



Biography
/ Memoir

Sky Eyes

*Dissociative Identity Disorder
from the bottom up*



A fictionalized memoir by Kriss Erickson

SKY EYES:

Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) from the bottom up.

Sky Eyes is a Spanish phrase: *Ojos del cielo*:
The eyes of a person whose body is here but
whose soul has fled.

A novel based on a true story.

by Kriss Erickson



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I would still be mired in the confusion of undiagnosed dissociative identity disorder (DID) without the help, patience, insight and creative efforts of my Naturopath and therapist, Dr. Jodi Berg. Dr. Berg's brilliant integrative strategy included acupuncture, herbal supplements and counseling techniques such as mediumship, channeling, energetic work, soul retrieval and humanistic/cognitive behavioral counseling strategies.

Dr. Berg's integrative approach helped me to understand the factors that contributed to my inability to hold a job, to be emotionally consistent with my friends and family and to function consistently as an adult. Dr. Berg's ability to psychically hear and see my scattered energy parts was crucial to my recovery. By helping me reconnect with

severely damaged parts of myself, Dr. Berg helped me rebuild and restructure my life.

I would also like to thank Lily Knol, a lightworker, who read early versions of this work. Several others who asked not to be named also gave their time, insight and expertise.

Introduction

Can you imagine how it would feel if you couldn't turn to your hostess at a dinner party and wholeheartedly say, "This is delicious!"

Or jump up and cheer when your son or daughter hits a home run?

Or feel your heart flutter when your fiancée slips an engagement ring on your finger?

Or really *know* how you feel — any time, about anything.

This is a glimpse into the world of a person suffering from a disabling, invisible disability — the shattered energy affliction called dissociative identity disorder (DID). DID develops when early childhood abuse goes beyond physical injury, beyond emotional and psychological damage to wound the soul.

People with DID are internally fractured, many to the point that they have no inner strength left. I grew up in the 1960s, before statistics about domestic violence and child abuse had been compiled. Finding community support for child abuse was difficult, at best, because siding with children meant siding against parents. I was repeatedly told to

‘stand on my own two feet’ and to ‘rely on my inner strength.’

What people didn’t realize was that asking me to stand on my own two feet was like asking a person with shattered legs to walk. Refusing to believe me when I said I was being abused and refusing to intervene was like walking away from an accident scene.

Surviving childhood abuse that causes DID is like surviving a holocaust. And like disaster survivors and veterans of war, what people living with DID need most is to be heard. Understood. Validated.

They don’t need to be told that the events they describe couldn’t possibly have happened. Or that if they change how they view their abusive parents or caretakers that their flashbacks and panic attacks will cease. Or to nod blandly when friends spout endless platitudes.

We simply need people to hear. To believe.

That’s what I ask as I share the story of my childhood.

The events in this fictionalized memoir are real. Every soul-wounding incident of abuse is real. My development of DID and my

struggles to make meaningful life connections are real. This book shows how deliberate, prolonged, consistent psychic abuse shattered my sense of self and my inner sense of reality and how my connection to my spirit guides helped me hold onto enough sanity to claw my way back as an adult.

I fictionalized this account only by creating siblings and extended family members, to protect the privacy of my real siblings, aunts and uncles. The mannerisms, appearance and other attributes of my fictionalized family members in no way represent my real family members.

Privacy and dignity were nonexistent in my childhood home. I deeply respect my family members' right to privacy.

Dissociation is a wonderfully creative defense mechanism that a young child employs when her body, mind and soul are battered so severely that she is unable to remain in the present reality.

A child younger than five years old has a limited number of defense mechanisms. She can feel fear, but she can't run fast enough to escape. She can panic, but though the 'fight or flight' energy courses through her, she can't use that energy to get to a safe place.

A severely abused child escapes the only way she can — by separating her energy from abusive situations and intrusive, overpowering energies. As a bone will break when hit hard enough, repeated abuse targeting a child's core self eventually shatters the soul. The soul doesn't die — it cannot. It swirls and festers and causes constant inner prickling.

Dissociation is the ability to detach, or dissociate, from ones' self and feelings. This detachment leaves the person unable to do even simple tasks the way others do. For example, instead of picking up a crayon to color, a dissociative child must locate the part that knows how to color. Then locate the part that knows what she wants to color. Then remember what all the searching was about in the first place.

If a stressful or violent situation occurs while a dissociative child is coloring and she focuses on the stressor, she may forget how to color. If she focuses on coloring she may behave as if the violence isn't happening.

