

## **FRED FEIRSTEIN**

### **THE BOY WHO WATCHED TELEVISION**

In the case of THE BOY WHO WATCHED TELEVISION, a tall and strong young man repeatedly wanted to strangle me when I opened the door to my office. The symptom constantly repeated itself in action and in symbolic interaction with the outside world. He was an out-of-work actor who wanted to find a day job. But when he prepared to go for an interview, he became highly anxious about pulling up a tie around his neck. When he got to the actual interview, he found himself wanting to strangle the interviewer. In our first session, he described how when a friend working for an actors' agency offered to get him a job in TV, he found himself pushing the friend against a wall and choking him. In the second session he connected this action to memories of being in summer camp and finding that "If a kid looked at me cross-eyed, I'd get him down on the ground and choke him till counselors pulled me off. Then I'd run into the woods and cry and feel overwhelming guilt." As we worked with key metaphorical communications and symbolic re-enactments (for instance, his going to gay movie theaters and wanting to choke his sex partners), we'd recover both the memory and the intense affects of a single repressed trauma.

*Frederick Feirstein is a training analyst and supervisor at NPAP. Feirstein has also published eight books of poems and has had twelve plays produced. He has been a Guggenheim Fellow and a Pulitzer Prize finalist in poetry, his new book being FALLOUT.*