

to understand the child's
unfamiliar vernacular.
But the longer he spoke
the more confident he became,
and I was able to comprehend
his basic point:

"Pussy, ass-hole, fuck-face,
god-damned fat ugly bitch —
you ugly ol' fat ugly bitch ho' —
fuck-face, pussy, ass-hole!
I hate yo' fat ugly guts!
You fat ol' ugly fuck-face bitch ho'!
You want me to suck yo' pussy?
You can SUCK MY COCK!"

O.K., O.K., kid — I get your message!
You could use some professional
speech therapy
and a more polished approach,
and a lot more variety and imagination,
but you're not doing badly
for a five-year-old.

And believe me, I do understand.
I'm having a shitty day, too.

A NICE PLACE TO VISIT, BUT YOU WOULDN'T
WANT TO LIVE THERE

The entire ward had recently
been completely re-decorated.
The doctors were happy.
The Board of Directors were happy.
The staff was happy.
The patients' families were happy.
Only the patients themselves
were not happy.
They didn't give a shit
if the walls were Tropical Tangerine
with Bachelor-Button-Blue trim.
The beds now had matching coverlets,
the carpet was so thick you sank into it,
and every chair, table, lamp, curtain,
even the tooth brush holders,
were color-coordinated.

Doctor visits did not increase
from the usual one hour a week.
Physical therapy continued to consist of
making beads out of Reader's Digest pages
and Elmer's glue.
The group therapist was still the same

"gut level feeling" pain in the ass.
Every jig-saw puzzle in the lounge
had at least a dozen missing pieces.
And everybody's medicine made them feel
crazier than they had
before they were admitted,
except for the real psychotics
who couldn't feel anything anyway
and who wandered up and down the halls
all day long,
dragging their arms
doing the Thorazine Shuffle.

One young woman with freckles
and bright red hair
began sticking her Thorazine inside her cheek
and spitting it into the nearest toilet.
Her only "illness" was a week of hysterics
after her new husband confessed to her
that he was gay.
Her family had no idea what to do with her
so put her in the psych ward.
Now, she took enormous pleasure
in dragging great globs of snot
out of her nose
and wiping it on the hems of
the new Bachelor-Button-Blue curtains.

This did not seem to anyone
to be the behavior of a psychotic.

THE SCIENTIFIC MIND

True genius began when,
without prior discovery
or books,
without laboratories
or equipment,
without formulas
or equations
or sophisticated language,
people who covered their nakedness
with animal skins
and cured their rotten teeth
by pulling them out
observed a shaft of dry brown wheat
and saw a loaf of bread.

— Catherine Lynn

Long Beach CA