Sometimes the scattered energy has a name, like 'Stacy' or 'Jenna.' Sometimes the scattered energy is unnamed and expressed as emotion. Whether or not the scattered energy is named, the dissociative child cannot access

all of her energy at once. She must constantly 'switch' from one part of herself to another.

Despite extensive inner wounding, people with DID are highly intelligent. Separating life energy takes an immense amount of imagination and determination. Finding a specific kind of energy, switching energy and looking for new energy takes intelligence and organizational skills.

Dissociative people have little or no sense of "I". Individuality seems like something for other people. They think and act as a group. This means that a DID child or adult can deliver a flawless, intricate report, burst into tears and complain in a childlike voice at a classmate or contemporary's criticism, then tell a joke as if nothing happened.

Children and adults with DID are often socially awkward. They may lack spontaneity and appear stiff and detached. In reality they're doing mental gymnastics to maintain even a few friendships and participate in social events.

This book, narrated by one of my dissociated parts, Stacy, is intended to raise public awareness of dissociative disorders and to help dissociative people who haven't had the strength to speak for themselves.

I know of no other book that describes how DID develops in a child, that describes DID as scattered energy or that shows the deliberate psychic damage that causes a child to dissociate.

An Afterward following the final chapter discusses the breakthrough energetic and parapsychology counseling techniques employed by my doctor and therapist, Dr. Jodi Berg, that were so helpful to me, by helping me to restore my emotional and psychic connections to my scattered parts.

Thank you for being willing to join me on what has been at worst a torturous experience and at best, a miraculous one.

Sincerely, Kriss Erickson

PART 1: STACY: Birth - 4

Chapter 1: STACY

In October of 1962, the four year-old named Stacy ran her fingers through her choppily cut dirty blond hair and pressed her nose against the chilly glass of her bedroom window in the small town of Hanneck, New Jersey. Crimson leaves fluttered from the maple tree in her back yard, skimming the brisk autumn breeze.

The outer world was so colorful. The red and gold leaves flitting across the cobalt sky were so bright that they stung her eyes. She squinted, not bothering to wipe the tears away that the bright light caused. She longed to be outside, breathing the brisk air, staring at the deep blue sky.

Her knees tingled as she watched the leaves pile on the stubby grass. She closed her eyes, imagining her feet crunching through the leaf piles, scattering the colorful castoffs across the yard. She imagined the crisp tang of the chilly air racing down her nose.

For a moment she was outside in the brilliant sunshine. For a moment the sun beat warm against her cheeks.

But then the crushing reality of her present returned.

She was a bad girl. Bad girls didn't scatter leaf piles or enjoy the beautiful fall weather or sit beneath maple trees. Bad girls didn't feel the sun on their cheeks. Bad girls must stay inside, even when no one else was home. Bad girls mustn't feel anything at all.

Bad girls must lie quietly on the rickety cot beside the window and pick holes in the pink-painted plaster walls. Bad girls woke up in an empty house and mustn't call, "Mommy?"

Ding-ding!

What was that? The bell on the paperboy's bicycle! She dashed across the narrow hallway into Mommy's empty bedroom and looked through the window that faced the street. The paperboy flew past, tossing papers, blue jacket and red and white striped shirt flapping, bicycle spokes whirring.

Stacy's lips automatically pulled into a smile as she watched him glide past on his shiny bike, the wind ruffling his brown hair, his cheeks pinked with exhilaration. Her lips knew what to do when joy was appropriate, though she felt nothing.

Uh-oh! Crazy Grace was standing in front of her house.

“Where’s my paper?” she shrieked.

Stacy crammed her fingers into her mouth, her body shaking with anxiety. The paperboy would be in trouble. Trouble was a big, big word inside her house. Suddenly, Mrs. Jones, who lived across from Grace, came out on her front porch.

“Leave that boy alone!” she called. “He’s doing his best.”

He’s doing his best. Leave him alone.

Stacy muttered the words over and over.

Those words felt so good. Those words held big, big truths. She hugged the words against her torn white nightgown and basked in their warmth. And wished those words were for her.

Mommy’s words were darker. Mommy’s words made her shiver.

Bad girl.

Little brat.

No breakfast for you.

No lunch for you.

Go to bed without dinner.

Get out of my sight.

Rotten little creep.

Mommy's going out for a while so you better be good.

Don't make Mommy cut a forsythia branch and beat your bare bottom.

