

ONNA SOLOMON

Autism Suite

Diagnosis

Statistics shuffle and split
each mother's frantic mornings—
Mourning. More. Mire.
As in to mourn. As in more. Admire. As in mire. Shit
smeared in the bathroom, screeching
joy at the vent fan's mechanics.
Take the survey—I *feel sad: Most of the time*
Some of the time Never. How many words
does he know? How many words is he
saying spontaneously? Each day at the clinic
families shocked, embarrassed.
The doctor's dictation: *a significant history*
delays . . . problems . . . behaviors.
It is my opinion . . . a (mild/moderate/severe)
disorder. Studies show. Studies show. The show
rewound, reversed, the scene repeated. The repeated scene.
A six-month wait to be seen. We can put you on
the cancellation list. Tissue boxes
in every room. A battery of assessments.

Theory of Mind

Those I'm not
think
things I don't
think

I know you know
things I don't
think thoughts I don't

Those I'm not
think things
I don't think

I know you
know things

I don't think thoughts I don't

Those who are not me
think about things
I don't think about those things

You don't think
what I think
You don't think
I know what I think

Metaphor

The soul is a house:
the whole
what resides within the walls

of one life.
What a life holds,
what it's built around.

Let me repeat myself:
The soul is a house, the whole
of what resides within the walls of one life.

What a life holds, what it's built around.

Without the house
what does furniture matter?
He can learn to make the bed,

flush the toilet, say "hello"
into the phone,
but if walls are missing
or unsound,

no sure boundaries in which to reside,
who could know
how to invite any of us in?

If the walls of the house
are missing or unsound,
how could he know
to invite any of us in?

Treatment I: Developmental

To wait.

Allow the child to be as he truly is—
let him wander, let him flap, let him break
the silence with his strange utterances—

There will be time for your own cries,
your own wailing—imitate *his* rocking.
Hum his intolerable hum for him.
Far from purposeless

he moves in continuous response
to sensation. Enter the water
through which he wades,
brook his gestures that seem
at each turn to reject you.

Definition: Inward (adj.)

In reference to situation or condition.
Situated within. That which is
the inmost part; belonging

to the inside: turned in,
turned in on himself—
a physical act, turned his back.

Of the voice: uttered so as not to be
clearly heard, muffled, indistinct.

Said of the heart as a material organ
possessing an interior part—

and so, figuratively, of the heart,
mind, or soul: as feeling and thought's
intrinsic secluded home.

Treatment II: Applied Behavioral Analysis

Say *I want cookie please*

I want cookie please

Good boy

Touch your nose good boy

Touch your mouth. Your mouth.

Touch your mouth. Good

boy.