

AKHÉ

A Journal for Lesbians of African Descent

\$3

October/November 1991 Vol. 3, No. 5



Aché presents **Belinda Sullivan** in:

"FRIGHTNIGHT II: THE HORROR CONTINUES..."

Where is Nicole & Samantha?!
Was Mrs. Carlotti playing with a full deck?!!
Is T.D. dead or alive?!!!

Meet an entire troupe of characters as they come alive through the voice of the teller. Storyteller (birthday girl) Belinda Sullivan takes you on a journey down the dark way... but hell has never been so frighteningly hell-arious! *

* This show is not recommended for children under 8. No flash cameras, please.



❖ THURSDAY will also feature Aché's 2nd Annual "Fright Night" Costume Contest. Prizes will be awarded for the fiercest & most original costumes. Get a \$2 discount at the door with a costume!!
❖

Wed. & Thurs., Oct. 30th & 31st
7:30pm. Tix: \$8 general/\$3 children 12 & under
La Peña Cultural Center
3105 Shattuck Ave., (nr. Ashby) Berkeley



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Aché (pronounced a-chay) is a bi-monthly publication by lesbians of African descent for the benefit of all black women. The journal serves to reflect and celebrate the wide spectrum of our experiences. We are committed to open and critical dialogue about the issues affecting our lives, but Aché will not print anything that is oppressive or demeaning to ourselves as lesbians of African descent. We especially encourage submissions from women who have never been published. The editors will work with all contributors to ensure that the final published text has been mutually agreed upon.

The appearance of names or images in this publication does not indicate the sexual orientation of that person or persons.

The deadline for submissions is the first Monday two months prior to publication. Neatly handwritten, typed materials and 3.5" Macintosh disks using MacWrite or Microsoft Word are accepted. Include name, address, & phone # on all submissions and a biographical statement no longer than 20 words. Please specify if you would not like your full name reproduced in Aché. Please don't submit originals, we do not have the resources to return them.

Subscriptions are \$10-25/yr. (Donations always welcome.) To subscribe, mail your name & address with a check payable to Aché to: P.O. Box 6071, Albany, CA. 94706

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Aché is dedicated to the memory of Pat Parker & all the black women who have passed before us and whose work we continue today. "By using the terminology "lesbians of African descent" we are able to acknowledge women of different shades and hues from every corner of the globe.

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From the Editor

You can't pick strawberries in the winter.

You've got to let the tide go out so it can come back in.

The cycles of our lives are like the earth, like the seasons. And we all need a gentle season sometime. You will be a wild and free blossom when it's your time—but you can't hurry the seasons.

You can only break the cycles when you are willing to stop and take a look deep, deep down inside. No one can reach in and do it for you.

A friend said these things to me in a conversation recently and it occurred to me that her advice applies to the theme of this issue: "Cycles of Life." I had been having a hard time recognizing the difference between stages of life and cycles of life, when one of those cycles, that it seems like you can never shake, came around for me.

Cycles show up as experiences that you have had before. De ja vu. Different faces. Maybe a different city. Certainly different circumstances—but so close that you can smell the rooms and the scenes from before. It is when you wonder if you are a voyeur in your own life or if you have actually consented to participate in these scenes over and over.

I know cycles can be good. You know, the times when we get back in our strides, and we are performing at the height of our creativity or work. When we feel fit and healthy and our relationships sparkle. It is when we feel "right" within ourselves.

I am in one of those cycles that has a way of sneaking up on me. Then when I am in the thick of it, I wonder, why am I still looking at these same four walls? Anyway, we live to learn and eventually to move on.

I am going to try and take a gentle season and sit with myself for a spell. Think about it, maybe you are due for one too.

There are two very important pieces of information I need to share with Aché readers. First, it has been brought to my attention that the Gay & Lesbian Marching Band will be playing in a 1991 Quincentennial event marking Columbus' so-called discovery of America. As an oppressed minority in the U.S., we, as gays and lesbians, should not allow ourselves to be coerced into participating in this bogus



acknowledgement of an historical figure who landed on shores already inhabited by native peoples. He proceeded to put in motion the destruction of native cultures (and in the case of Cuba, the complete annihilation of the native people), the rape of the land, and consequentially, the trans-Atlantic slave trade. I highly recommend a boycott of all events that recognize Columbus as the discoverer of America. (1992 is the official year of the Quincentennial "celebration.") For information about counter-activities in the Bay Area, contact Resistance 500, based at the Intertribal Friendship House in Oakland.

Aché Business:

The journal will be taking a break for the holidays, so there will not be a December/January issue. The next issue is February/March. All submissions are welcome. (Deadline: December 9.)

The February/March issue is the current editorial staff's last publication. Since the organization is in transition—we are beginning to form a board for our expected non-profit status—we aren't sure if the journal will maintain its current structure of nine editors. But anyone interested in becoming a part of the journal committee, please attend a meeting at the Aché office December 14, 1-4 pm. (Committee includes: editorial, production and distribution.)

I want to thank the Aché editors: Blake, Paula, Akiba, Amana, Natalie, Ekuu, Imani, and Winn, for all of their hardwork, diligence and vision so far. The journal keeps getting better. Thanks to Janet who has designed the current lay-out and put in many long hours to get the pages ready for printing. Thanks to Usbet for her role in keeping the journal funded (and lay-out of this issue) and Adalia who has taken on the mailing list and local distribution. (Also, thanks to Dawn, Heather, and Lydia for their help and support.)

I hope to hear from many of you between now and December. Feel free to leave a message for me at the office, (510) 849-2819.

A Letter to the Editors and Readers

This letter is in response to all of you who wrote, visualized, lit candles, cooked kallaloo, danced, sang, worked, and prayed-- sending me light, energy, love, and other contributions by air, sea, phone, moon, wind, and elevator-- during my recent battle with the cancer in my liver. To each one of you I send my heartfelt thanks for the help and support that has been so meaningful to me and to my healing. Although each one of our lives is unalterably our own and each one of us is ultimately responsible for that life, I sometimes feel as if my survival is a corporate effort. We are, each one of us, intricately woven into the others' existence.

It is gratifying to remember that there are still ways available to us by which we can make our most intense desires and good wishes tangibly felt.

In the dim of a hospital room on the east side of Manhattan I felt you, from Dakar, Detroit, Elmira, Sandusky, Oakland, Minneapolis, Boston and Dubuque; from Lubbock, Wolf Creek, Newark, San Diego, Santa Cruz, Grand Rapids and Berlin; from Fredriksted and Peter's Rest, from Portland, Calistoga, Haverhill, Hamtramck, East Paterson and Winona; Stroudsburg, Odesa, Brooklyn, Wakima, Newburgh, St. Johnsbury, Great Neck and Oswego-- as well as all the other places from which messages arrived-- I heard you.

It is deeply reassuring to know the work is being used. "The group we started is still working in our schools," you write. And I know it is your tongue, your muscle, your determination to make what you believe felt, that makes-- not only healing words-- but the vision, also, come alive in classrooms, factories, churches, kitchens, offices. It is your determination to become who you most wish to be that makes us all stronger.

No matter where or how we choose to work, we can inform the product with who we are and with what we truly believe.

This is not a simple time, nor a time for simple words. As a species we have conducted ourselves in such a way that the very air we breathe and the sun which warms us threaten to turn against us. When peoples of the world still spend more per minute on armaments than to feed starving children (yet we are supposed to be at peace,) it is easy to be overwhelmed by the power of the forces aligned against what is most human. It is easy for those of us who are truly open to the state of the world around us to give in to despair. But that is like accepting death as a solution, rather than a stage.

Right now, I know I must continue to fight, and that the battle is worthwhile. That battle did not begin with me nor will it end with me, but what I do, and my piece in it, is essential. If every woman who wished for my well-being takes that passion and energy and love into the struggle for clean air, better schools, decent health care, the right to die, to bear or not bear-- if each one takes it into her daily work for survival and change, then our children's future will be that much more possible. Not guaranteed, but so so much more assured.

For the last 8 years, I have been committed to the use of homeopathic immunosupportive therapy to keep the metastasized breast cancer in my liver under control. When my liver failed in May, I made the decision for chemotherapy. I believe that decision, along with my previous 8 years of immunosupportive treatment, saved my life.

Each one of us within our lives must take whatever is useful and use it for energy and survival, letting the rest go, schooling ourselves through scrutiny to recognize the difference.

Again, I thank you for your light and for your good work.

Audre Lorde
St. Croix, August 20, 1991

Letters to Aché

Dear Aché Sisters:

I love your journal! In 1988, I was in San Francisco and attended one of the film screenings at La Peña of Black women's works. As a Black woman, I was then, and remain, inspired and excited by the work and connecting that you are doing with Black women, whether lesbian, bisexual or straight. I edit a women's publication [ListenReaLoud] in Philadelphia that focuses on struggles of women around the world. I'm enclosing a copy of it with this letter. One thing that I would love to do is a profile of Aché. I think that many women would be inspired by the story of your 2 person beginnings and now expansion to a collective. Both your process and the content of Aché strike me as an example of the cycle of women's personal, community, political, spiritual work feeding in, intertwining, growing. Look forward to talking to you. Warmly,

S. Smith,
Philadelphia



Dear Sisters!

I was visiting a friend who had a newer copy of Aché than I've seen for awhile. I miss the community of black women/ women of color in the Bay Area, and I

live and work with a growing, powerful group of black (European sense people/women of color) women. We have different groups and are working through differences and co-existing.

Please send a year's subscription to my address in Berlin. If you are interested, I could send graphics or tell other black women artists I know here to get in touch. For this reason, if you have back issues of Aché, I could share this better. Some women do not speak English, yet can share their graphic skills. It could be a means of interesting them to learn.

In September, a group of us are planning to complete an exchange with women who came [to Germany] from the Bay Area. The priority is for women who attended the exchange and possibly some Eastern German black women will come. I believe that most of us are lesbian. This summer there will be a Summer Institute in which black women will come from around the world (Asia and Africa as well) to attend. We are working on the program and looking for a good space to show artwork of black women here.

I must leave for work, but I wanted to get this off before I procrastinate and end up in San Francisco. Aché is a powerful reminder and I am grateful, Lisbet,

that you are working with it, with other sisters. Till then, the best.

Zariamma,
Berlin



Dear Aché,

Enclosed is a money order for \$87. I wish to donate this to your organization and any future profit too. The following letter explains how I arrived at my decision to donate profit from tape sales.

Dear Aché Readers,

I want to tell you about an incident that occurred about one year ago at the East Coast Lesbian's Festival after I played my set on the night stage. I have been performing on sidewalks and at festivals across the U.S. a style of musical poetry which up until about two years ago I described as "rap"—I dropped the term for a number of reasons. Anyway, it is a style that is largely influenced by African music/poetry styles.

Firstly, let me tell you the facts. I am a 32-year-old working class white womyn who was born in London but whose cultural roots are predominantly Celtic. I have a small amount of Jewish blood in me too.

At the E.C.L.F. after my set,

a Jamaican womyn of color told me she found my work to be "disgusting" and to constitute "plagiarism." In fact, she felt my stuff was a poor attempt at emulating Lillian Allen, the popular Jamaican dub poet. At the time the criticism occurred, I was shattered and barely able to respond—what I said was "I needed to hear this." I believe that as a white womyn attempting to put out political poetry with an obvious African influence, I need to tread lightly and actively respond to comments and criticisms, particularly from lesbians of color.

