told the staff that the labour would have to take its own course but that I was to be kept heavily sedated as it was going to be a difficult delivery and some hours yet. He told the two women who had seen me fall "Her family can claim compensation for this you know, but we will just have to hope for the best".

When I surfaced to consciousness again I had been wheeled back into the delivery room and lifted onto the delivery table. I was surrounded by six or so doctors in white coats and there were quite a few nurses in the room busily getting trolleys ready. The Registrar had a trolley of instruments beside him and he was standing in front of me as if he was about to demonstrate some surgical procedure. My legs were bent right

123c up and the doctors were going to do a lot more than just examine me or deliver the baby. I felt an awful feeling of foreboding about it and I tried to ask what was going on because I desperately wanted to know what was happening to me and my baby. The Doctors saw me struggling to ask what they were going to do to me and they all knew exactly what I was trying to say even though I was lisping badly but the Doctors would not answer me. They just paused in what they were doing and waited, staring at me in silence and ignoring my pleas to know what they were going to do, until I fell back into unconsciousness. They knew that I could not keep conscious for more than a few moments at a time and so they knew that if they waited in silence for me to fall back into unconsciousness then they would not have to answer me and they could get on with what they wanted to do. They knew that I would object to what they were going to do if they told me and so they had no intention of telling me and I had been rendered helpless against defending my own wishes by the drugs that they had given me. As I saw them all staring at me with cold hard looks on their faces with me lying on the delivery table and all those white coated Doctors standing staring at me while they waited for me to become unconscious without them telling me what they were going to do to me, it struck me with absolute horror before I sank into the darkness that this was exactly what had happened to my mother when they had admitted her to Beeley Mental Hospital for causing her brother Alfred's death. I knew that the circumstances were very different and I was not really afraid of the Doctors looking after me even if I did not approve of the way that they were

24c. handling everything but it struck me with horror that it was as if fate or history or something was repeating itself.

Two years later when I could still not come to terms with the horror of what had happened to me some Psychiatrists tried to find out what those Doctors had done to me and I was told that I had been given a spinal epidural. At the time no one who gave it to me told me what they were going to do or told me afterwards what they had done to me. If I had been asked if I wanted an epidural I would most definitely have refused it because I did not want my spine tampered about with at all and apart from the fact that I did not want it there were also medical reasons against giving me one. Unknown to me my back had been damaged and it is most probable that I did it in falling from the theatre trolley. The Houseman should also have taken a lot more notice of what I had said when I told him that I had gone into labour when I bent over to pick up a heavy cleaner because it was very likely that I could also have injured my back then. A spinal epidural has to be given very carefully and it should not have been done when my back had been damaged.

In 1973 Spinal Epidurals were not used routinely on labour wards because they were still a fairly new idea. They were only given to mothers who were in severe pain or to people willing to pay for extra pain relief. The husband of one woman in the Ante-Natal clinic had paid for her to have a spinal epidural while she was a N.H.S. patient

125c. when she was having her first baby in Lewisham Hospital and he had arranged for her to have the same treatment again when the second child that she was expecting was born. Her husband had paid the full cost of £60 for the spinal injection because it was not medically necessary and the Consultant Mr. Buckle had got the drug for her and he had very carefully given it to her himself. As spinal epidurals were only used exceptionally it was most likely that Mr. Dunstone had not had a lot of practise in giving them. There are also two ways to give spinal anaesthetics. The most usual way is to put the needle into the mothers spine through her back; but it is also possible to try to insert the long needle into the spine diagonally through the mothers vagina. The Registrar chose to do it in the second and more awkward way which was less accurate and the most distressing way for me. The Registrar had been the first Doctor that I had seen in the Ante-Natal Clinic and he knew that I could not bear to be touched. He knew that after all I had been through I found internal examinations particularly distressing and when he got me onto the delivery table in the labour ward that same Registrar, who knew exactly how I felt about it, chose to give me that epidural in a way that he did not have to use and which he was fully aware would cause the the worst possible mental distress.