You better not see!

You better not remember!

Who do you think you are, you little brat?

You little brat. You little brat.

Daddy's words felt better. On the outside. Daddy's words were like the Icy-hot cream Mommy used when her sore back made her stay in bed. Daddy's words oozed warmth, for a few seconds before they chilled her bones.

C'mere.

Sit on Daddy's lap.

Sit still now.

That's a good girl.

Lie still, now.

Gooooood! So good!

Don't be so hard on Mommy.

Play nice and Daddy will give you a chocolate bar.

Stacy sighed as the paperboy rode out of sight. Mommy and Daddy's words stung her mind like late-season yellowjackets.

An old truck covered with a rusty canopy rattled down Arc Street, stopping a few feet from Stacy's house. A brown-skinned man stepped from the cab, white teeth gleaming as he waved his straw hat.

"Bananas! Bananas!" he cheered, as if the whole world was a bright, luscious fruit.

Stacy's stomach rumbled.

She felt dizzy as her inner energy shifted. Shifting energy felt weird but when it happened, parts of her emerged that knew helpful things. Things like finding food.

Shifting energy was bad, too. Sometimes it meant she didn't know what she was doing.

Rummmmmble.

She was so hungry, she couldn't stop the energy from shifting. She blinked and suddenly she wasn't scared little Stacy who looked at the world outside and obeyed Mommy and Daddy and suffered in silence when her stomach was empty.

She became a stronger Stacy, a resourceful Stacy who dared to break her parents' rules. She was out the front door. Standing barefooted beside the banana truck. Clutching a nickel in her grubby fingers. Enough for one banana. Where had the money come from?

She didn't know.

She didn't feel the cold pavement seeping into her feet. She had no idea that her panties showed through her thin nightgown, or that she'd pushed past Crazy Grace, Mrs. Jones and several other neighbors.

A brief thought arose.

What if Mommy came home while she was outside?

Fear blurred her vision. She blinked. Focused on the banana man. A small part of her saw him. One small child peeking around the corner of her awareness.

Part of her exchanged the nickel for a golden yellow banana. A different part noticed the compassion in the banana man's eyes.

“You have Sky Eyes, little one,” the banana man said in a thick south-of-the-border accent.

“Your body is here, but your spirit has fled. How is it that you have seen so much sorrow in your short life?”

The chilly morning air didn't penetrate her defenses but the banana man's words did.

He *saw*.

He saw a part of her that she'd hidden deep in the clefts of her soul, where she thought no one would find it.

She blinked. The brief dark spot guided her feet back inside.

She was in her room. Gulping the sweet food. Filling her cheeks. Chewing open-mouthed while an inner voice urged, hurryhurryhurry!

Her teeth made nyah-nyah noises as they smashed the soft fruit.

Blink.

She was burying the banana peel in the paper sack beneath the kitchen sink where Daddy threw his banana peels. Galloping up the stairs to her room as Mommy turned the corner onto Arc Street. Slipping her chilled feet beneath the threadbare sheet of her cot as Mommy opened the front door.

Mommy mustn't know that she'd disobeyed. Mommy mustn't know she'd left the house. But how? Mommy knew everything Stacy did and thought.

Mommy even knew things that Stacy didn't know. Things she'd hidden. The blank spaces between the pages of her inner book.

Stacy knew this because once when she was alone in the house, she'd dialed lots of numbers on the telephone. A few days later, Mommy had called to her in the dangerously sweet voice that reminded her of a fruit with hidden thorns.

“You were on the telephone while Mommy went downtown the other day, weren't you?” she purred.

Stacy tried to say 'yes' but her throat closed. She had ducked her head so Mommy wouldn't see the tears crowning at the corners of her eyes.

Mommy had grabbed her arm and dragged her down the narrow staircase, through the dingy living room and cramped kitchen into a weedy spot in the back yard where a forsythia bush grew.

“Pick a branch,” Mommy commanded.

“A-a branch?” Stacy said, her throat spasming, garbling her words.

“Pick a good one or I will,” Mommy said through gritted teeth, her lips spread thin so it would look to the neighbors as if she was smiling.

She waved to her best friend, Kelly, sprawled in a striped lounge chair in her yard next door.

Stacy blinked. Her body shook so hard that she couldn't focus. Her finger pointed to a branch. Mommy had used forsythia whips, as she called them, before they moved to Hanneck. This was the first time she'd made Stacy pick her own branch.

