

“The prenatal loss of my twin siblings”

My own experience of the prenatal feelings
and sensorial-memory

Claudia Pinheiro

Abstract: This article is a report of my experience of having survived the death of my wombtwins. I became aware of the prenatal sensations and perception that I describe here while attending body-psychotherapy as a part of my new professional training. Although I had no real evidence that we were triplets, this knowledge from my prenatal time has brought me closer to myself, and has added an essential positive change in my self knowledge.

Keywords: Wombtwin survivor, prenatal trauma, Self-knowledge.

First of all a poem that I wrote at age 18:

Sinto que me elevo lentamente	I feel as if I'm slowly rising up.
Onde estou não estou também	Where I am, I am not as well
Estou sempre uns metros mais a cima	I'm always a few meters further up
Enquanto eu, vazia de alguém	While, empty of anyone,
Fico cá em baixo e desespere	I stay here below, in pure despair.
Fogem-me as rédeas de quem sou	From me escape the reins of who I am;
A de cima voa, observa	The one that's above flies, observes,
Como uma estranha vinda do nada.	Like a stranger from nowhere.
A de baixo procura nua e só	The one from below searches naked and alone
Como as ruínas de uma casa abandonada	Like the walls of an abandoned house in ruins.
E eu vou caindo muito fundo	And I keep on falling very deeply,
Num vazio escorregadio e irreal	In a slippery and unreal emptiness,
Mas que acaba lá muito longe	That finishes far, far away
É esse Fim a origem desse mal?	Is that End the origin of this ailment?

Introduction

All my life I felt I was different, as if I came from another planet; and I always felt I was too big. I felt that there was something wrong with me, that I was somehow “a mistake”, and that every thing was so difficult. As a child I had a hard time communicating with other kids my age, I was very lonely, although I felt very comfortable with little children and babies. I always wrote diaries a lot. It was not only sadness I felt, it was more a sensation of a void without name and without form.

My first love stories were very strong, inevitable and unanswered platonic relationships. When I was 17 years old I fell in love with a girl and years later with a gay boy. It took me a long time until I could free myself from those fantasies.

I felt these people belonged to me, were an extension of me. These were every time very intensive feelings ... it always took me a long time until I could solve this extreme bonding. It felt as if this kind of relationship was always needed in my life, because without them something essential was missing. I just couldn't free myself from these self-harming feelings.

When I met my husband (we have three wonderful daughters) my life began to be very stable and happy. At the emotional level, I thought I had grown out of all that confusion. After the birth of my first daughter it became clear to me that I had to give up my profession as an architect and work with people. I started to learn biodynamic massage, and in order to dedicate myself to work with families and babies, I attended the body-psychotherapist course in Crisis-therapy for pregnancy, childbirth and early childhood which Paula Diederichs leads in Portugal since 2006.

However, since the autumn of that year 2006 I have suffered from a strong depression: feeling that I was extremely sad and alone, that I was going to die, or something like that. It happened after I decided to stop the therapy I was doing as a part of my new professional training. I felt extremely attached to my therapist, as if I was in love with her. It was not sexual, but I felt a need to be close to her, as if she was a part of me. I was going crazy; I was feeling more and more anxious. And after I decided to stop seeing her I felt that I was not going to make it without her. It was a terrible pain that I knew from before; it was like being left to die.

It was during the education in Crisis-therapy for pregnancy, childbirth and early childhood, and the parallel individual body-psychotherapy I did with Jason Baker that I became aware of where these sensations came from. The assured and responsible atmosphere that Paula Diederichs creates in her work was of great importance to allow me to get in contact with my prenatal trauma in the first place. With affection and wisdom they both took my hand, and that's how I dared to walk step by step all the way into myself. I felt trustful and taken seriously.

In November 2007 by the method of family constellation I could finally see that my first therapist was standing for a tiny person whom I love very, very much, and who left me feeling alone and incomplete. I was quite sure that it was my twin sister. I have immediately taken up this possibility in myself, and after I had got to know the work of the non-profit organisation Wombtwin.com from London (that recognizes that the foetal death of a twin in any stage of development leaves in the survivor deep psychological effects) I had no more doubts. The work of Althea Hayton, the founder of this project, has helped me very much to value my feelings accordingly.

While I was grieving over my twin sister I became conscious of my little twin brother. He was always very near as well, especially since puberty, so near that I couldn't possibly see him. I recognize him among other things in the long relationship to my homosexual friend. In his honour I have hidden away my femininity, and carried a part of his male energy for him. For me, being a multiple was not really a surprise, and it has brought more sense, joy and also rest into the bond I have with my twin sister.