At the time when I was going to be given that epidural I did not know what those Doctors were doing to me and I felt mentally tormented that they deliberately would not tell me. It was an awful feeling of suffering to be in a position where I was so helpless that I could not defend myself against what

126c. ever other people wanted to do to me and for years afterwards I panicked every time I remembered that and until the Psychiatrists checked my medical notes and found out for me what it was that they had done to me I kept trying to peer into the blank spaces in my mind in mental torment while I tried to work out what they had done to me. Once I knew I felt better about it but it could not take away the horrible feeling that something had been done to me against my wishes that had actually done me more harm than good. The damage that the epidural did was physical as well as mental because my back was permanently damaged. I had no proper feeling in my back and limbs for over two years from what the epidural had done to me and because the injection got into my spinal cord I had other side effects from it as well. The usual side effect of a spinal epidural getting into the spinal cord is loss of memory and long term hallucinations but the injection worked so drastically on me that I lost part of my memory that I took over seven years to recall and I got so much of the drug into my spinal cord that I developed second sight and five complete extra senses.

While the Doctors were giving me the spinal epidural they also took a blood sample from my unborn baby while she was still in my womb. Usually when doctors do that they take a small piece of skin from the babys head and test that to see if the baby is in any distress during labour but as my baby was in the breech position they could not get at the babys head (thank goodness) and so they took the skin from the

127c. babys ankle. To this day there is a large scar on my child's ankle where they just sliced off a piece of the skin without asking and without anaesthetic. They later said that the baby 'probably' did not feel anything because when a mother had been given painkillers they affected the baby as well but I knew that my body was acting in full strength to keep the drugs that they had given me away from my baby and so she must have felt it. It was not possible for them to judge what my baby could suffer especially because the baby could not speak to defend itself and somebody who can not speak suffers more because they have no way of telling anyone. There was nothing that the Doctors could do with the results of what they found because they could not give me a caesarean section after such a bad fall or do anything to help the baby so it was only done for teaching purposes and where as it was supposed to be done to see if the baby was in any distress it probably actually caused the child a lot of distress and it was not good enough for the Doctors to say that the baby probably knew nothing about it because they had no way of telling how much the baby did know.

After that it seemed a very long time before I surfaced to some sort of consciousness. I was only aware of black darkness that I continually searched to find a way out of but after a long time I seemed to find a kind of level of consciousness in which I was fully alert and could hear and feel everything that was going on but I could not open my eyes to see nor could I move at all in any way whatsoever. My mind was quite clear and if I could have sat up and opened my eyes I felt sure that I could

128C talk since words were coming to my mind easily and if my mouth had not been too heavy for me to move then I felt that I could have spoken to someone. I felt as if the fall that I had not long had from the theatre trolley had cleared my head a lot even though it ached badly. I was in continual and severe pain in my abdomen but I seemed to have got used to it and I just wished that I could have moved my body which I found was like one heavy immovable dead weight. The only thing I seemed to be able to do was listen because I could hear everything that was going on in the room and I could work out exactly where each person was and what they were doing by the sounds they made. The only problem I found in recognizing what people were doing was that I was not familiar with all the activities of a labour ward and so I could not have named the actual procedures that were taking place. I could name all the usual things like someone walking across the room and which direction they were walking towards so well that I could have marked on a diagram exactly where everyone was in the room and out in the corridor, just by listening to their footsteps and movements. I could hear things like objects being moved and I could work out what they were made of and how heavy they must be by the sound they made when they knocked against something or were put down but because I had not seen all the instruments and things on the labour ward that they were moving about I could not have described them or named

129c. the things that people were doing unless it was something easy like a tap being run or someone writing in my notes because I could hear the pages being turned over in the corner where they had put my notes.

I was not afraid of the situation as long as no one touched me but even though I did not want to be left alone in the room without anyone responsible being there I would have dreaded my family being allowed to see me like that at all or being allowed anywhere near me. I felt afraid of what the medical staff could do to me without my consent but I felt even more afraid of someone else being allowed to hold my baby instead of me if the baby was born before I could break out of that situation and wake up. No one was aware that I was listening to everything that they were doing and at one time fear struck me that they might think I was dead because I could not move or speak. I became afraid that they were only keeping my body there until the baby was born and it was a long agony of fear until someone made a remark that meant nothing important to them but that reassured me that they did in fact know that I was still alive.