Stacy couldn't bear to be in the moment with Mommy and the branch and the knowledge of what would happen next. She blinked, blacking out for a few seconds,

though she could still walk and talk so to Mommy it looked as if she was awake.

In her next aware moment, she and Mommy and the branch were in the kitchen. The forsythia branch sang in Mommy's hand, striping Stacy's arms, legs and back. The blows fell long after Stacy had stopped crying. Long after she lay, shaking, on the floor.

That beating had been days ago. Many blank spots ago. A lifetime ago. Stacy liked to think it had happened to another little girl. A girl named Sunny who was so cheerful that she sang during the whipping so that the red welts the whip made wouldn't throb.

The only way for Stacy to escape was to forget. To create other realities. That was the only way to hide things from Mommy. So she erased the memory of the breakfast banana despite the knowledge that her stomach wasn't sending waves of hunger so sharp that they made her feel queasy.

Mommy trudged up the stairs and poked her head past the length of silver conduit that held the light switch and the uneven edges of the cracked pink plaster in the doorless entry of Stacy's room.

“Get dressed,” she snapped. “You have chores to do.”

Chores. Stacy shivered. Chores were hard. She blinked. Created a blank spot. Flipped an inner page.

The next moment she was dressed in blue pants and a white shirt. She stood in the kitchen, watching Mommy’s crimson lips slide over a spoon as she slurped cereal. She watched Mommy’s throat muscles contract as the milky flakes slid toward her stomach, fascinated by how easily food entered Mommy’s body. No rules stopped her from eating. Hearing Mommy’s brilliant white teeth mash the crispy grain and smelling the coffee perking on the gas range made her remember how nearly empty her stomach still was.

“Mommy?” she half-whispered, rubbing her right foot along her left leg. “Can I have some cereal?”

Mommy snorted, her lake blue eyes flashing.

“Can I have some cereal?” she mimicked. “Why should you get cereal, you little brat?”

Mommy's anger, familiar and cruel, struck like lightning.

Would she ever be strong enough for it not to hurt? She was too tired, too hungry, too cold.

Always.

Mommy had told her about lightning—how it could zap through people and hurt or even kill them. She'd shown Stacy the charred spot where lightning had hit the locust tree behind the shed in the back yard.

“This is what wild energy can do,” Mommy'd said. “Only a lightning rod can protect the house during a thunder storm.”

So Stacy became Mommy's lightning rod. But no matter how much energy she absorbed, she wasn't safe from Mommy's wild energy.

“Get up on that chair and do the dishes!” Mommy snapped, spitting mashed cereal across Stacy's white shirt.

Stacy climbed up on the torn blue vinyl chair, her awareness fluttering like the pages of a book in the wind. She flipped to the dishwashing page. A page of herself, to do one

little thing. The rest of her inner book stayed closed.

She'd created her inner book when she was a baby. When Mommy ignored her cries of hunger and she'd sucked her thumb until it bled. The pulsing pressure a small comfort though it didn't ease her hunger. When Mommy refused to change her diaper, her chapped bottom was a sore, stinky page that the rest of her could ignore.

A knife hidden beneath the gray dishwater, crusted with toast crumbs margarine, poked her thumb. Tears sprang to her eyes a moment before she covered the pain by flipping to a numb page in her inner book.

Mommy plopped her empty cereal bowl into the sink, unaware of Stacy's injury. Stacy let out her breath in relief. She swished the dishes clean as best she could in the greasy water, her fingernails scraping the film of scrambled egg from the cast iron skillet Daddy had used to cook his breakfast.

Part of her screamed in disgust as her fingers touched the mushy mess. Part of her longed to stuff the soggy eggs into her mouth.

“Can I get down now, Mommy?”

Jean Bewick scrutinized the dishes drying beside the sink.

“Next time don’t leave the frying pan in the water so long,” she snapped. “It’s getting rusty.”

“Yes, Mommy.”

She slid down, unsure if she should stay in the kitchen. Or move. Or not.

She blinked.

“Look at me when I’m talking to you!”

Mommy’s voice and the white-hot zing of the cigarette jabbing Stacy’s arm brought her back.

“Pick up your toys or I’ll vacuum them up!”

Blink. She sat on the living room floor beside a pile of blocks.

Her stomach rumbled. She clutched it with her sore hand. The bars of sunlight streaming through the living room window whispered to her. She’d learned to read the sun, the wind, the trees. The sunlight said that somewhere, maybe even right next door, it was lunchtime.