This was the first time any criticism from anyone had been directed to me and it caused me to look deep inside at my own racism. After one year, and based on the work I have done examining my conscience and dialoging with some lesbian friends—womyn of color and white womyn—I wish to announce a public apology for what I now see as perpetuating racism in the lesbian community. I now see that some of the work I presented that night is a rip-off of African culture, particularly those pieces that try to emulate Jamaican words and accents. Fortunately not all of the pieces have been recorded on either of my tapes and some songs have been dropped from my set altogether.

I have thought hard about whether or not to continue to sell my tapes at all and to date I have decided to continue to do so but with the following changes: a) That each tape contains a written acknowledgement of the influence of African music and poetry on much of my work; and b) An explanation that any profit derived from the sale of the tape goes to benefit organizations that primarily benefit lesbians of color.

My reasons for continuing to sell the tapes are: 1) The support from some lesbians of color and white womyn to do so; 2) The fact that not all of the content is African influenced; 3) The amount of time and work and heart that went into self-financing the tape that do (whatever their shortcomings) contain sincere messages of unity amongst womyn, rage at patriarchy, and reinforcement of messages of sisterhood.

In spite of the personal pain of the journey of unlearning my racism, and this journey is a life-long one I believe, there have been good things to come from this—not least is a more active exploration of my authentic cultural roots. As a Celt of Scottish descent, musical poetry and chants in oral tradition are truly my cultural heritage and my aptitude for rhythm comes from

here I believe—my mistake was to emulate a sound from a culture that is not my own.

I wish to say that being in an ongoing anti-racism workshop is helping me get to the truths about my racism—I strongly recommend all white womyn do something similar to decontaminate ourselves of the subtle and overt racism in us. Thank you to my friends and supporters. In Sisterhood,

Marilyn T.,
Colorado

Are you having problems getting your Aché in the mail?

Since we began using an outside company to handle our mailing list early this year, we have received numerous complaints from our subscribers about not receiving their Aché's in the mail. If your subscription has been irregular, please contact us and let us know which issues you have missed and your current address and we will adjust your subscription accordingly. Thanks for being patient with us while we sort this out. You can contact us at:

Aché
P.O. Box 6071, Albany, CA 94706

(510) 849-2819

Conference Report

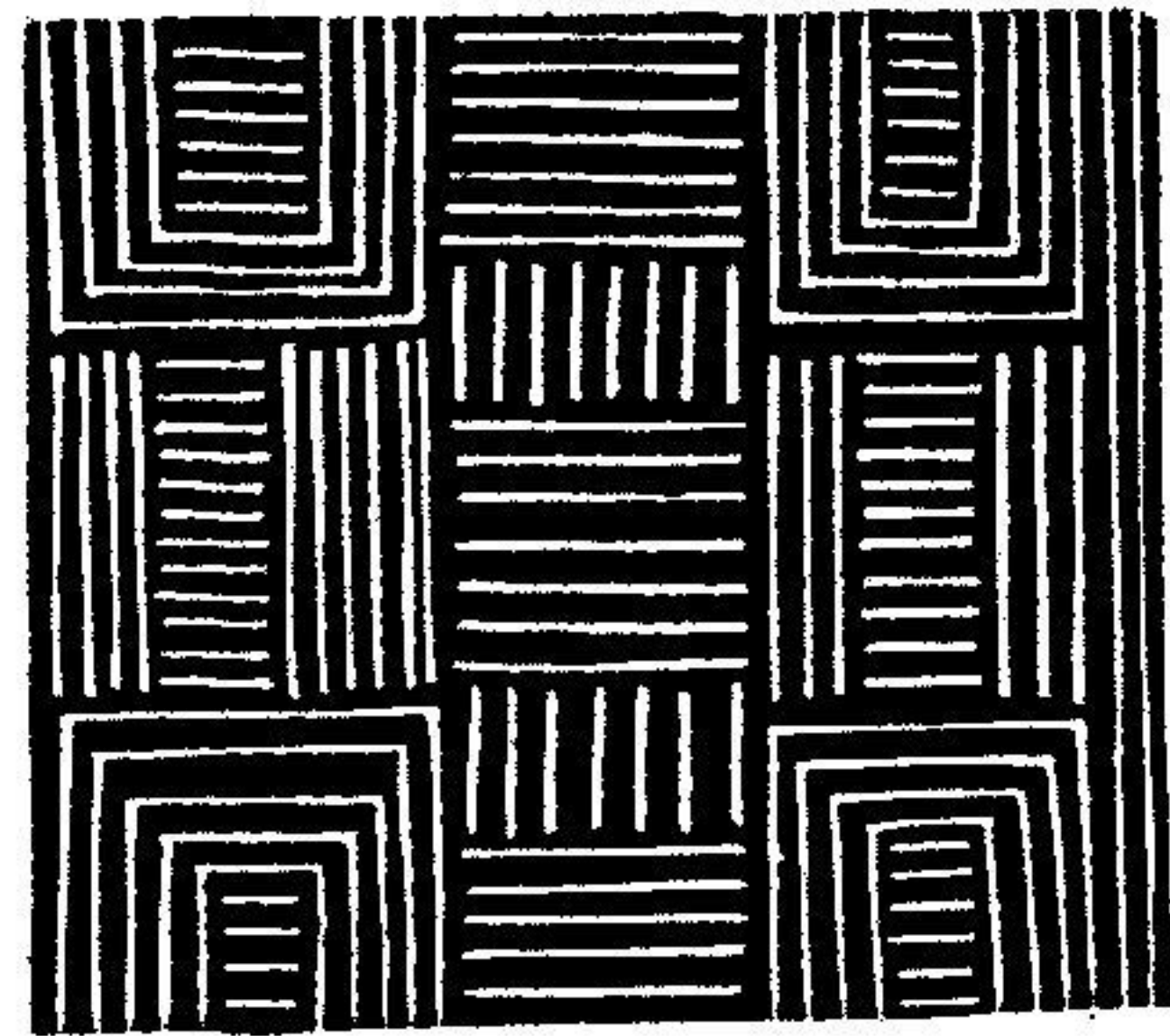
Weaving the Future: 1991 National Black Gay & Lesbian Leadership Conference

by Skye Ward

The brutal effects of the Reagan/Bush era have irrevocably shifted and altered the political psyche of African American lesbian and gay activists. The AIDS epidemic has propelled us into action. And with the onslaught against progress led by Jesse Helms and represented by such racist incidents as the murders in Bensonhurst and Howard Beach and the revival of the posse Comitatus, we are being challenged to develop strategies that address our specific concerns, to borrow from Malcolm X, as "vic-

reformist and radical lesbians and gay men. The conference will bring together over 500 activists from the Bay Area and around the U.S. Our hope is that the conference will meet the strong need to carry back models for power-sharing, coalition-building, and organizing to communities across the nation.

The formation of the UNITY coalition represents an historic development in the evolution of gay and lesbian activism in the black community. Working



African American lesbians and gays are moving out of the servants quarters of the dominant white gay community, relinquishing our roles as racism hostesses at conferences and "politically correct" window-dressing during political campaigns...

tims of America."

To this end, UNITY, a coalition led by Bay Area African American gay and lesbian organizations, has taken on the tremendous task of hosting the Fifth Annual National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Conference, scheduled to take place in Oakland, February 14-17, 1992. Forming the core of the UNITY coalition are local organizations composed of African-identified, inter-racialist, feminist,

in such a coalition from strong autonomous bases will be an integral part of work in the 1990s, but such alliances have not come easily. However, 1992 Leadership Conference co-chair Tolanda McKinney says the tense and at time awkward communication has ultimately led to positive growth within the UNITY coalition. "It's been a struggle in the beginning," McKinney said in a conversation with me last month, "but it has been coming along. I can see that

we have learned to respect each other. We still have bumpy roads and we still have a long way to go. But I think we have started to take those steps together."

There has been a significant rise in black lesbian and gay leadership and community-based organizations in response to the rampant racism in AIDS activism. These newer groups are coming together with others that existed before the AIDS epidemic. African American lesbians and gays are moving out of the servants quarters of the dominant white gay community, relinquishing our roles as racism hostesses at conferences and "politically correct" window-dressing during political campaigns. We are no longer satisfied with being relegated to special task forces, caucuses, and ad hoc committees. The lack of power-sharing by the white-controlled "gay community" has forced us to come together and build and strengthen our own institutions.

This coalescing has allowed us to move out of gender-segregated communities to hear one another as black men and women. As black lesbians we have had to air out dirty laundry in order to confront sexism and misogyny. We have dared to hold court in the white gay press, in feminist literature, and wherever else we could find a forum to interrogate the fragile elements that hold us in false unity with black men. We have also learned that we cannot dictate an agenda for black men who identify as pro-feminist. Oh how strange it was to our collective ear to hear black gay activist Colin Robinson declare femininity (without mocking women) to be a quality belonging to men, too, who seek wholeness in their emerging consciousness! Yet in order for us to come together as a community of black lesbians and gays, both men and women must learn to accept and/or work with new ideas, rather than declaring them invalid or outside of our common agenda.

Gay men who have been immersed in AIDS activism and education are being sensitized to the deplorable state of healthcare for black women, seen especially in the epidemic of breast cancer and the erosion of abortion rights. However, perhaps one of the hardest tasks for some of the more visible gay male AIDS activists, both in the conference organi-

zation process and in general, has been to step aside to allow seasoned lesbian activists to demonstrate leadership styles that are alternatives to "dominance-over" patterns visible in old-fashioned models of hierarchy. As AIDS activist Craig G. Harris has noted, black lesbians have a history of political activism rooted in the tradition of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs founded in 1896, the women's suffrage movement, and the women's liberation-feminist movement that has resulted in a talented pool of strategists, theorists, and astute leaders. In an essay whose title, "Weaving the Future of Black Gender Politics" inspired the theme for the 1992 conference [Weaving the Future: Sisters & Brothers Working Together], Harris wrote: "It cannot go unrecognized that the Black Lesbian community is far more advanced along the process of

UNITY needs you!!!

The following committees need volunteers:

- **Banquet**
- **Housing**
- **Logistics**
- **Registration**
- **Security**
- **Women's Institute**

We also need women deejays to spin for the conference banquet.

For further information, please call Gypsy at (510) 437-2163, from 7:30am-3:30pm; or write to UNITY at:

4430 Telegraph Ave. #25,
Oakland, CA 94609.

creating institutions and building coalitions (than black gay men). Black Gay men, however, are only beginning the process of organizing to combat the oppression we face as Blacks and as Gays. While this autonomous organizing is an essential element of the growth process of the Black Gay male community we must be mindful of the need to be attuned to the issues of Black women, particularly Black Lesbians, and incorporate these issues into our agendas."

Oftentimes we live and work in isolation, and we become estranged from one another. As a result,

The lack of power-sharing by the white-controlled "gay community" has forced us to come together and build and strengthen our own institutions.

"Coming Home" is a theme that has surfaced in our community, illustrating the need to address that estrangement and the need for black gays and lesbians to put *ourselves* at the center of our analysis. The black lesbian and gay communities are coming home to one another. The conference manifesto states the sentiments of the steering committee: "Men and women, both, expressed clearly the importance of sharing responsibility for the emotional work of creating and nurturing family. We must assume responsibility for working through and unloading the baggage that prevents us from being close and loving one another, as black people, as gays and lesbians, as women and men, and the list continues..."

What we are now learning is how to cooperate out of love, respect, and self-determination, not political expediency. As men and women, we are learning to capitalize on our political maturity and to view our gender difference as an asset. Says Audre Lorde: "Difference must be not merely tolerated, but seen as a fund of necessary polarities between which

our creativity can spark like a dialectic."

