

**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.