

Kim Palmer's Story



Kim Palmer in October 2000.

The tragic story of Canadian singer-songwriter Kim Palmer, who ended life living in a porcelain trailer in the Arizona desert. Her music about MCS lives on.

Keywords: Kim Palmer, MCS, electrical sensitivity, MCS music, songs from a porcelain trailer, The Dispossessed, alternative treatments, housing

Well as I say, the first third of my life was fun, the second third has been hell; I sure hope the last third is somewhat liveable!

I grew up in a suburb of Toronto, a top-of-the-class student receiving my high school Ontario Scholarship while already on the road playing keyboards and singing with a well known recording act. My childhood, teens and early 20s saw normal health dotted with flus and headaches (which, had I only known then, were due to a food allergy to dairy products! . . .)

In the early 1970s I went to California with one suitcase for a two-week vacation - and never came back. (I loved it and was pursuing a spiritual path there.) After a couple of wonderful years, at the height of my happiness and sense of well being physically, mentally and spiritually, in 1978 I moved into a small, one-room apartment in Orange County.

I have never been the same.

After two years of quickly deteriorating health, a girlfriend, noticing my plants were always dead, said "Kim, you can't be THAT bad of a gardener; you'd better call the gas company!" And sure enough, there had been a slow gas leak the whole time I had lived there, sleeping with the windows shut. I had also bug bombed, freshly painted, was using Malathion on the roses as part of my rent discount (I remember it dripping on my hands and arms through the gloves), could smell the neighbors' pesticides, had pulled up a very moldy carpet after the room flooded, had a gas leak in my car, and the topper, in my opinion, was on a faddish-low-protein-raw-foods-lots-of-juices-lots-of-fasting diet that I believe opened my cells further to the environmental toxins. I would wake up every morning spinning, wondering what was inside me that was so wrong, not knowing the problem was outside.

I quickly became allergic to almost all foods, could barely digest anything, was pale as a ghost, went down to 95 pounds (at 5'7") and then started to become sensitized to all things chemical, losing tolerance for the normal world and always being in a state of reaction, exhaustion, and mental confusion.

This was still the early 70s and no medical professionals yet had a clue about this syndrome. I began a disheartening journey through both the traditional and alternative medical realms, seeking answers and not only receiving none but being disparaged, told it was psychological, and put on treatments that worsened my condition. After five years I figured things out from my own reading and began treatment for candida, allergies, etc., finally definitely receiving benefits though short-lived. I tried everything from desensitization shots in Texas to live cell therapy in Mexico to anti-parasitics in Arizona to cavitation surgeries in Oklahoma to drops in British Columbia to diets and herbs to mega vitamins to hormone therapies to auto-urine therapy to drugs to acupuncture to energetic desensitization to IV's to hypnosis to anti-fungals to homeopathy to energetic medicine to mercury removal to sauna detox to extensive testing to Neuro Peptides to

thyroid to NAET to scar neutralizing . . . to other unmentionable therapies! After ten years of this, moving into places that made me sicker and sicker, and somehow still working/diving for the bed when no one was looking, following a doctor's advice I replaced my mercury fillings with plastic. I was then bedridden for almost three months and became sicker overall, thinking the symptoms were mercury detox as suggested by practitioners, but now suspect the petrochemical leakage from the plastic may have pushed me over the edge. (There is much evidence supporting this for the chemically sensitive today.) I next headed to Austin to experience a clean house in clean air. There I "unmasked", a phenomenon where you reach the baseline of your sensitivities and find out how sensitive you really are.

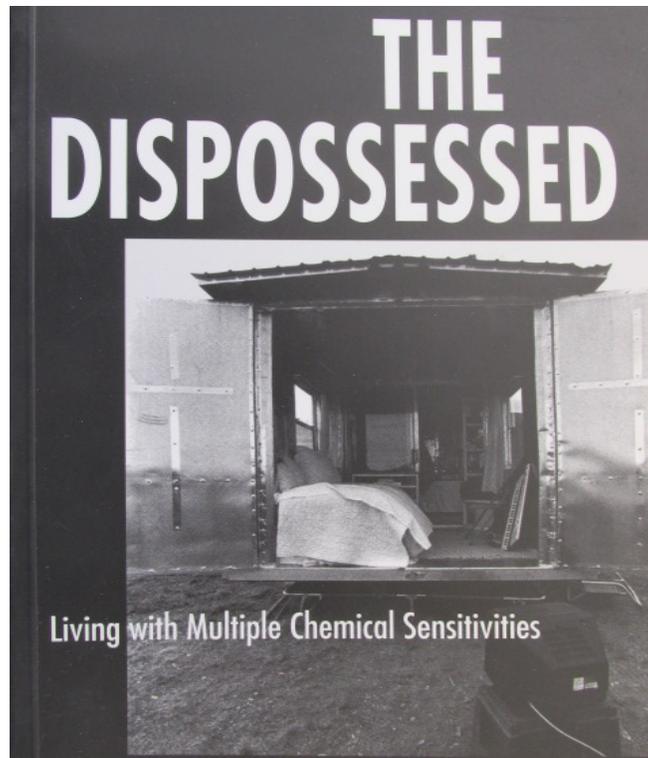
That was ten years ago and I have been completely disabled ever since.