The conference manifesto also addresses the alienation of black lesbians and gays from the black community as a whole. It states that "the disconnectedness some of us experience in our relationships with non-gay lesbian black people" prompts us to "take another look at whether homophobia prohibits or furthers the cause of unity among all children of the diaspora." Black gays and lesbians are inching toward increased visibility and recognition: We refuse to be seen as "stepchildren" in the larger black community. Always part of the legacy of black radical politics that characterizes the East Bay, black gays and lesbians are now widening our influence in the mainstream.

Indeed, in an April 1991 essay in *Zeta* magazine, bell hooks suggests our [African American] liberation struggle must make room for allies who may not necessarily be black, gay, or "radical"; that we cannot afford a "solidarity" that is "developed along narrow guidelines, with rigid codes that determine who should be included or excluded." "Ultimately," hooks writes, "liberation struggle, whether it be feminist or black or gay, or some combination of the above, must talk about the solidarity that alters and shifts depending on cause and circumstance." The ability and willingness to forge coalitions is essential to our survival.

At the same time, the conference manifesto includes statements on the importance of continuing the legacy of our African ancestors, who built a sense of nation and created strong families despite having been displaced, scattered and enslaved. The conference steering committee has insisted on relying on black leadership and on keeping resources within the black community. "We plan to pull together the strands of knowledge, culture, and creativity from all segments of our community and demonstrate that the fabric of unity is our greatest strength," the manifesto states. Or as McKinney says, "I'm hoping that Black Gays and Lesbians *own* this conference, so that Oakland will become known as the home of proud Black Gays and Lesbians."

WOMEN OF COLOR FROM GERMANY VISIT S.F. BAY AREA

The San Francisco and East Bay lesbian of color communities played host to 13 women of color from Germany who were participating in a two-week cultural exchange. The women, who identified as Afro-German, Turkish, Kurdish, Iranian, Korean, South Asian and Jewish, arrived on September 1st, as part of an exchange that first took place last year when lesbians of color from the states visited Berlin.

A primary component of the exchange was participation in a discussion process called "Walking-the-Map: World Travelling." The week-long discussions were facilitated by MariAna Sierra, who along with Jean Weisinger, arranged the itinerary. Sierra described "Walking-the-Map" as a five-step process that uses the world map as a metaphor for examining one's location in the world geopolitically and interpersonally. "The process," says Sierra, "is used to tackle whatever 'isms' that come from a result of being colonized people." Sierra emphasizes that "a significant aspect of walking-the-map is to do it through playfulness and love."



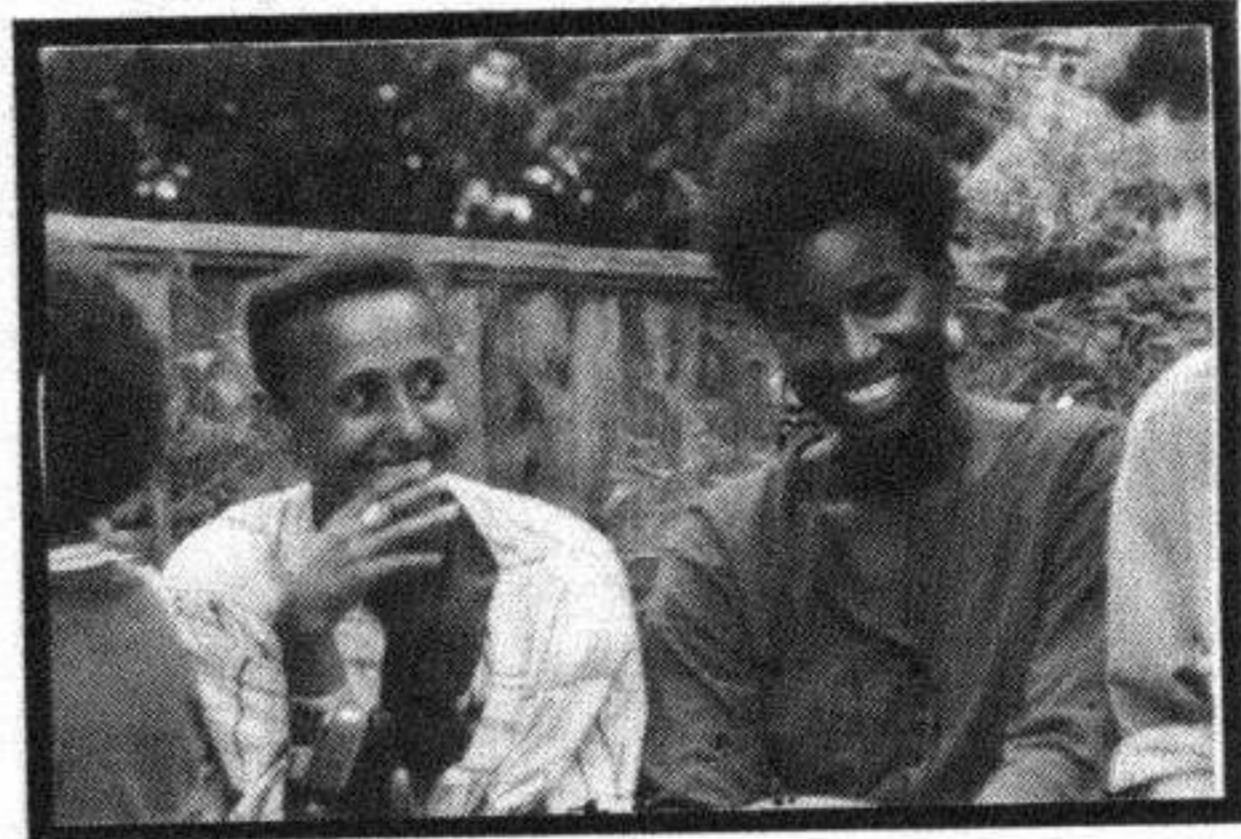
(from left: Sonia, Zariamma, Ajoke from Germany, co-host Sierra, and front, Skye Ward, Aché)

The exchange was a rather ambitious undertaking given limited financial resources, translation difficulties and the other logistical problems of housing 13 women and a 4-year-old boy. Nonetheless, coordinators Sierra and Weisinger, along with the cooperation of individuals from the lesbian of color community, executed a full schedule of events. Highlights of the women's visit included a radio interview on KPFA, various panel discussions, a presentation in Sacramento, attendance at an American Indian Contemporary Arts reception, and visits with grassroots organizers.

At an Aché-sponsored brunch, the women from Germany spoke of

BY SKYE WARD

the alienation they experience as immigrants and German-born women of color. During the discussion, they explained that there are no direct translations or parallel terms for "women of color" or "community of women of color"—the concepts are new and such formal systems of support and identification are virtually non-existent in Germany. Although there are no established women of color



(Ina, from East Germany, and third-generation Afro-German, Abeena)



(exchange participants Yvonne and Yara)

communities, the rising tide of racial violence and fascism directed toward people of color are propelling these women to organize.

Next year a 2nd group of lesbians of color from the states will return to Berlin to continue the dialogue. A few women in the German group are collaborating with photographer Jean Weisinger on a photo-essay that will premiere in San Francisco then tour Berlin and other parts of Germany in 1992.



photographs by Jean Weisinger

Dankeschön!!

A special note of thanks and appreciation goes out to all the women who donated their labor and talent. And especially to all the sistahs who so graciously helped with housing, transportation, child-care, etc.

Thank you Adalia, Lisbet, Geneva, Ana, Happy, Diane, Osa, Terri, Angel, Mitzl and others...

"Simon Says"

by Stephanie Smith

Al Green and I were commuting buddies. His music was the only way to make my journey through the tunnel of hell bearable. Since both subways and headphones give me headaches, I chose the most enjoyable route to my daily migraine. I popped the Reverend into my tape player, shoved myself into a seat that was clearly designed for the smaller-butted folks of Tokyo, and attempted to chill. It would be a long ride into Brooklyn.

Halfway through "Let's Stay Together," the doors opened and I was treated to a sinus-clearing whiff of mid-May Times Square subway funk. One sniff was enough for me to realize that, if it was already this rank in May, then we were in for one seriously heinous, funky summer. After what felt like weeks, the doors mercifully closed.

My nasal nightmares gripped me through the next station, where they gave way to my perpetually raging hormones. I stopped holding my nose just as we pulled into Penn Station, only to look up into the huge brown eyes of the dreadlocked momma of my dreams. Yes, Nefer-titti's long-lost daughter had just appeared on my #3 train to Brooklyn. I was flustered. Reverend Al was wailing, "You Ought to Be with Me." It was all I could do to keep from slipping the headphones over girlfriend's head and asking her if she would join me for a game of "Simon Says": Simon says sit right down and talk to me....Simon says let me suck on that juicy bottom lip....Simon says take off those Malcolm X glasses so I can see those foot-long eyelashes....Simon says tell me where you got all that booty. You

know, the usual way us kids play "Simon Says."

Turns out I was staring so hard, girlfriend was blushing magenta. I quickly turned my attention to her shoes. Big, black Ralph Kramden specials. I was scared of her. One quick stop and she would surely squash my petite little work pumps. Oh well, I always did like 'em butch. I was trying not to stare, but I was having a hard time feigning interest in the rest of the folks on the train. It was just after the evening rush, so the train was crowded, but navigable. Looking around the car, I noticed the usual assorted nuts, plus a few B-Boys, bohemians, and business folk. Nothing to hold my attention.

Approaching Fourteenth Street, my eyes wandered back to the diva. I was taken aback by her pour-to-fit Levi's. Never before had a pair of jeans molded themselves with such precision. Setting aside my ever-increasing lust, I turned my attention to the masses getting on and off the train. It occurred to me that if I did not act fast, I might lose my diva to the next available booty-squishing seat. I decided to go for it. Al Green started into "Call Me." I chanced a look up at my goddess, who was now engaged in the mortal act of reading a subway advertisement. She appeared to be engrossed in a new proctologist's ad for laser surgery. The ad listed a toll free number to call for assistance with anal warts: 1-800-MD-Tusch. As she snickered, I caught her eye. We shared a smile. It was then that I noticed the kente cloth she had stylishly wrapped around her baby dreads.

Stephanie Smith is a Black/Jewish lesbian currently writing a semi-autobiographical novel, Mixed Nuts, about growing up in an interracial family in the Midwest. Stephanie is still searching for the dreadlocked momma of her dreams during the three minutes a day when she is not on the phone.

It must have taken an hour to make that cloth look so effortlessly placed. I knew right then that I would not be using my Kunta Kente joke as a conversation starter.

Still obsessing over my opening line, I noticed that we were stopped at Chambers Street. As the doors began to close, a brown, liver-spotted hand reached in and managed to hold one door open. A face quickly appeared in the space created by the deceptively strong hand. It was a jowly face, belonging to a septuagenarian with wrinkles like little canals. The woman looked right at my diva. In a rheumy voice she asked, "¿Oye, este tren va para Flatbush?"

To which the dreadlocked momma responded, "Si, senora. Pasale," and pulled open the other door to allow the woman to enter.

"Gracias," said the vieja.

"De nada," replied my diva.

Well, I was hooked. Not only was she super-fine, but she spoke Spanish and was kind to old ladies. The conductor pitched a fit over the scratchy loud-speaker, and we were off.

The music began again. The Reverend moved on to "Let's Get Married," which I took as portentous. The title prompted a daydream about the cute little dreadlocked babies we would have, the diva and I. All decked out in kente, with names like Kuumba and Ujamaa. I saw them teaching their little classmates about Kwanza and the Motherland. Our little Afrocentric offspring would make us so proud I was becoming more smitten

by the second.