Since none of the people in the room knew that I was listening to them they talked quite normally to each other as if I was not there. No one spoke to me but if any one had done so the worst insult that could have had to endure would have been for someone to talk to me slowly or to simplify things to me because they mistakenly thought I did not understand them. I could not speak and I could not move but inside my still body my IQ must have been at its very highest and I seemed to 'know' things in a way that other people did not. I had

130c an incredibly high sense of perception in that situation and in that life and death situation I found that I had a tremendous understanding of other peoples sufferings. I could see life from inside what suffering was like at its very worst and I reached an equal understanding of other peoples suffering. There seemed to such a great gulf in understanding between me and the medical staff who were looking after me and I realized that they were carrying on with their job with no real understanding of how I needed to be treated in order to get better. They just did not know what it felt like to be me and they were so indifferent about what I was going through. They seemed to think that because I was still, I was asleep and they had no idea at all that I could hear everything that they were saying and feel all the pain that I was in but I just could not move to communicate with them and it was so ironic that it was actually the drugs that they had given me for pain that had put me in that horrible situation.

I felt trapped like that and I had an awfully claustrophobic feeling that it was almost the same situation as if I had got lost underground while potholing and while searching for the light in order to get out of the place that I was lost in I had come up into a sort of dark cave. It was not the way out and there was no light but in the darkness I could put my head above the murky dark water and listen in the silent darkness even if no one knew where I was and even if no one could hear my silent voice. I felt trapped in my

131C own body and it was terrifying. There seemed to be a whole maze of caves in the darkness that I found myself in and each one seemed different from the other. It seemed as if they were all at different levels of consciousness and by swimming through the darkness to find them I was coming up and exploring each one in turn. I seemed to have a different combination of abilities in each cave of darkness that I found myself in and in one I found that I could hear but not see and in another I could see but not remember words with which to speak and in another I had an understanding that was greater than any knowledge that I had ever possessed, and so on. It seemed as if the whole of my brain was quite intact but that I could only use a limited combination of its abilities, or none at all, at any one time because it was conserving its own energy. So that I did not seem to be able to hear and see together or if I could get them both working together I had difficulty in either trying to understand what messages both my senses were receiving together, or in trying to speak. I was also ravenously hungry because although the four suppers that I had eaten earlier had been adequate at the time I was now hungry again and I felt as if I was burning up food fuel at such an incredible rate that I needed a continuous supper of the same amount of protein food again. I hated lying there unable to move and I wished that I could have been warmly covered up with a blanket because it would have made me feel more secure and less defenceless. There was a certain feeling of security in having clothes on and I wanted to have more than just a night-dress over me.

The pain that I was in was the worst

132c thing because it was sharp and it had been going on for such a long time. I wished that I could sit up to breathe better or be able to move to change my position or even see to watch what was going on but at that time I could not see anything except darkness for a very long time even though I could hear very clearly. I felt just as if the whole of my body below my neck was trapped in cold dark water and I could only lift my head out of that water to look around in sheer darkness and do nothing but listen to the eerie silence. It was the drugs that had been given that had stopped the feeling that I could float right out of my body which had done that to me but it was the drugs that had made me sleepy that prevented me from getting out of that difficult maze of causes that I was in, and out into the light of consciousness. So that I was sandwiched between the two in a most awfully claustrophobic situation in which I could hear everything that was going on in the room and my feelings were painfully alive, but I had no means of communication.

I wished that someone would sit me up and prop my eyes open and I kept trying to do it but I could not even lift my eyelids to open my eyes because they felt like dead weights just the same as the rest of my body did. I tried and tried to move any part of my body at all by trying to lift each leg in turn and then each arm and when I could not do it however hard I tried, I concentrated on my hands, especially my left one, to try to lift even

133c. one finger up to move it, and when I could not move any part of my body at all I became terrified. I spent ages trying to move even one of my fingers and I felt sheer panic tearing through me when I could not do it; so I had to stop and take control of the situation before I went Mental at the sheer torment of finding myself like that. I thought sensibly to think what I could do to get myself out of the situation of being fully conscious in my mind but of being unconscious in my body because it was virtually lifeless and could not move to show any reaction at all and I decided that if I could not move my arm or legs properly with the tremendous effort that I was trying to put into it then I would try a much easier way that I had suddenly thought might move them and I tried to jerk each limb in order to get it to move.

