

Rebirth

I was born in a depression.

Three weeks after the Wall Street crash, in fact.

My parents were depressed.

My mother didn't really want me and regarded me as an object of pity and duty.

I was fed, in the womb and after, on
anxiety
desperate over-nourishment
fear of weakness
mental determination to survive
heady cheerfulness just masking despair
deeply buried Jewish anger - converted generations before
into masochism and moralising
over-self-centredness.

In early adolescence, I was born again - into a war.

1939-45

Born back into the womb

And fed all over again on the same diet

What else could they give me?

And it saved us! We won through!

Who did?

Anyway, I survived.

In young adulthood I was born again - into the prosperity of the '50s and '60s

And I started to feed myself

outgoingness

sexuality

health

excitement

adventure

enjoyment

But all that other food had never been digested, nor vomited up

And the new food sat uneasily and ineffectively on top.

And so, in late adulthood, when post-war affluence was beginning to wear thin

I turned to therapy

And started to vomit up that early diet

And propel myself out of the womb of 1929.

And in 1977, after much labour, I was born again - into a depression.

The economy was hitting a low.

The growth movement was in a bad way.

My therapists and group leaders were depressed.

They needed my fees but they didn't really want me, middle-aged female,
and regarded me as an object of pity and duty.

They fed me, in their womb and after, on

anxiety

desperate over-nourishment

fear of weakness

mental determination to survive

heady cheerfulness masking despair

deeply buried anger against the wider community outside the

growth movement - converted into Messianism and moralising
over-self-centredness.

Nevertheless, I was born again.

And I know now how to vomit all that up.

And I know how to feed myself.

And it's not from a growth movement which is a ghetto

Nor with the anger of Freud and all the self-important therapists who've
followed him.

I'll feed myself

outgoingness

sexuality

health

excitement

adventure

enjoyment

in the whole wide world.

The economy, they say, is on the mend.

The growth movement is re-assembling itself.

Soon everyone can be better fed.

At last, it's beginning not to matter to me one way or another.

Alix Pirani