Jolted back to reality by the click of the tape ending, I popped open the Walkman and flipped over Reverend Al. Before starting the tape, I stole a look up at my mocha colored goddess. She returned my glance with an amused smile. Her sweet, gap-toothed smile gave me the courage to speak the words that had been caught in my throat since midtown. "Hi," I said.

"Hi, back," she said.

My jaw dropped. In a rich, throaty tenor, she had just spoken my line! Whenever anyone says, "Hi" to me, I always say, "Hi, back." That settled it. How can you argue with destiny?

My heart aflutter, I turned on side two of the tape. Al Green was now screeching, "I'm So Tired of Being Alone." With me, he was preaching to the choir. I was truly tired of being alone. Sitting there all slack-jawed and goofy-eyed, I found the noise of the tunnel a great excuse for my inability to produce a charming pick-up line. After all, I could barely hear the music over the din of the subway; I certainly could not be expected to be creative.

Another stop. Clark Street. Damn, we were already in Brooklyn and all I had managed to say to this fine woman was a meek "Hi." What a sad-sack dyke I was, unable to pick up a sister on a long train ride to Brooklyn. Might as well turn in my copy of *Serious Pleasure*—my leather jacket, too. Looks like I wouldn't even know what to do with a fine woman if she jumped up and bit me on the behind.

I was still berating myself as the train pulled into Borough Hall. My stop. My bottom lip now dragging the ground, I rose and clicked off Reverend Al, mid-scream. I would need my ears for the long, sad walk home. "Excuse me," I mumbled. She nodded and stepped aside. But then, she turned and faced the doors. Her stop. Yeah!

I felt her behind me the whole way out of the station. I peeked over my shoulder a few times just to make sure she was not going to transfer to another train. My luck held, as she came through the turnstile and headed above ground. I emerged from the station to find downtown Brooklyn only slightly less rancid and humid than the subway had been. I was not amused. As my clothes began sticking to me, I realized I was still in full work drag. All the way down to my itchy pantyhose. No wonder I couldn't think of anything to say to the diva! Pantyhose cut off the circulation to your crotch.

Everyone knows you can't pick up women if there is no circulation in your crotch. Feeling vindicated, I turned towards home.

The walk was making it easier to think. I consoled myself with the idea of trying to find the goddess later on. Surely next time, I thought, I will be wearing my urban dyke guerilla leather or more appropriate attire. But, as I turned down Joralemon Street, I saw that she was still right behind me. I slowed my pace. The sound of her Ralph Kramden's grew closer. In an instant, there we were, side by side. I mentally recommitted to the religion of my youth.

"Hi," she said.

"Hi, back," I replied. My turn to blush. Then, supremely confident, I asked her her name. Now, given her appearance, nose rings and all, I fully expected her to say Shaka Zulu or, at least, Keisha.

"Liz," she said.

"Liz?" I said, stifling a chuckle. "I'm Rebecca," I said quickly and stopped to extend by hand.

Liz, I thought to myself. The dreadlocked diva of my dreams is named Liz. Regaining my composure, I looked right into those huge brown eyes and said, "So, tell me, Liz. Ever play 'Simon Says?'"

Hunger

by Stephanie Smith

I shiver from fear
my desire for you
leaves me unprotected
vulnerable to wind
to chill to you

I crave you or
the idea of you
cannot discern which is
stronger never been there
though its texture is known
to my tongue

On the screen of my
inner eyelids you appear
in that space I have
made fierce love to you
a thousand times and
you to me more
yet I have not kissed you

Never had you
as I want you
soft wet hard on me
in me stroking
licking tasting sucking
want you ass-up on all fours
pleading with your strong loins
for my stroke

I am scared of you
or of my passion
for you
cannot discern which is
stronger I know your body
solid firm
belied by a tactile softness
giving in to my touch
but never to my
desire

LJMERANCE

by Darlene Angela

imagine this familiar beginning...

you catch her watching you. she catches you watching her. you invite her to a movie. you can't keep your hands off her. you call her daily, sometimes three times daily. she gives you cards, flowers, erotic messages on your answering machine explicitly stating what she'd like to do to your luscious body. then, she does it. and you're an item.

the two of you are in new lover's bliss. looking into each other's eyes, spending hours in bed, eating meals together. going grocery shopping, doing laundry together. taking her to meet your family. you can't meet hers because they no longer speak to her. she can do no wrong in your eyes. telling your friends you get along so well. you think you've found your

am I ready
to love
this much?

perfect match. you're in love. you make promises of always and forever, of being committed to making this good thing last. she promises to always be there for you, to never let you feel loneliness again. and then...

you begin to notice she never washes her hair out of the sink or bathtub. she always leaves lights on when she's not in the room. (Doesn't she believe in conserving energy?) you don't like the way she spends so much time studying and has to squeeze you into her busy schedule. she tells you that you must be friendly with her work-friends (who don't even know she's a dyke). she demands that you put her first—or else. she complains that you keep starting fights over the smallest things. you begin to wonder why she is trying to change you now. she begins to wonder whether you are the same person she fell in love with.

"what is happening?" you keep thinking. you've just had the three most wonderful months of your life.

"why does it have to end now? what is happening?" she keeps thinking. she's just had the three most wonderful months of her life. why does it have to end now?

why does it have to end now? because we have moved beyond the first three months of a new relationship into the

tumultuous period inherent in months four thru six. sound familiar? at this time, the early feelings of infatuation, lust, and beginning love get mixed in with the reality of who this person is that makes our blood boil and our hearts pound. the end result is a tapestry of wonderful times interwoven with times of conflict, argument, and i-can't-believe-she's-like-this. what is happening is simple: we are getting to know each other. we realize that our lover does get on our nerves, that she is not perfect, that we do know how to disagree and even argue, and that being in love and committed to love is one thing in month one and another thing in month four.

in month one, everything is new. fresh. exciting. and unknown. by month four, the newness is a bit more dim and the exciting gives way to the routine. by this time, the unknown becomes known. it is this knowledge that is crucial, because it is filled with all of the realities, possibilities, and truths of the relationship. it is this knowledge that makes us decide if we are really willing to do the work to accept the challenge in order to make our relationship a healthy one. does she get on my nerves so much that i do not want to spend all of my life with her? can i imagine spending years struggling with a woman who will never put me first in her life? am i ready to love this much? in month four, important questions arise and, hopefully, get answered.

too often, what happens during the four-thru-six-month period is that we,

overwhelmed with all of the new knowledge we have been filtering, decide "this is not the relationship i want. at this time. or ever. my lover is not the woman i thought she was. this is not the relationship i am willing to spend the energy necessary to do the work to sustain it. i am not emotionally ready to love once the knowledge sets in: i am better equipped to love when the love is new and exciting." so, the relationship ends.

still sound familiar? keep listening. what we feel in the first few months of a new relationship is real. it is pleasurable and fun and refreshing. it is full of hope and potential. but, is this truly the time to speak of an undying love? of marriage and children? of a life together with a lover we do not yet really know—intellectually, emotionally, and, yes girls, even sexually—as we face the uncertainties of life?

what is the moral of this story? why not wait to make promises of love, struggle, and commitment to a relationship until after we pass through the first months of new loving and knowledge. maybe then, there will be fewer misunderstandings, fewer broken hearts, and fewer false hopes.

DARLENE ANGELA: I am my mother's fourth daughter: a 24-year-old native Californian African American Libra lesbian. I am on a quest to speak and write my truths, to discover and accept the beauty in my universe, and to bring lots of laughter into my life.

Features



CONSIDERING PREGNANCY

by Natalie Devora

For years I have wanted to be a mother. I have wanted to experience the entire process: conception, pregnancy (complete with all its wonders), labor, birth and childrearing. I have longed to feel life growing within me, experiencing the wondrous changes of my unborn child as I go through my daily rituals. I have wanted to feel my feet and ankles swell and my back ache. I have wanted it all. I have dreamed of looking into the precious little face of my child and offering trust and unconditional love with the promise that I would meet its needs and then see him/her mirror that love.

Now at nearly 30 this desire and dream of longed for motherhood is becoming a reality. Currently, I am actively inseminating or trying to become pregnant. My priorities have shifted. No longer am I concerned with cooking a gourmet meal or when I'll go dancing next. Now I am obsessed with ovulation charts, thermometers and cervical mucus. My focus is on how long my menstrual cycles are (the number of days between two menstrual periods). This helps me estimate the best time to test my urine to predict ovula-

tion, so that my schedule and that of my lover and donor can coincide for the insemination. I never imagined that getting pregnant would be so much work. More than anything we, my co-parent, her lover, my lover (who has chosen not to be the primary co-parent) and our donor have learned to laugh at all the juggling that is being done to facilitate the act of life.

This past spring I and the woman who will be co-parenting with me and my lover all attended a series of panel information seminars for gay men and lesbians choosing children. Sponsored by The Lyon Martin Parenting Project in San Francisco, these panels were designed to disseminate as much information and present as many different views and options as possible for those interested in parenting. Topics included: options in pregnancy, adoption, foster care, legal issues to consider, such as how to create contracts with known donors, in cases of co-adoption, or parental contracts with a co-parent. Two evenings of the panels consisted of gay and lesbian parents who shared their stories.

I found these panels informative, interesting and quite helpful. I recommend the series highly to anyone considering bringing a child into her life. Cynthia Underhill, director of The Parenting Project, will offer the "Choosing Children" series again later this year.

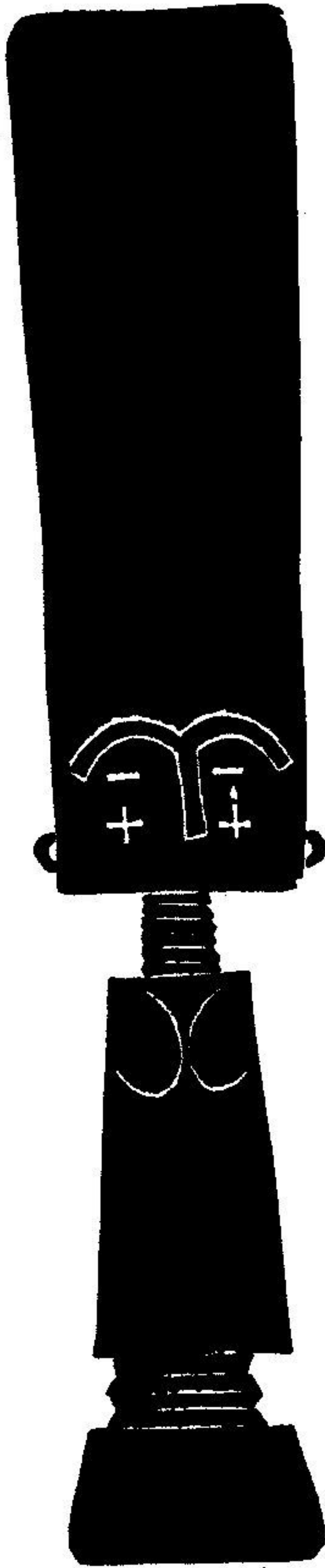
Finding a donor can possibly be the most frustrating and potentially charged process a lesbian may go through. One must choose between asking a friend, using a known donor or going through a sperm bank, thereby using an unknown donor. The decision is individual. What might work for one person will not meet the needs of another person. I chose a known donor because he was both willing to assist me without ego involvement, and I felt he would be a good role model as a black man in my child's life. Whether you decide to use a known or unknown donor, you should know all the facts and consider the possible later repercussions of your choice. Ultimately, all children want to know who their father is, where he is, and why we, as their mothers, chose to do things the way we did. One final thing here, it is important that we respect a woman's right to privacy and to make whatever decisions she sees fit when choosing a father/donor for her child or children. She may not want to discuss the details with anyone other than close friends or family. It is not for us as individuals or a community to judge or cross someone else's boundaries because of our curiosity.