Just as I was beginning to feel that I was starting to get somewhere with making my limbs move I heard a woman's voice in the room say "She's fitting" and there was a general movement of people coming towards me in the room and they must have given me an injection because I felt the skin of my right leg being pinched and a needle being stuck into it and then I was thrown into a well of darkness that was pitch black. I could still hear everything that was going on in the room but it sounded much further away. I felt trapped inside my body and as if the people taking care of me were stopping every attempt I made to break through to consciousness when I was too helpless to defend myself. I felt as if they had thrown me down a pitch dark deep well shaft and although there seemed to be a glimpse of light at the top

134c. of the shaft that I was in where I could still hear people talking in the delivery room I could not try to climb up to the light because they had taken away my arms and legs. I felt alright when I could hear the people in the delivery room talking even if they sounded a long way away and even though they were only talking casually to each other and not to me, but when they stopped talking and the room became silent I began to panic because I wondered if they had gone out of the room and left me alone in it again. It was frightening and I was like that for a very long time. I felt that I had to fight my way through to consciousness but as if I could not find any way out of the unconsciousness. For the first time for a long time that I had been trapped in the darkness I could see light a long way above me at the top of the long shaft of darkness that I had been pushed into where my eyes were open to the light in the delivery room as if I was looking down the wrong end of a telescope and it was making things look further away. I knew that the long shaft of darkness that led up to the light was the right way out of the maze of underground caves that I was in but because I had been given something to take away the movement in my limbs I had no limbs with which to climb up it and out of the darkness.

At one time I felt so trapped that although my lips could not utter a sound my mind screamed in mental agony. After a long time of being like that and in so much severe pain in my abdomen I felt as if I was going to go completely mental because I

135c. did not know if I would ever get out of that awful darkness and as I lay there in the depths of despair I heard beautiful singing. Far beyond the delivery room that I was in and out in the night sky I could hear angels singing. There were hundreds of them and about four or five of them came right down to where I was to keep me company and help me when I was stuck at that lowest point. The singing of so many angels was so clear and beautiful, it was not echoey and it sounded like beautiful church music. They sang two beautiful pieces one about "Thou Holy Lamb of God" that I had never heard before about hosts of elders, undefiled and robed in white, standing crowned around the throne of God and waving palm branches and how the sun and moon need not shine their light any more because the light of God was shining in plenty. The other one they sang was a Christmas Carol that I did know because it was the words and music of "It came upon a midnight clear, that wondrous song of old" and as they sang it they emphasized the words "of angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold" as if they wanted me to remember it carefully. There were so many of them singing and their voices were so beautifully clear that it sounded like hundreds and hundreds of people all singing a lovely part of Handels Messiah all in tune together. As they sang and I listened to them I heard another sweet little voice joining in with the angels song and I realized that there was a little girl trapped down in the darkness just in front of me and her sweet little soul was singing along with the angels. Listening to them all singing made me feel that I was more interested in listening to the angels singing than in trying to fight the

136c. drugs to get out of the darkness. I
felt as if I would rather have
stayed where I was and listened to
that beautiful singing than have
bothered to try to get up to the light
that I could see far above me in
the delivery room and once I stopped
fighting and relaxed it had quite
the opposite effect because I just
floated right up to consciousness.

I opened my eyes completely and
found that I was lying on my back
on the delivery table. I was in
strong continuous pain and was
still struggling to breathe. I was
being washed by several night
sisters who seemed to be getting
me ready for the actual delivery.
It seemed to be getting very late in
the evening and the lights in the room
were very bright. I felt much better
for being washed but the sisters were
still not washing me as thoroughly
as I would have prepared myself for
the birth of my child. I was used to
using a proper scrubbing brush,
hot water and plenty of soap when
I washed myself and the plain face
cloth and warm water that the
night sisters were using did not make
me feel as clean as I was used to
feeling when I washed myself espec-
ially after all the housework that I
had done at home for my Mother.
One of the Sisters said that my feet
were filthy but she could not under-
stand how my feet could be so black
and yet they did not smell. She said
that my hands were the same and
she had never seen such a peculiar
colour. As she tried to soak each foot
in the water in turn by bending the
knee of each leg and putting the foot
in the bowl of water, I tried to explain
about all the housework that I had

137c. done and that I had been too tired to wash my feet even though I had washed the rest of myself and that by coming into hospital I had missed the weekly Friday night bath that I was allowed at home. I was rambling on and coming out with odd words that I could remember but that I could not fit into any sensible sentence. Eventually I told the sister that 'I had been cleaning the attic' but I knew that was not the right sentence that I was looking for.