With much help I somehow flew to Austin where a porcelain trailer made for people with MCS was for sale, which saved my life.

After learning how to ground it I seemed to handle it, hallelujah. The idea was to buy it and take it west to escape the very oppressive humidity and mold of Texas, which for me was so flattening I was bed-ridden and in pain there most of the time. But I got stuck there five years, every summer driven West by a friend as I lay in the truck on oxygen searching for a safe place to put my RV, sleeping on a cot in the open (as there is no tent I can tolerate) on California porches, in New Mexico backyards, under Texas canopies and Arizona stars, with already frail health. And every summer for five years we'd come back, totally exhausted, mission failed. Finally, after living outside for five grueling months straight last year, I found a place in the one small desert area I do best in in the whole country (being very limited by my altitude, mold, vegetation, cold, sensitivities, etc.). I have tapped funds and tried homes and treatments for 21 years now. This is my story as I sit here, masked and tired, in a metal box. I don't know how I'll make it, but still will not give up.



Kim Palmer's two trailers on top of an Arizona mesa in 2000. She first lived in the small, home-built steel trailer, which later became her studio. Later she bought the larger porcelain trailer, which was built by Dr. Lattieri.



Kim's first trailer covered the front page of Rhonda Zwillinger's 1999 book The Dispossessed.

Kim passed away October 23, 2006, due to her environmental illness. She lived the last years of her life on top of a mesa in a rural corner of Verde Valley in Arizona. She started out renting a part of someone's land, where she placed her two trailers (as seen in the pictures above). The zoning did not allow people to live in camping trailers, but she had no choice and could not move to a trailer park. Luckily, it was a very rural area and there was no problem for a while. About 2001 a realtor spotted her and complained to the county. Kim appealed to the zoning board. They were willing to hold their hearing in her yard, since she was too sick to go to their regular meeting, but they refused to grant her a variance. Her needs were not as important as the perceived impact on the property values.

Kim purchased the adjacent lot and a used mobile home from a friend she knew never used pesticides or any other bad chemicals. She had the entire interior of the mobile home covered with galvanized steel plates and aluminum foil. It was good enough that she could spend hours inside, but she could not sleep there (people with MCS are more sensitive when sleeping). Instead, she had two MCS roommates who slept in the two bedrooms, while Kim continued to sleep in her porcelain trailer. She was careful not to use any lights in her trailer and lived in fear that someone would again complain. Luckily, it never happened.



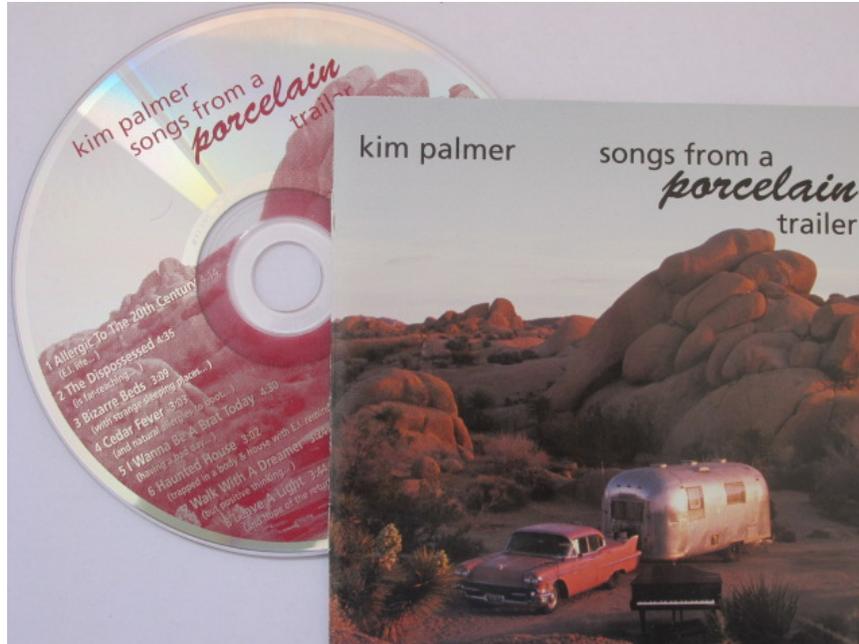
A bedroom in Kim's mobile home. The walls and ceilings were foiled, while the floor was covered with galvanized steel plates. She was never able to sleep here, but others were.

Kim was lightly electrically sensitive (EHS) for several years, in addition to her severe chemical sensitivities (MCS). The last year or so of her life, her EHS became severe as well and she struggled with the electric heat and air conditioning in her trailer.

Too sick to be in a hospital, she received hospice care in her porcelain trailer. It was still a struggle to get the nurses to limit their toxic personal care products.

Kim Palmer's music

Kim recorded multiple albums while living on that mesa, using one of the trailers as her studio. It was equipped with all she needed, including a professional mixer. Here she recorded her 1999 album *Songs from a porcelain trailer* about the difficult life people with MCS have to live. Most of the songs are about herself, except *Cedar Fever*, which is about a friend in Austin.



For more information about Kim Palmer’s music, and for free downloads of the *Songs from a porcelain trailer* album, visit the Kim Palmer Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Kim-Palmer/177085795872>), which is maintained by her friend Les Moore.

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