There are two sperm banks located in the Bay Area. The Sperm Bank of California is located in Oakland and Pacific Women's Health Services is located in San Francisco. Both banks offer a multitude of services ranging from complete diagnostic tests for donors and recipients, fertility awareness classes, semen analy-

sis, individual semen freezing and storage, and shipping frozen sperm nationally. Both provide technical assistance for self-inseminations and in-office inseminations. Pacific Women's Health Services, directed by Sherron Mills, also provides inseminations using fresh semen. Each of these sperm banks state that they have a wide ethnic selection. Yet there are very few black donors. These organizations will be happy to send an informational packet upon request.

I can safely say that I have read as much as I can get my hands on about how to get pregnant, lesbian mothers, children of lesbian mothers and legal contracts. There are several books on fertility available. The two that I have found most helpful are *The Fertility Awareness Workbook* by Barbara Kass-Annese, R.N., C.N.P. and Hal Danzer, M.D. and *Your Fertility Signals, Using Them to Achieve or Avoid Pregnancy* by Merryl Winstein. Both books are written in plain English for better understanding. Though directed toward a heterosexual audience, I found that any woman utilizing these books could benefit from the information about fertility.

There have been several books published in recent years, primarily anthologies, about lesbian mothers, their children and their families. As there are far too many to discuss here, I shall mention the two that are most relevant. (For a listing of these books please see the bibliography at the end of this article.) *Considering Parenthood*, written by Cheri Pies, has been one of the principle books published by and for lesbians wanting to explore their feelings about parenting. The book has sections on why or why not to parent, exploring feelings about a child's gender, money issues, and the actual how to's of getting pregnant—from



Fani wooden fertility figure, Ghana

finding a donor to going the sperm bank route. There are exercises at the end of each section for reflection and discussion. I found the section on money most helpful, because I was forced to examine how I currently distribute my money and how that would have to change with the addition of a child. Overall, *Considering Parenthood* is a good place to start reading. Most will find that they want more detailed information after reading this book.

Different Mothers, edited by Louise Rifkin, is a fantastic new book containing personal stories by children with lesbian parents. The ages of the children range from five-years-old to mid-thirties. Their truths are filled with pain and wonder, love for their mothers, and frustration about the uniqueness of their families. Just as no one can really ever tell anyone else what it is really like being a parent or what mistakes to avoid, the words between the pages of *Different Mothers* give greater insight into what life can be like for our children.

Since I have made the decision to birth and raise a child within the family that I have so carefully created, I have been feeling both excited and fearful. Excited because something that I have so clearly wanted for many years is manifesting itself; I will have the opportunity to give someone the kind of love I give to the children I work with daily. I am fearful because I know that when I least expect it, the voice of my mother will come blasting out of my mouth—saying something absolutely dreadful. Nevertheless, I move forward in this process, learning as I go along, creating new rituals and rites of passage while maintaining parts of my childhood history I wish to pass on. At any rate, I am just beginning.

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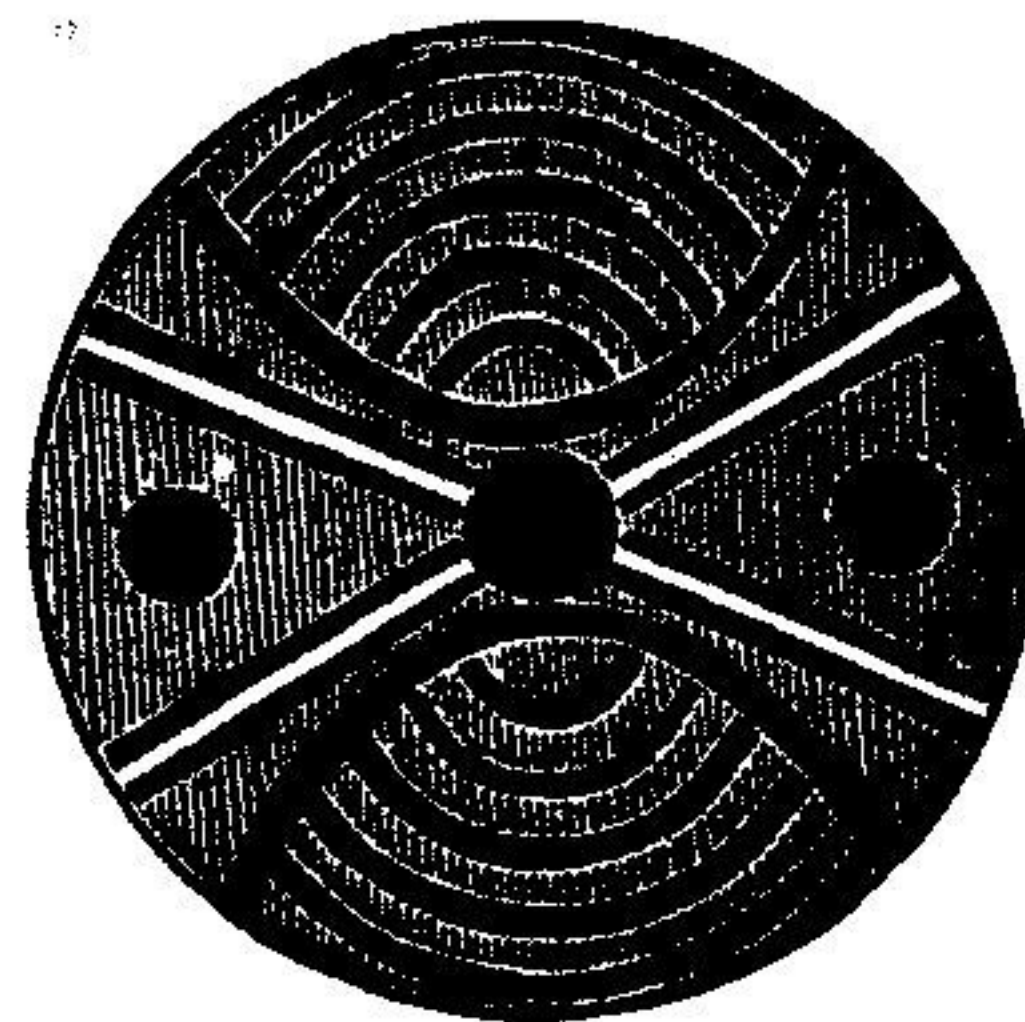
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Is it Time for Gays to Leave Mainstream Churches?

by Sandra Robinson

It is time for lesbian and gay people of faith to intensify our commitment to changing life-denying attitudes. A consistent truth about lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transvestites and transgender people is that where there are gatherings of people, we are there. Some of us recognize and accept our sexuality, others do not. Some of us choose to be open about our sexuality, others do not. Some of us, facetiously, look forward to that "Great Coming Out Day" when we will all reveal ourselves at once so that the world will be amazed at our numbers. Some of us believe that if lesbians and gays would leave at the same time, denominational church structures would collapse. Realistically, we must face what it means to our spirituality that many sexually closeted and open people have central roles in mainstream churches, synagogues, and temples.

Whether to stay or leave is a critical, individual journey as is the decision to be open or closeted. Those who stay must ultimately decide why they are staying and be certain that they are staying for the right reasons. Can we actively participate, adding our experience to the life of our faith community? If we stay, how do we stay—open or closeted? For people of faith, counting the cost and paying the price undergird spiritual commitment. For people of faith, fear can never be a healthy justification for remaining in the closet.



It is said in some quarters of the lesbian and gay religious community that to come out is a death-dealing event. What should set communities of faith apart from secular society is their ability to live the strength of their spiritual convictions even in the face of danger. Many of us have come out—and survived to learn that to stay closeted as a result of living in fear is life-denying. For those who stay in the mainstream out of love for the church, it is critical to find ways to bring about change where the killing effects of homophobia thrive. Kittredge Cherry, ecumenical field director of UFMCC, accurately asserts, "The time has come for every lesbian and gay man to recalculate the costs of staying in churches that continue to deny our full humanity versus the benefits of leaving to join or create sex-positive and life-affirming communities of faith."

Some of us leave mainstream churches in brokenness, pain, and anger. So often the thought is, God loves me, the church does not, so to hell with the church! Among these are people of color and women, who suffer doubly from more intense homophobic ethics and misogyny within their church communities. Leaving in anger without healthy grieving, a healing process, and a supportive community is destructive to our self-esteem and spiritual health. It leaves us in isolation and prevents recognition and expression of our particular contributions to the

church. It no longer has to be this way. This is a time of spiritual renaissance among gay and lesbian people worldwide. Those who choose to leave can continue their commitment to bringing about change by aligning with the churches, groups, or organizations that do recognize the truth of our existence. It is imperative that we see that our effort at confronting homophobia in religious communities is working. Most mainstream churches are finally discussing human sexuality.

Facing the truths of human sexuality will force the church to engage other terrifying issues. If homosexuality is acknowledged as a human norm, the church has prescribed an untruth for thousands of years. If Scripture has been badly interpreted on this issue, what else is badly interpreted? For centuries some churches used Scripture to justify slavery, citing passages such as the story of Ham in the book of Genesis and claiming that God cursed Ham (who was presumed to be black) and all of Ham's descendants. Most churches and theologians today find this interpretation of Scripture abhorrent and untrue. Actually, Noah cursed Canaan (without reference to color) after a drunken stupor.

Every prophet in Hebrew scripture (not to mention Jesus in the New Testament) grew hoarse proclaiming that God's most urgent concern is human justice and righteousness. What if the church must finally recognize that hypocrisy is the true sin of Sodom and Gomorrah—a sin that invades every aspect of church life? The church is so terrified that it

will continue in last-gasp measures to protect tradition in the face of human realities—measures that include encouraging and forcing lesbian and gay people to form their own churches (this is similar to the history of black churches) and separate-but-equal tactics that allow membership but deny baptism, the Eucharist, and church office to known homosexuals. (Will the church next set an arbitrary age at which young people stop receiving the Eucharist or be forbidden from baptism because they might be gay?)

Diversity is natural to lesbian and gay culture. This makes us a kind of reconciliation phenomenon. Who else can speak the truth of our existence to a broken world that will only improve once homophobic life-denying chains are broken?

The irony is that chain breaking will create a chain reaction of also breaking the sins of sexism, racism, and classism—herein lies the greatest fear of life-denying traditional churches.

*Rev. Sandra Robinson is the Dean of Samaritan College, the educational institution of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (UFMCC). From 1984 to 1990, Robinson coordinated the dialogue between the UFMCC and the National Council of Churches of Christ and World Council of Churches. She directed UFMCC's Department of People of Color from 1986 to 1989. She is a contributor to the forthcoming anthology *Amazing Grace: Stories of Lesbian and Gay Faith*.*

Who Am I...Really?

by Akiba Tiamaya



carved wooded figure from the Congo

I am a human— a two-legged— a Black, Two Spirited Woman. A woman of many ancestors and many life times. Like an intricately woven blanket, of a million threads, of different lengths and widths—a mosaic of colors— my lives, selves and relations have brought to me an unbounded array of experiences.

Today, I feel those life times coming together making me more whole. This experience of myself is one of deep awakening and a larger acceptance of myself as a spiritual being. I have been on this journey throughout my life, constantly being nudged by a quiet but ever present force— a warmth, a love, a truth, and a knowin. Many times I have come to station-points/crossroads where I've been required to make grave choices, where I've had to strain to see my path, and each time the silent voice said go forward—you will survive— I am with you.