I had been cleaning the house and I had used my last ounce of strength to clean everywhere in that big house so that I left it absolutely spotless before my baby was born but I had not cleaned the attic out. My father had got up there the previous weekend and some of it had been cleared out because I had helped him but he had put most of the stuff back and had said that we would do it properly the weekend after next. I had stood and held the ladders and I had lifted heavy boxes that my father had passed down to me and it seems incredible now that I look back that at eight months pregnant I could have been balanced on ladders over the long steep staircase in our house to hand heavy boxes up and down to my father but it was just part of my everyday life then and I had no option against my parents once Dr. Galvan had told my parents that I should carry on as normal during my pregnancy. I would not have been so badly off if I had put on plenty of weight during my pregnancy and I had really looked pregnant but because I did not even look pregnant my parents saw to it that I had no opportunity to 'lay about in the house especially since I was not working'. My parents had found me one task after another so that I had been

138c. doing decorating, gardening and repair jobs in our house over and above our housework and I had been dreading doing the attic even though I wanted the whole house to be spotless for my baby's arrival. My father had only sorted through it during the previous weekend but it had worn me out and that was the last time that I seemed to have any energy left. After that I had still managed to get the housework done when I had got up from being ill in bed but I had not managed to look after myself properly and although I had washed myself I did not feel as clean as I usually was and since my feet had been the furthest part of my tired body to reach down to they had got the least attention. The sister who was washing my feet was quite middleaged and she was very, very good at nursing. She had got all the things ready to wash me with and set them out properly and she had closed the door and window and seen to it that the room was warm with an electric fire. As she was washing my feet I wanted to tell her about why they were dirty because they suddenly seemed to be the pivot point of all my worries since it was my feet that had carried me up and down all the hills around where we lived to get all the heavy shopping that my mother had wanted and to do all the other numerous tasks that I had been sent on. It seemed to me that where ever I had been to it had been my poor weary feet that had carried me there and because they were the furthest place for me to reach to when I got washed and dressed I felt sorry that they had put up with the least attention

139c. so patiently.

As I tried to speak to the Sister I knew exactly what I wanted to tell her but there seemed to be so much of it that I seemed to have difficulty searching through the vocabulary in my head to find enough words to make a sentence with. It was as if there was a room in my head where I kept all the words I knew and normally everything was kept in strict order like books on a library shelf but I felt as if my head had experienced something like an earthquake and everything had been shaken off its shelves onto a huge pile on the floor and trying to sort through it was like looking through the worst mess that I had ever been in. I was not confused because I knew exactly what I wanted to say but I was just too tired and too weak to attempt the impossible task of trying to find the right words. The whole idea of what I wanted to say was there and I kept coming out with words like 'paint brush' and 'heavy tins' (meaning tins of food and tins of paint) and lots of other words that all fitted the picture of the awful struggle that I had been through but just as the housework had all been too much for me so was the task of trying to tell somebody what had happened. It was too difficult to speak now and I just could not find the words I needed to say things with. Eventually I came out with the sentence "I've been cleaning the attic" but I knew that even though it had been difficult enough to find that sentence it was still not the right sentence that I was looking for, and it seemed as if it needed so many more of those sentences in order to put together the whole picture of what I wanted to say.

The Sister spoke to me irritably and said "What were you doing that for? no wonder you are having a premature

140c baby, its foolish to be doing housework when you are pregnant!" I said to her "I have to do it, its my rent money" and I felt so miserable because I had known that I was doing too much housework just as the sister was saying to me but it had been people like Doctor Galvan and the District Midwives themselves who had encouraged my Mother that it was good for me to carry on as normal because no one realized just how much work my Mother made me do. The Sister asked me why I did not pay my parents rent money. She told me that I should be entitled to Welfare money to pay for my keep and she spoke to me eagerly as if she thought that she had found the cause of all my troubles. She thought that I did not know about claiming Supplementary Benefit and that all she had to do was to tell me to go along to the local office and then I would not only get a large sum of money in back payments but that my working days would be over. I told her that "I got it" (money from the DHSS) but that "they (my parents) took it all as well as doing all the housework." It was a terrible struggle to get all those words across to them against the struggle to breathe and the continual pain and the sisters listened in horrified silence to what I was trying to say.