If physically I survived the death of my twins, I feel that at a spiritual level only at 43 years of age, after having investigated the beginnings of life and understood the sensations and experiences that I described here, only now can I experience

my own life with more fullness and confidence. I now understand the Love that we share and knowing that they always wished me a full and happy life, I can finally be where I am, and who I am.

Report of My Experience from the Intrauterine Time

In the beginning I was We, I had someone, a friend, someone who I could trust. I had someone with me whose presence by that time seemed as obvious as me being there. She was already a little smaller, when I really noticed her presence. She was another person, but to me she was almost a part of myself, we were so near that I got confused about that. There was a deep connection between us. We shared everything in our world, the good and the bad moments. Everything that existed was as much mine as it was hers. I felt safe and confident, in absolute certainty that we would be together from the beginning until the end.

And we were not alone, the two of us, in our mother's womb; we survived a terrible pain when our little brother disappeared. This brought us even closer together. I felt that we were so strong together that the worst happenings didn't seem that bad to us, because we held on to each other. But then she began to withdraw from me. In the beginning I didn't notice anything; I was feeling so well. There was peace, lightness, naturalness; it was like being in paradise! We played, rested, simply were in harmony, feeling the pleasure of living, and I was sure that she felt the same.

But then she began to be very quiet. I felt that she was sad and I didn't know why. I tried to approach her, to understand. I tried to help, tried to communicate, but she simply began to disappear, to lose her life, to give up. She was so lovely, so mine, so little, and she left me there alone. abandoned!

What should I do? There was NOTHING I could do.

I was in a deadly shock!

It was as if someone had cut off my legs, or as if they had pulled out my heart. What now?

How am I going to manage to live with this pain, this longing? How could this happen? How did this happen?

She just stopped caring about me. She abandoned me without saying goodbye. She didn't want to play with me any more.

Or did I do something wrong? I was so much bigger – was I too aggressive, was I too alive? I felt a huge need to make the time go back, to force her to stay, I felt an enormous fury, a will to explode: I DON'T WANT TO STAY HERE ALONE.

I could have done anything to change the events; I could even have decided to go with her. To me this option was not open. I was too alive to want to die with her. What I wanted was that she would stay with me, but there it was – I could not do any more. She was already gone.

Then I swallowed my sadness, fury and disillusion. I promised myself that I wouldn't release her memory, not for a minute, for the rest of my life. I felt betrayed and abandoned. It was a terrible pain, a mixture of rage, love and hate. It was the first and biggest disillusionment in my life. I was there for her; I was her big sister, wanted her to rely on me, because we shared everything, but she broke that unity, she abandoned me!

I had the sensation that one half of me was happy to be alive, because I didn't succumb like my sister, but the other half had decided to stay with her, keeping her memory alive. This part kept all the feelings that were connected to her tied up and confused. There was

immense, unconditional and altruistic love;
there was shock, confusion and uncertainty of what to do next.
there was fright, terror, hatred and physical violence.
there was rage, loneliness, resignation and cold solitude;
there was guilt at being alive.

These feelings were always present, and the worst thing is that they were indefinable, unspeakable and inconceivable. That enormous pile of emotions paralysed me, caught my movements, and was so heavy that I couldn't be light, spontaneous or happy.

When the moment to be born arrived I felt a very strong physical pain, as if a knife was deep in my small back. This is why I could not roll up in the foetal position; my breast was stretched forwards and my head lifted up, and I entered in the birth channel with my forehead. I felt that it was so difficult, because I wanted to take all "this history" with me.

I had a very hard time at my birth, but not as hard as the tragic events I had lived a few months before.

I didn't want to lose the memory of my wombmates, but I felt that it would possibly happen. How could I tell everyone about my pain once I was outside? Nobody knew it. Inside in the womb I could still remember everything, although they were long gone.

I anticipated that after my birth I would be separated from the conscious remembrance of my beloved siblings, and from all the happiness I have experienced with them at the beginning.

That's just what happened. So I began to silence my inner voice and to hold back my energy. Specifically for my later life it meant that I was not to fight for what was most important to me in life: the bond to my little sister and brother.

Half of me was frozen.

I would never love so much again, or feel that fury, and by no means would I allow myself to feel this extreme injustice with hatred for God and the world. The best decision for me was to stay away from people, stay alone. To prevent me from feeling guilt, I would pay attention not to injure anybody. Being outwardly in this gentle and kind posture, I would lock away my internal feelings, in order not to get injured never again. It was clear to me that I would be lonesome, but this loneliness was not as bad as suffering for the loss of my twins.

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