Four and 1/2 years ago, in June, I found myself on top of a mountain in upstate New York, on a Vision Quest, when one such voice spoke to me of a very sacred ceremony called Sundance: a ceremony given to the Lakota Sioux people by Buffalo Calf Woman. I was told that I was a Sundancer and to go dance. Later, when I spoke to the medicine man about my vision, he asked me if I was ready to dance. I asked, "What is a Sundancer?" He replied that a Sundancer is someone who prays for the people. People Sundance for the continuation of life.

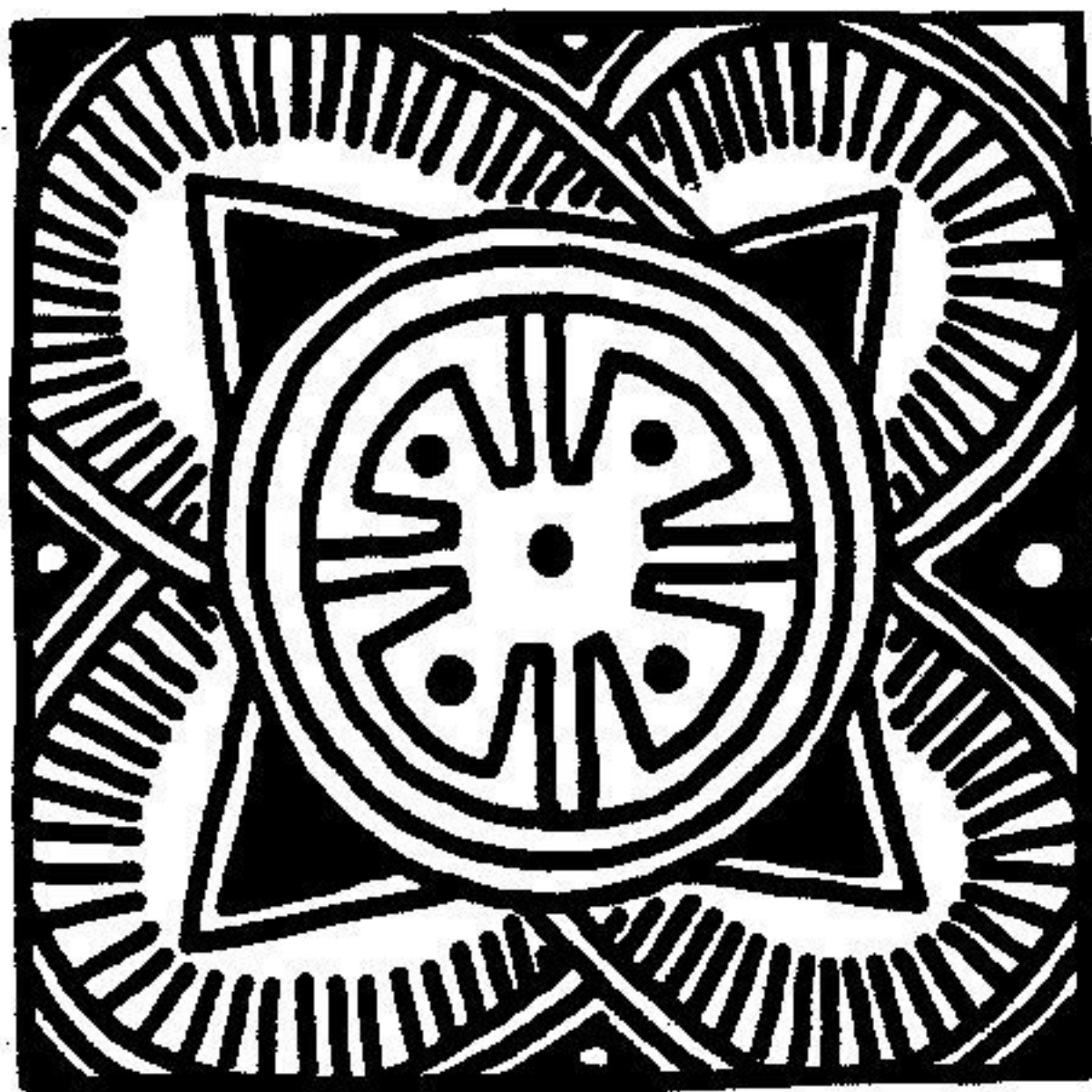
Although I recognized this to be both a great honor and a gift from Great Spirit, I was afraid—wondering if I was worthy. Afraid because I was looking through fragmented eyes at fragmented experiences. For, although, I was seeing myself as a Black woman of African and Native American ancestry, I was wondering if I would be abandoning my Africanness—not realizing that they were all so alive and connected within me. Not quite understanding that the very essence of that connection was Spirit.

But...I stepped onto the path, because by then I had begun to know that this voice of silence was the only real voice that I could trust.

For three intense and challenging years, the Orisha would prepare and send me to this sacred Dance in Arizona. For three

years, Grandmother and Grandfather would call me into this sacred circle of womin, to take my place in this Ceremony—purify for four days and then dance in prayer for four more days inside the Arbor.

This year I completed my fourth year. It was my year to wear red, to dance with Chango, my heart; Oya, my



Bambara design printed on cloth by the discharge method

mother; and Elegba, my path. July 28, 1991, was the completion of the sacred cycle of my pledge. This year when Grandmother and Grandfather called me onto the land, I was chosen to lead the other dancers in ceremony—to hold the form inside the Arbor. Still looking through somewhat fragmented eyes, I was afraid. Once again that VOICE of silence said I am with you. I will lead you in this dance. With many, many blessings, I completed my fourth year. My heart was wide open and my prayer/my dance was love. Spirit held

the form.

This story has been but a tiny fragment of my journey in awakening to spirit. The journey itself has been the greatest challenge of my life, in fact it is my life. Along with that there has been the constant need to share with others about my journey. To be able to talk with family, friends and loved ones about my experience of Spirit in the same way I would speak of my best friend—that has often been very hard.

So many of us have felt it necessary to keep our Spirituality in the closet—often afraid of being judged weird or different. Being Black, Womn, and Two Spirited/Lesbian is enough difference. Besides Spirituality is so subjective, so sacred and feels so intimate. I've also noticed that sometimes there seems to be what we term "contradictions" between ourself and our idea of "spiritual" that live inside us, so if we keep it in no one will know, but often if we don't let it out, we won't know either.

There is a Spiritual revolution occurring on this planet and so far we haven't even been able to really talk about what Spirituality is—to define it for ourselves, to bring it home, make it personal. Womn are the ones leading this revolution and we Womn of Color definitely have a HUGE role—as always we have big work to do.

I know it's going to take a lot—first to really come out, and secondly to honor and respect all of our paths, but I look forward to that day and I really believe that behind that door is where the path to real healing and balance lie.

MANTRA

by Blake C. Aarens

I am intense, I am in need, I am in pain, I am in love.

I am intense.

I don't know how to do anything half way,
and I ain't interested in learning.

I eat,
until my belly is full.

Cry,
'til my eyes are swollen and tender.

Laugh,
until my mouth hurts from smiling,
and my sides ache.

Love,
'til my heart is full to overflowing.

Fuck,
'til my cunt is sore,
and I walk bow-legged for days afterward.

As I said: I am intense.

I am in need.

I wanna fly.

But first,

I need to give up the shit that's holding me down.

I need to let go.

Let go of the scraps of love
even though

there's no new, whole love
ready to replace it.

I need to let go.

Let go of my safe source of income,
and have faith,

that my heart's true work
can support me.

I need to let go.

Let go of the vision
of the woman I hope to become

and be

the woman I am.

As I said: I am in need.

I am in pain.

And this pain is mine.
I have earned it.
So don't try to soothe me before I'm ready.
Tell me to dry my eyes,
blow my nose,
pull yourself together, girl.
Because I will sit
with these feelings.
Let this water flow.
'Cause I don't want to have to learn these lessons
by fire next time.

As I said: I am in pain.

I am in love.

With so many women.
And every one of them resides within me.
The helpless infant,
sucking at her mama's breast.
The toddler,
taking her first shaky steps,
exploring her world.
The 12-year-old girl child.
Hands on her hips, her face bright,
and open.
The teenager,
her body swelling into curves both frightening
and exhilarating.
From these,
I come to the woman you see before you.
And I love her.
Fiercely.
For in loving her,
I learn to love you.

As I said: I am in love.

I am intense, I am in need, I am in pain, I am in love.
I am alive.



Tell Mama

abandonment, anger, resentment, despair to powerlessness. These feelings may have you on an emotional roller coaster and this can be very confusing and scary. Again, get help! It is available. A trained and aware person can help you sort out your feelings. Remember that both of you are vulnerable. Take care of your hearts. Walk with much tenderness, sensitivity and love. Good luck.

Q: My girlfriend is uncovering some incest in her past. She doesn't want to have anything to do with sex, including kissing and hugging. Even talking about sex sets her off. What should I do?

Frustrated

Dear Frustrated,

Get help!!! Neither you nor your girlfriend have to weather this alone. Your local rape crisis center may prove to be a valuable resource. Most crisis phone lines are anonymous, accessible 24 hours daily and provide non-threatening counseling. Local women's bookstores and major bookstores in most cities have books and information on this subject.

Recovering from sexual abuse can be a long and hard process. It is important you know and understand your level of commitment to this relationship. Your girlfriend needs your patience, understanding and to feel safe and secure. Are you able to provide this as her partner? This may be difficult and complicated for both of you; your needs are changing and may present themselves differently in the relationship. Your girlfriend's process of unblocking her incest may have stimulated feelings and emotions in you that run the gamut from shame,

Q: My girlfriend and I tried using Dental Dams and we can't get any "good" feeling? What are we doing wrong?

Sad but Safe

Dear Safe,

Practice makes perfect, but here are some suggestions you may find helpful. Use plenty of lube: Astro, Glide, Probe or Slide. Experiment and choose the one best suited for you and your partner. You can also try the spermicides with nonoxynol-9, found to kill the AIDS virus in laboratories.

Rub the lubricant on the vaginal lips, then place the barrier over the lube. Use the fingers to find the clitoris under the barrier, don't guess!! Ask questions! Enjoy.

Dental Dams are small; check around at your local women's sex store for latex barriers. Latex barriers come in different sizes, flavors and colors. There are holders available that snap the barriers into place so the hands are free to hold and touch elsewhere. Or you can make your own using a garter belt or seam binding and snaps. Panties with the crotch cut out make great holders. Instead of using Dental Dams or latex barriers, a plastic

wrap may be used. The plastic can be cut larger to accommodate rimming as well.

Practicing safer sex may be awkward at first because it is different, but since your mind is willing the body will follow. It is better to be safe now than sorry later.



Q: My girlfriend joined a 12-step program, AA. Now she is not drinking. I like to drink a little now and then, but she makes me sick, always talking that AA stuff. I don't know what to do.

Sick and Tired

Dear Sick and Tired,

Congratulations to your girlfriend, she is taking care of herself! Recovery effects people in different ways. Now that your girlfriend is in recovery she may appear zealous and dogmatic. She may be so focused and elated in sobriety that she could be missing what else is happening around her. All you know is that she and her AA talk is making you sick and she is hard to be around. Are you in denial about your drinking? Take mental stock. Find out what is really going on and then both of you need to set boundaries. If being around you is threatening to her sobriety and if you feel stifled, you have choices to make. An exercise in honesty and a self-inventory is high on the mark for your aches.

Q: My girlfriend wants us to use dildos and other sex toys. Does that mean she wants to have sex with men or that I don't satisfy her?