After the laborious effort of talking I slipped right back into pitch darkness and was there for a very long time but I could hear everything that was going on in the room even though I could not see or move or speak. In that horrific situation time dragged on and on in agony so that each minute seemed like a whole hour that would never end and I fought and fought to get up or to move so that I could breathe to control

141C my labour but I could not do it because my body just lay completely still as if I was fast asleep even though I was wide awake inside my body. I could hear the sisters getting things ready around me in the room and the room seemed as if it was all noise and confusion. I would have liked to be awake and to be talking to someone but I could not move or speak and the pains in my abdomen were coming every second and they were wracking my whole body. There was no break between them and I was in agony but even then I still felt that it would have been well within my ability to control them if I could have sat up and breathed properly but because I was feeling them through the depths of unconsciousness I was helpless to do anything about them. My body felt numb on the outside and could not move but inside my body I was alive and could feel every single thing that was going on and so I felt the full strength of every pain inside myself and was unable to speak or move to do anything about it which was absolutely horrific. The most ironic thing about it was the way that the outside of my body was unconscious but the inside of my body was fully conscious to everything. I felt alone in a maze of frightening darkness and I felt so completely defenceless against the continual lashings of pain that were inside me and yet outside my reach because I could not regain consciousness to sit up and control each pain. There seemed to be a crushing weight holding my chest down and preventing my lungs from filling with air. Each slight breath that I struggled to take did not seem to compensate for the previous useless effort that had not provided enough air for my lungs and my heart seemed to be beating laboriously in my chest as if it was appealing to me for more air which I could not give it. My

142c. lungs were demanding more air to an extent that made my head feel dizzy with despair because as hard as I was trying I still could not fulfill their constant demands for air. Despite all that my body remained motionless, my chest was not even panting for air because it was too relaxed and it was precisely not being able to pant for air that made it so terrible. I was breathing as shallowly as if I was asleep because my chest was too heavy and relaxed for me to push up to get enough air into my body. I was suffocating for want of getting my lungs to expand enough to get plenty of air in and I felt like a living tomb. My head was splitting with pain and I had the worst headache that I had ever experienced in my whole life. All the time I was like that I kept fighting to be able to move or speak and I kept trying and trying to push up against my skin to move a leg an arm or even a finger of my body in order to attract attention to get somebody to help me. I tried to speak but I could not even move the skin of my face however hard I tried to do it and I pushed and pushed against my face muscles to try to make them move until my head felt as if it was going to burst.

I heard one of the sisters in the room come over to me and I felt her touch my forehead with her fingers and when she spoke I recognized her voice as being the older sister who had shut the door and got the room warm to wash my feet. She sounded very concerned and said to the others "look, she's sweating blood". Another Sister whose voice I recognized as the plump coloured Sister who had said good evening to me earlier, spoke very matter of factly and said "Some women

143c. do, I've seen it before." The older Sister was horrified at her indifference and said to her "yes, but SHE'S only a child". For some time prior to that I had felt quite hot but by then my body had become wet with a slimy, oily sort of sweat and I was pushing so hard to move any part of me, especially my face, that I was forcing blood up through the pores of my skin. As the Sister wiped my face the print of my face came off on the blue jay cloth and she held it up for the others to see saying "Look the print of her face has come off on this blue jay cloth!" The other Sisters said that I was nearly ready to have the baby and made other remarks about it like that. As the Sister wiped my forehead I struggled vainly to speak to her and she must have seen me because she said "Shes in a lot of distress, she'll have to have some more". I was in mental and physical agony and I did not know what the 'some more' was but they must have given me an injection because they moved towards me and after a few moments I found myself pushed deeper into the darkness that I was in and the awful pressure of the weight of the darkness that I was fighting against to try to wake up from was multiplied tremendously.

I deeply regretted having had that first pethidine injection because once I had let them give me that first injection it had rendered me incapable of refusing any more injections and I wished that I could turn the clock back and do everything all over again and this time do it properly. I kept seeing clocks flashing through my mind, the clock of the labour ward, my brothers watch, the kitchen clock that had ticked away with a mind of its own, and I wished that I had all that time all over again to make things be alright a second time. I wanted to say no to that one injection that had ruined everything and I knew that with each injection that I was

144c. given I was getting worse and worse and the staff were not stopping what they were doing to me. It was nothing to do with the pain that I was in because it was actually fighting what the drugs were doing to me that was causing me so much distress. It was so awful that the labour ward staff actually thought that the drugs were helping me and I knew that I was being given them but I just could not speak to tell anyone what was happening or that they must stop giving me anymore.

