

A poem written by Elna Trautmann describing her experience as a victim of abuse

Living the lie

This game of Jackal and Hyde
In one moment a perfect gentleman
Bowing down to Church and Christ
Calling on the Holy Spirit's might;
The next his fist draws blood and bruises
This is all your fault, he insists.
Plead for mercy, confess your wrongs
Or I shall kill you, he shouts!

And I confess throughout the night
To anything he wants.
If I am still alive by sunrise I shall leave
I promise myself now over and over deceived
But in the morning I stay
Inexplicably loyal to a dark sided man
I hang on to a sliver of hope
But the crucifix above our bed already fell and
broke.

Shame shrouds this marriage
Our few friends, families, church elders and therapists
Nobody the wiser as we carry our dishonest secret carriage
More and more I grow into a stranger to myself
Where are my honest to God activist days?
How the once courageous outspoken woman strays!
Just month ago I was a professional on public stage
Now I struggle to hold my own in a private prison cage

And yet at my own peril I stay in this game
This is my Christian* obligation I claim
I refuse to consider maybe this my ego at play
Too embarrassed to admit my feet of clay
But I fear the day that he will kill me eventually
And yet the prospect of starting all over again often scares me more
And thus the game of Jackal and Hyde continues
After all he is the perfect gentleman too



Note: * I do not ascribed to any particular Religion. Although I grew up in a Christian home, I embrace The Truth shared by the mystical traditions of all main stream religions. During the time of my abusive marriage, I agreed to practice Christianity on the insistence of my husband who claimed to be a reborn Christian at the time.