Threatened

Dear Threatened,

Relax! Your girlfriend said she wants to use toys and dildos with you. Sex toys enhance or add to your sexual experience, not replace what you already have. I suggest "shopping" together. Perhaps being able to look, feel and select your toys will demystify them for you and get you engaged. You can also make a choice not to play, the decision is yours.

Some lesbians find vaginal penetration satisfying and the use of dildos exciting. That does not translate into wanting a penis or to be with a man sexually. Nor does it imply that a lesbian who enjoys using a dildo on her partner has a secret desire to be a man. We all have fantasies and that's okay. Sex toys and dildos can be a great turn on. Have fun shopping!

Q: I have been with my girlfriend over eight months. At first she was very sweet, but lately she has been getting angry with me at nothing. She has hit and threatened me. Afterwards, she's sorry and doesn't want me to leave her or tell our friends about the fights. How can I get her to change?

Battered

Dear Battered,

Run, don't walk to the nearest battered women's agency and get help fast. Women stay in battering relationships for many reasons: shame, fear, low self-esteem being among them. You cannot get her to change. It is her behavior and only she can change it. Counseling may help her, counseling may help both of you. But until a more binding contract is reached between you, you may do your-

self a great favor and dump her.

The incidence of lesbian battering, physical and emotional, is very high. Physical abuse is easy to recognize. Emotional battering can be tricky; if you feel beat up and licks were never exchanged, you have just experienced emotional abuse. No one has the right to take away our physical and emotional health and safety. Think about it, and while you are thinking, run into action. You have a choice to make and, whatever you decide, it needs to include keeping yourself safe.

Check with Community United Against Violence in the Bay Area. Gay battering relationships is one of their concerns. CUAV's phone number is (415)864-3112. WOMAN INC., also in the Bay Area, may be of assistance. Their number is (415)864-4722. You can also call your local gay and lesbian organizations for additional resources.

Q: What is B&D?

B&D is an abbreviation for bondage and discipline. Sadomasochism, known as SM, is a type of consensual sex play that gives host to a wide variety of physical sensations. No, it does not have to hurt and it does not always involve using whips, chains, knives,... But, it does always involve honesty and mutual consent.

Because all partners are in agreement before the sex play (scenes) begins, this type of sex can be very fulfilling. For many participants, a scene is a chance for their fantasies to come true.

B&D is a form of SM. For some, being restrained during sex is erotic. During this pre-arranged scene, the restrainee (bottom) enjoys the freedom of "not being in control" and being totally pleased. With the help of her partner, she gets delightfully taken past her limits and feels incredibly sexy. Fun, huh?

Others find great satisfaction in tantalizing, stimulating, teasing and seducing with abandon with the use of restraints. These women may feel strong, powerful and desirable in setting up the scene (top) and maintaining the tempo of the what's and how's. The selection of the restraint—ties, scarves, ropes, etc.—is an additional turn on.

B&D must be practiced safely. Yes, there are do's and don'ts involved. Do not experiment with handcuffs, locks, keys or complicated knots or tie anyone without knowledge of what you are doing or without your partner's consent. Binding can cut off circulation and can be very dangerous.

Contact your local SM organizations and groups. In the Bay Area, try Samoia, Society of Janis and the Outcasts for more information. Some of these groups give demonstrations. Check with your women's sex stores and bookstores to find other contacts. *Coming into Power* by Pat Califia is an old but excellent resource and available at most bookstores.

Note from Mama: SM is controversial in the lesbian community. Some lesbians of African descent like, practice and/or have questions about SM. Mama's position is simply to be informative. For more discussion on SM, look for Aché's issue on sexuality.





Author Unknown

*(Please contact us, we would
like to know who you are.)*

SISTER

There is no family
like black woman
who said sister
when she saw me
somewhere deep
from clear brown eyes
when who knows
what I must be by now
clutching camels,
running, looking
like I don't know what but
here I am and
know I can't be naked
covered in gray ashe
when a body's red and brown
I know a body's red and brown
held together
by a straight back
pulled together
with your pride
Who knows
what I must be by now,
or what I look like
struggling, trying

to find a smoke
or get my shit to walk upright
and know it's bad
when I just can't be naked
or put my arms out
or do anything but smile
but she said
sister
and it shook me because
I sometimes forget
what's the truth
of the point
of the matter
we're in and
I know no family
like black woman
I have felt
well sister
must know
what it's like
then
there
that's true
sister.

by
Karen Williams

Blossom
Lotus flowers bloom in muddy swamps
Not swimming pools

How beautiful I shall be!

I've no swimming pool
Just mud aplenty!

Watch me bloom!

Shikuma: All Kin

Your sir name
has generations in front of it
you know your great grandmother's
father's father
and how many siblings he had
the oldest of five
who wore his brotherly face

Shikuma
from Watsonville to Hawaii
that name is written
what a legacy
a living name

I was born in Mississippi—Black
a sharecropper's step granddaughter
a teenage girl's first
in a list of nine

I know my great grandmother, Mary
her daughter, Lovie Lee
and Rose my mother

I look for my kin
there is no name to guide me
Like a collector
I buy the photographs of strangers
Black African Stately
captured in sepia tones
to hang on my wall
to signal my beginnings

Ekua Omosupe
© 8/91

—This poem was inspired by
Lois Shikuma. Thanks, Lois.

Whitney

She is my baby
11 years is not enough
for her to know that growing
into a woman Black and as
full as the moon is not
just a blessing.

She doesn't know
that there will be
days, nights, years
that she will dream of a girlhood
gone too quickly.

She doesn't know
that this garden of
roses and innocence will be
choked by weeds and indecision
monkey bars and swings could become
cages and nooses and I will
not always be able to fix her
cuts and scrapes with band aids,
peroxide and caresses.

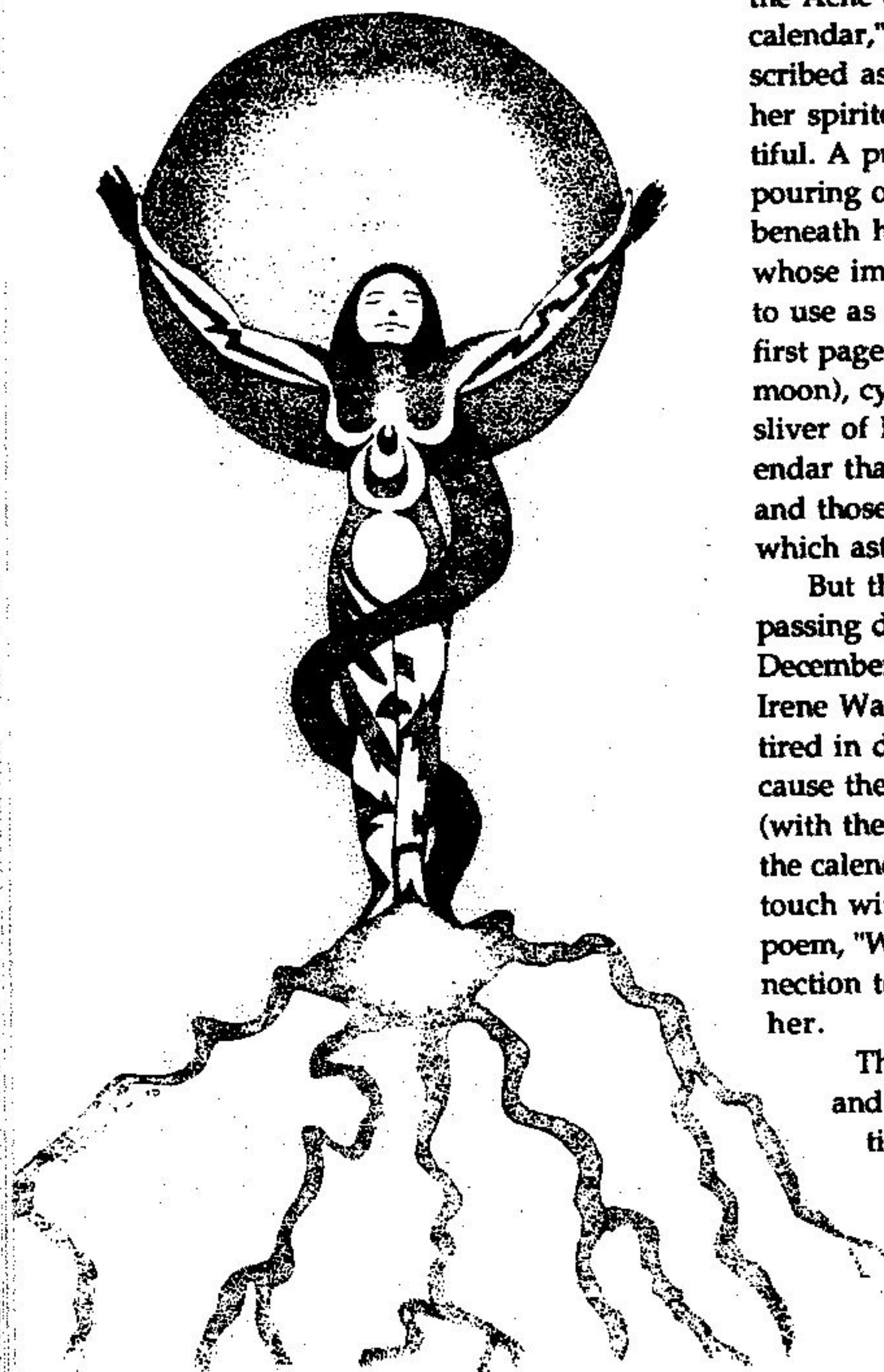
This child does not know
that some of her hurts will become scars
deeper than the black of her skin.
She is my baby girl
growing too soon into
a woman.