After that injection complete blackness took over and I have no memory of that except a feeling that I had given up the struggle to stop drowning in the darkness and that I was just floating helplessly in pitch black water like a dead body and that I was unable to move. When I came to my senses again I could see and moan quietly. There was a nurse beside me who was busy writing on some white papers on the right hand side of the bed that I had been put back onto. I had no idea why I had been moved off the delivery table but some of the nurses were busy washing it down. I was in agony because I could not breathe and I managed to say "Pain" to the nurse and "air" referring to the fact that there was not enough air for me to breathe in to ease the crushing pain in my chest. The nurse pulled a mask across which was attached to a large machine beside my bed that had been brought back into the room from the assortment of machines that had previously been brought into the room. The mask was attached to the machine by thick ringed black rubber tubing and she put it to my face and told me to suck at it.

145C. I was desperately weak and in my desperation to do what she told me to do in order to get some air to breathe I sucked at the black rubber edge of the mask with my lips. The nurse thought I did not know what to do and she told me to suck the mask but I could not do it. She tried to help me to take hold of the mask and she lifted my right arm up and tried to put my hand round the mask for me to hold it but I could not hold onto anything because I was too weak. When the nurse saw that I had no use in my arm she became alarmed and she was horrified when she saw that my fingers were absolutely locked rigidly in a bent up claw like position. She put down my hand and held the mask over my face herself and told me to suck in the air but it was still no use because I was too weak to do it. As I tried to suck in the air I was opening and closing my mouth like a fish but I had no strength and I could not raise my chest muscles to draw any air into my body. At the time I thought there was no air in the machine but apparently the air only came out when a mother breathed it in and as I was too weak to breathe in I could not do it. The nurse did not realize that and she seemed puzzled that no air was coming out of the machine. She checked the dials of the machine and when she saw that they were alright she fitted the mask more firmly over my mouth and nose and told me to suck hard to draw the air in. I kept opening my mouth but no air came and as she held the mask over my face I could feel myself suffocating where there was no air at all. The nurse looked puzzled because no sound was coming from the machine to show that I was breathing in the air. She took the mask off my face and I saw her look at my face in horror. She quickly picked up my right hand and looked at my fingers and I could see that my whole hand and arm was mauve as if I was wearing long

146c mauve gloves. The machine was a gas and air machine for the pain in my abdomen, I needed air to breathe for the pain in my chest and I did not get it. The nurse quickly dropped my arm onto the bed and started shouting to the other people in the room while she started altering the dials on the machine and then I must have passed right out because everything went black in quite a different way from the darkness that I had been fighting for so long and it was more like the darkness of having been shot right out into space again. The next thing I can remember is of my soul standing in the room about five feet away from my body that had been laid out on the bed in the room. Quite some time had passed and I had come back to my body of my own accord after having been out in space again and having come straight in through the outside walls of the building to get back into the room. The room was horribly still and quiet and there was a horrible atmosphere in the room. All the machines had been switched off, the room was cold and there were screens around the door again but they were heavy green screens and not the flowery screens used earlier. There were three people in the room, the older sister and a pupil midwife who were filling in some forms and a nurse who was making a list of my clothes from my case which was on the floor and the locker next to the bed. The nurse stood up from where she had been bending down at the locker and she looked at my body that had been laid out on the bed. Then quite suddenly she started shrieking quietly as if she was a bit hysterical. The Sister walked across the room from where

147C. she had been working at something and she tried to calm the nurse down by saying to her that she knew it was a tragedy because I was so young but that they had got to leave me there because there was still the possibility that I might keep the baby alive even though it was probably too tiny to live' but the nurse took no notice of what the Sister was saying to her. At that point my 'soul' was standing right beside the Sister and the nurse as the three of us stood looking down at my 'body' on the bed and I was listening to everything they said. The nurse took hold of the wrist of my hand on my body and she was shrieking to the Sister to look at it. The nurse was telling her to see that Rigor mortis had set into my hand while I was still alive and the nurse was pointing to my chest and shrieking to the Sister to look and see my chest and that I was still alive. It looked as if the Sister was either going to shake the nurse or slap her face to pull her to her senses but she looked at my chest where the nurse was pointing to and then she turned straight to the other nurse in the room who was in the far corner and told her urgently to "Leave that (whatever she was doing) Go straight into that television room and get those doctors out of there and back in here at once".

