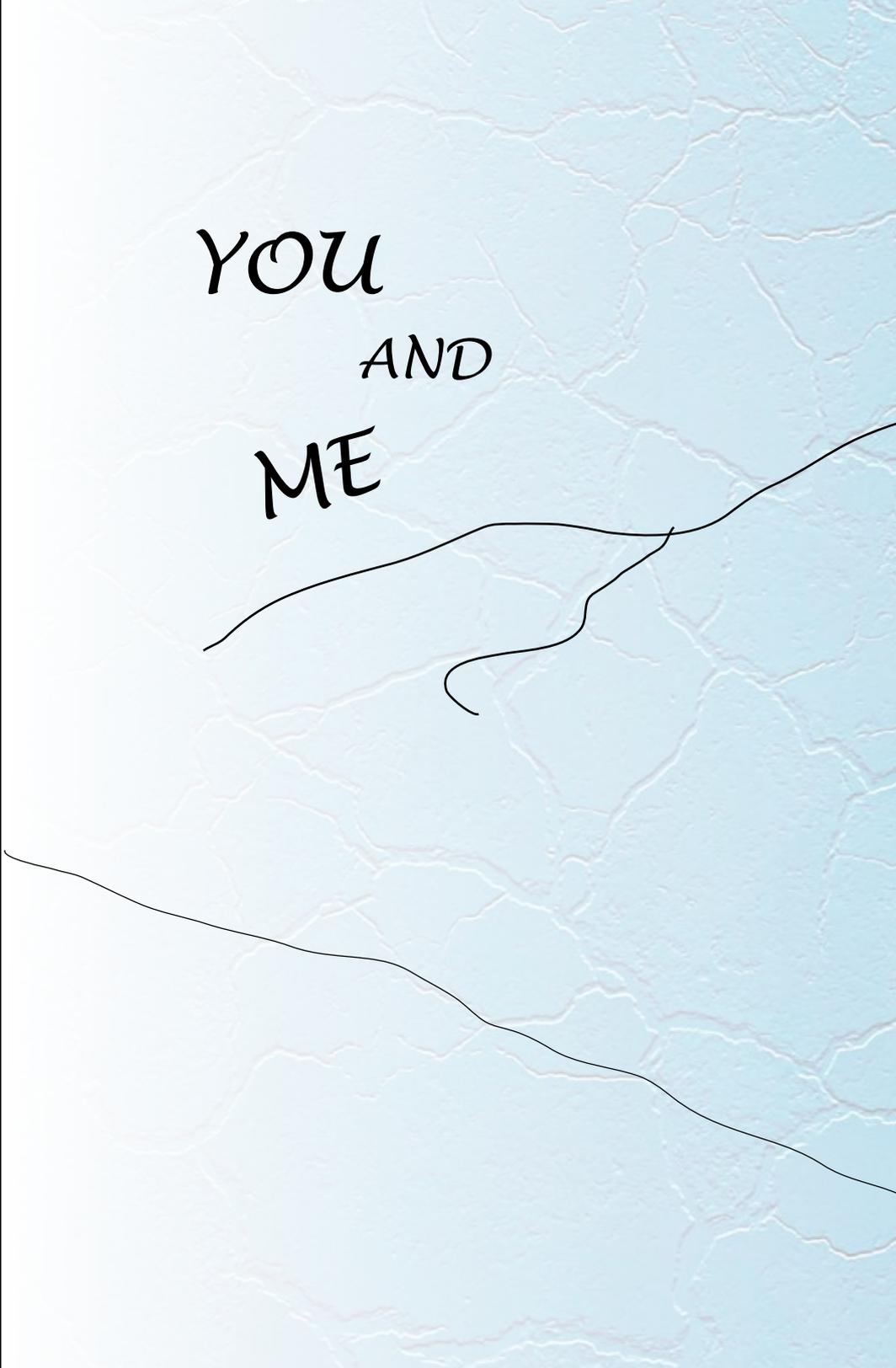


YOU
AND
ME



NO ONE

I did not ask to be born.

I did not ask to be born to you.

I did not ask you to have trouble getting along with each other.

I did not ask you to fight.

I did not ask you to yell and scream, rather than talking and negotiating – just as you have always expected of me.

I did not ask you to get divorced.

And I certainly did not ask you to continue fighting – even after the divorce.

WHEN

When you fight
I feel like crying.
I don't know who is right
And, to tell you the truth, I don't really care.

When you say unkind things about each other
I feel hurt and confused.
I don't like hearing bad things about my parents.
And if Dad really is a "lowlife" and disgusting
(and other things that I am embarrassed to repeat),
then what does that say about me, his son?

When you yell and scream at each other, don't try
to tell me that this is just your way of "discussing"
things.
I'm not that stupid; after all, I am your kid.
The last time I used words like those in a
"discussion", I was severely punished.

I'm sure that both of you think that it's really
important to "express your feelings," but when you

do so, the only place I want to be is in my room...
in my bed... under my blankets... with music
blaring through my earphones. The problem is
that the music isn't always loud enough to drown
out the "expressing of your feelings."

WHENEVER

Whenever I fight with my brother, you want me to compromise and you want us to "get along" – and to do so quickly.

... but when the two of you fight, you don't speak to each other for a few days – and sometimes even for a few weeks... do you think that's OK?

Whenever I argue with my friends, you tell me to speak to the teacher – "She will know how to make peace between you," you tell me.

... but when the two of you are screaming at each other and I say, "Won't you stop it already!" you ignore me. Sometimes, maybe, you stop yelling for a moment... but then you go back to your annoying fights.

Remember when they opened a mediation club in school? You thought that it would be a good idea for me to join.

... And what about you? Instead of trying to work things out, you just talk to your lawyers... and then you fight even more.

Is there really a difference between you and me? I have to talk about what bothers me, but you are allowed to scream.

Only I need to get help dealing with my anger, but you can manage on your own?

PSYCHOLOGISTS AND SOCIAL WORKERS

Social workers and psychologists can sometimes be quite annoying when talking about the need to get help.

Sometimes they have to help find the solutions to the problems that you've created. They talk with us. They have to hear about our feelings and suggest ways that will make us feel better. They encourage us by assuring us that the bad feelings will pass. These are things that you as parents should be doing. But sometimes it seems that you are too busy being angry and hurt and fighting with each other to really have time to talk with us and hear what we are feeling.

Those psychologists talk a lot and ask lots of questions. They like to think that they really understand what I feel. But they can't quite understand how sad and scared I sometimes feel...

but then again, neither do my parents. At least with "shrinks" I can say whatever I want without worrying about hurting their feelings or making them angry.

I also know that sometimes it's good to talk to them about things that I can't discuss with you. They don't need me to be on their side. I don't need to say things to make them happy.

I know that they can help. I know that they don't take sides in the arguments between the two of you. And most important... they tell me that it's OK for me not to take sides. That's good, because taking sides is the last thing I want to do!

Come to think of it, why would anybody in their right mind think that I would want to take sides? How can that possibly be good for me? I want both my parents to love me. I want both my parents to like me. I don't want you to talk about me like you talk about each other. Things are bad enough without someone else being angry at me.

But, come to think of it, all this really isn't my fault. I did not create the problem. I'm not the one who is sometimes out of control. So why do I have to go the therapist?... Maybe someone else should be going??? (Hint, hint)