I can remember her turning to the nurse beside her and telling her that she was right and that they must quickly move the bed out from beside the wall. I can remember watching the sister trying to give me mouth to mouth resuscitation and then the next thing I knew was that I opened my eyes as a lot of nurses were moving me back onto the delivery table. As I looked at them I saw a sea of anxious faces peering at me in disbelief as if they had never seen anything like it before and that they thought I had just done something

148c. amazing but I could not work out what it was. The Sister and the nurse were busy quickly working a large machine on my right and getting other things working in the room again. The Registrar and quite a few other Doctors had come into the room and everyone was staring at me in disbelief and the Registrar said to Sister "So shes alright then?" and the Sister gave him a look that seemed to tell him not to say anything in front of me and he nodded. The Registrar just stood looking at me and then he looked at the machine next to me on my right that the Sister had been fixing up. The Registrar stared at the machine in disbelief and then he told everyone to look at the dials on the machine. All the dials were whizzing round and round and backwards and forwards as if the machines had gone berserk and the Registrar said that he had never seen anything like it before. Nobody seemed to move for a moment or know what to do until the Registrar told them that they had got to get me off the machine quickly. He said that the machine had gone berserk and that it was obviously broken so they must get me off it. There was a general confusion towards me and then everything went black again.

After a while I came to my senses again and I saw a lot of machines working around me. The Registrar and several of the doctors were busy in the room, then another doctor who had still been watching the television came into the room. He told the Registrar to come back and see the television because the next program that had come on was scientifically interesting. He said that there was some bloke called Uri Geller who was on the television and he was making metal bend. The doctor told the

149c. Registrar that Uri Geller could actually bend metal and that there were people phoning in from all over Britain and claiming that they could do it as well. The Doctor said that all over Britain metal was bending, clocks that had not worked for years were starting up and dials on machinery was going berserk. The Registrar looked across at the machines around my bed and he told the Doctor that it must have been what had happened to the machines around me. The other doctors who were younger than the Registrar got quite excited about it and said that the programme was a sensation, they wanted to telephone into the B.B.C. programme and although the Registrar was not keen he said that they could do it. The Registrar said that he could not leave the room now to go back to the television now and from the way he said it he seemed to regret having watched the television at all. He told the Doctor and several others who were hovering about behind him that it was alright for them to do it because they were off duty but that he was going to get into trouble over this and he irately indicated his arm towards me. The Doctors had the telephone number of the BBC programme (possibly from the programme on the television) and they used the telephone in the corridor to ring in and got straight through to the programme by telling them that it was Lewisham Hospital. When one of the Doctors had explained what had happened he came rushing back into the room that I was in and asked the Registrar what my name was. The Registrar looked on my notes and told him that it was Anne Maple and then he asked the Doctor what he wanted to know my name for. The Doctor was just rushing back to the telephone and he called to the registrar that the programme wanted to know my name and where I was so that they could send a film crew and cameras

150c along to the hospital or to my home to interview me. The Registrar began to look alarmed and the coloured labour ward sister started to create a terrible fuss about it. She shouted at the Registrar saying "Do you want them to know all THIS (pointing at me) ? What are you trying to do, loose us all our jobs?. That girl's not supposed to BE on that machine ! You're the one who doesn't want her parents to know, what are you going to do if her parents are watching that programme ?" The Registrar looked a bit worried but he told the Sister that the other Doctors were only phoning into a television programme that thousands of other people were phoning into and that probably no one would come along, but the Sister shouted at him that they (the doctors) had got straight through to the programme because they had made it sound important that it was a hospital that was phoning in, and she shouted at him "THAT PROGRAMMES GOING OUT LIVE OVER THE B.B.C. ! If her parents are watching it you are telling them NOW ! "

The Registrar looked horrified as if he still did not believe it and he quickly looked around the room to ask the other staff if it was true and they said that it was as if they were all getting alarmed about it. The Registrar rushed into the corridor and told the Doctors to get straight off the telephone which they did but they had already given my name and the name of the hospital to the programme and they should not have done it. I could hear everything that was going on and at times the shouting roused me enough to open my eyes but I could not speak and I felt awful because I knew everything that was