Ekua Omosupe
© 6/91

Take Back the Night '92 Lunar Calendar: A Review

Reviewed by Blake C. Aarens

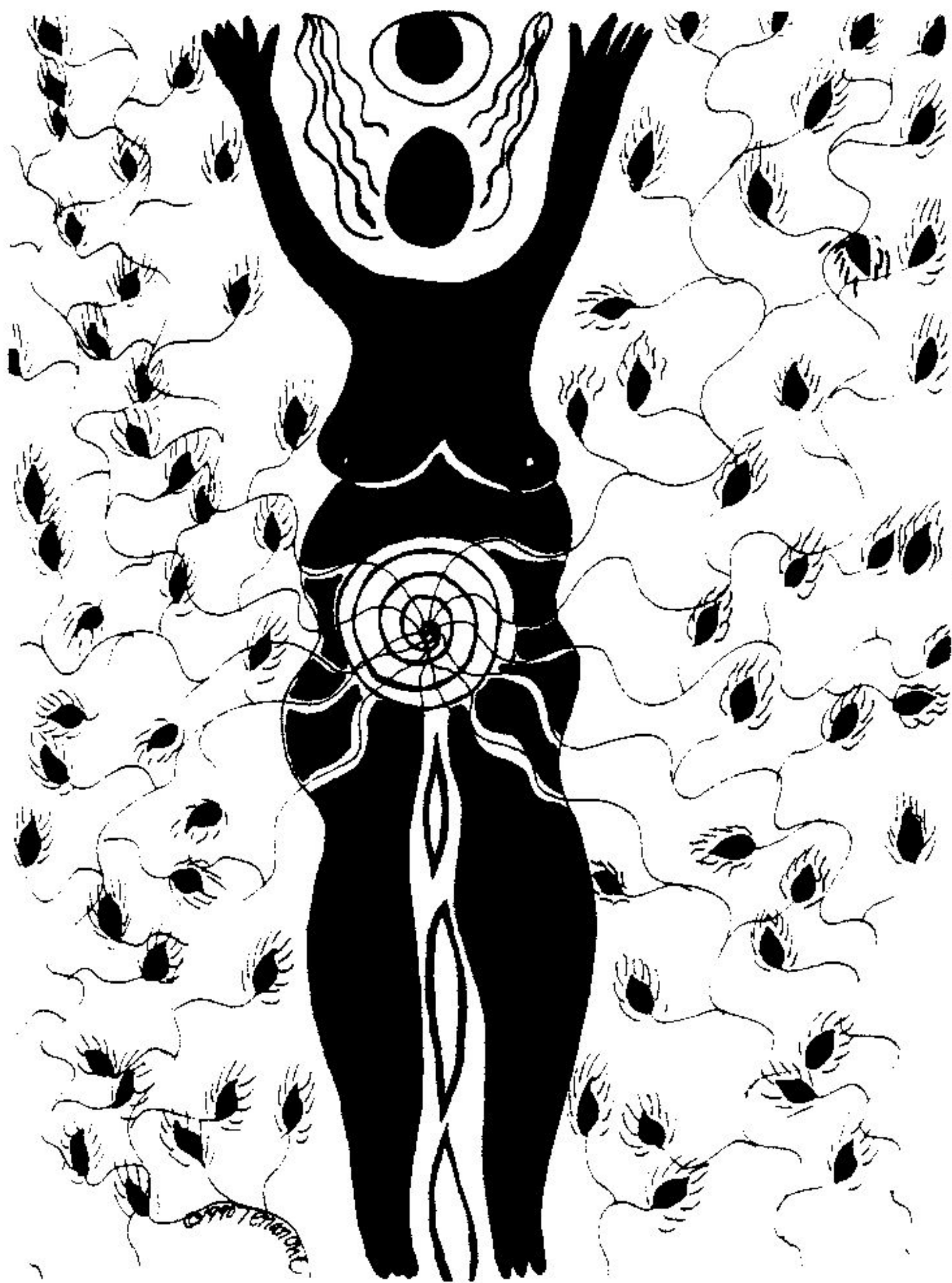
by Kim Martin



I opened the envelope that had been left in my mailbox at the Aché office and gasped out loud. The cover art for this new calendar, "Audre's Song...I (A Burst of Light)" by Asungi, is described as "a visual Affirmation/Prayer for sistah Audre in her spirited defense against cancer." It is breathtakingly beautiful. A purple-robed goddess of a sistah smiles at you, light pouring off her body, the starry night sky and the indigo sea beneath her. It was the first time I had looked at a calendar whose images I could relate to. This lunar calendar is as easy to use as it is beautiful to look at, with instructions on the very first page. Each "moonth" begins with the new moon (dark moon), cycles through the full, and ends with the old moon (a sliver of light in the night sky). How wonderful to have a calendar that acknowledges the changing cycles of the heavens and those of our female bodies. It even tells you day by day which astrological sign the moon is in.

But this is not simply a calendar for keeping track of the passing days. It is a work of art and poetry. The first moonth, December 5-January 3, features a pen and ink drawing by Laura Irene Wayne of four Afrikan sistahs making music, each attired in differently-patterned wraps. It occurs to me that because the drawings are in black and white, coloring each one (with the changing of the moonth) would not only personalize the calendar, but also could be a ritual grounding to keep us in touch with the cycles. The drawing is accompanied by Wayne's poem, "Womyn Dance," which calls to us to remember our connection to the earth's rhythms; she invites us to move with her.

The seventh moonth, May 31-June 29, features a pen, ink and airbrush drawing by Sue Martinez Chavez of a beautiful Native woman, her jet black hair and strong features soothing to the eye. Her cheek is decorated with the phases of the moon, and she holds a corn husk doll in her hand. I can't wait to color her face with the brick red color of the earth from which her people come.



pen and ink drawing by Tenanche Semiata

The ninth moon, July 29-August 26, features a pen and ink drawing and the poem "Sistahood Adoration Son...I" by Asungi. The poem is a love poem, born of deep affection and the remembrance of deep connection. It urges us to honor our Selves and the beauty and power of our sistahs within us.

The calendar ends with the biographies and photos of the contributors. A more beautiful and richly diverse collection of womyn could not be found. Black, white, yellow, red, and brown, they gaze back at me, having shared their images and words with me over the past year. Having the contributors' names and photos is also a perfect way to help us seek out other work by the various artists.

This powerful and inspiring multicultural lunar art calendar is printed on recycled paper. The cost is \$10.00 plus \$1.50 for postage and handling. CA residents add 7% sales tax. Send your orders to:

Full Womoon Productions
P.O. Box 1205
Santa Cruz, CA 95061
(408)426-7966

"Secrets, Dialogues, Revelations: The Art of Betye and Alison Saar"

Oakland Museum, 28 June–25 August 1991

Reviewed by Paula Ross

*"First I want the viewer to feel it physically, like
a shiver."*

Betye Saar

I don't remember where or when I initially encountered Betye Saar's work. But indeed, from the first time I saw it, Saar's art did invoke intense, psychic shivers. I had seen it in shows and installations at The Temporary Contemporary in L.A., the Studio Museum of Harlem and small galleries. I was immediately drawn to the boxed assemblages and altars, the bits of feathers and beads, old lace and fabric, scraps of paper and small religious artifacts. You can read stories from these: the found objects, the characters, the carefully conscious and wildly serendipitous juxtapositions, the plot. Standing before these reliquaries, there is the sense of the divine in the ordinary, the sacred in the everyday. The relics emerge from their unconscious locations, from the junk yards, the swap meets, the dumpsters and *botanicas*, rescued from obscurity by the artist's compulsion to create. But Saar's work reflects not simply the creative impulse. Her framed constructions mix symbols and signs of different cultures, religions, civilizations and races. There is profound connection here, paradoxically achieved through the manipulation of fragments.

"I am interested in ancestral history. ...some self is back there remembering from another life. I'm not into reincarnation or things like that, but the work triggers something, and it all seems right when you see it in a small piece of art." ("A Conversation with Betye and Alison Saar," Mark Van Proyen, *Artweek*, 15 August, 1991.)

"We're very different but very similar."

Alison Saar

I am reluctant to leave the darkened spaces housing Betye Saar's boxes for the more harshly lit world of her daughter's art. The symbolism of the soothing, womb-like environment in which the elder Saar, the mother, appears, is not lost on me. Alison works on a much larger scale — enormous, monstrous almost when compared to her mother's more miniature, more interior approach. The "Subway Preacher," (1984); "Medicine Man," (1986); "Lady Lazarus," (1988); "Sapphire," (1986) are wood and mixed media people who are characters in their own stories, urban icons. The artifacts and relics of their urban lives are literally embedded in their skin, their chests, their torsos. And here we see the visual echo of mother and daughter. The subway preacher's chest is filled with objects, the kind you might find in Cracker Jack boxes— a whistle, a plastic dinosaur, a tiny crown, a pair of scissors. Framed in plastic roses, Sapphire's open bust contains a mass of small articles—a watch, a fish, a snake, a moustache comb, a bird, a horseshoe, a barrette. The wood of the figures shows the rough carving and scraping of Alison's tools; these are not delicate pieces. Their pain, their defiance, even their stoicism is insistent and clearly visible from across the room.

"In 1981, just months prior to her MFA thesis exhibition, Alison Saar jettisoned the refined, semi-abstract, handmade paper works that she had planned to display and rapidly produced a group of robust and coarsely carved sculptures....The earlier

paper works were delicate and soft, characterized by muted colours and an occasional found object; they clearly shared a sensibility with her mother's work. (Indeed, Betye was later drawn to recycle Alison's discarded paper pieces in her own work.)"

Elizabeth Shepherd, curator

Alison Saar has clearly made some kind of peace with the fact that art was first the domain of her mother. But in a 1989 video, "Similar Differences," she and Betye both talk about the rebellion that preceded. Initially, Alison rejected the idea of becoming an artist "simply because my mother was who she was." So she chose to pursue a career as a writer, albeit in art history. She soon found, however, that it was much easier for her to speak in images and visuals than in words.

This was already apparent to her mother at different stages of Alison's life. "Alison was the most stubborn of the [three] daughters, and the messiest, so already she was individualistic." Later, Betye says, when Alison began moving further into producing work as an artist, "I'd suggest things and she'd say, 'No, I see it this way.' Once I saw the results, I knew she had her own vision."

Still, Alison, like most daughters, needed to separate from her mother, define herself as independent. She moved to New York; Betye Saar remained in California. It was on the other side of the country that she found the literal, raw, unrefined materials of what she

counters with the vertical metropolis, so unlike the horizontal sprawl of L.A. and southern California, led to the excavation and unearthing of anger and passion, the "wild animal side" of people that competes with and fights the civilized side, the part, says Alison, that enables us to interact with other people.

While the perceptual, and to some extent, conceptual connections between mother and daughter as artists was obvious in this show, the actual physical link is played out in the joint installation, "House of Gris Gris," (1990). This collaboration, to "open the new decade," says Betye, "seemed special to us."

I came upon the Gris Gris house as if in a dream; it sat, shadowed in the indirect light, like some magic shrine. About to enter the front door, I stepped on the sill and quickly stepped back. There was such power emanating from the interior that I felt the need to gather myself together, to mentally prepare for what might be inside. In that time, standing several feet from the door, I noticed the bottle tree above the entrance. This, I knew, was a reference both to the Watts Tower of Betye Saar's L.A. childhood and to the folk customs of displaying bottles to catch spirits, both good and evil. Above the roof, suspended to the left, was a spirit ladder made by Betye, the connection between heaven and earth. Suspended to the right of the house were large wings held by a metal harness. Metal entrails curled in a pile on the floor near the wings—Alison's interpretation of the link between heaven and earth. The house's walls consisted of moss, eucalyptus

leaves and twigs sandwiched behind wire screening stretched taut between wooden frames. A flashlight, kept in a can outside the front door, illuminated the room. On the floor, Betye had drawn an enormous heart, homage to Erzulie, goddess of love. Above my head, a tin ceiling, animals not distinctly one kind or another, had been drawn by Alison. There were bottles here as well, holding candles and covered with melted wax; a painted fire on the floor astonished me when I felt no heat. This was a house of grey (from the French, *gris*) magic, neither black nor white.

Leaving this space with its implications of domestic containment and sacred focus, I read from the installation's description: "[House of Gris Gris] alludes to a nest as the site of procreation and artistic creativity, as well as to the mother/artist's and daughter/artist's own home."

Creating this space that honours both their common origin and their distinctly different visions, Betye and Alison Saar have captured pieces of power lodged in one of the most charged of human relationships—mother and daughter. The experience of their work evokes pain and offers healing.

"Living in Henry Ford Country"

an excerpt from *Her*,
by Cherry Muhanji

John R. Street, Detroit's own version of Harlem, is the setting for this issue's fiction selection, excerpted from Cherry Muhanji's first novel, Her: A Novel (Aunt Lute Foundation, SF, 1990. \$8.95). Her is a story about Detroit in the late fifties and sixties, the story of Black men and women who left down home, not for 125th Street and the Apollo, but for Woodward Avenue and the Fox. Muhanji is a co-author of Tight Spaces, and like many writers, began writing "what she wanted to read."

—Paula Ross, Fiction editor

All the women were there. Each had received a note on purple stationery with gold embossed lettering. A curious note that sent all the women backtracking in their minds to the last time they had seen Wintergreen anywhere else but on stage. Some remembered her buffet flats, but the time stated in the note was too early for that. Besides, she hadn't given one of those in years. Others, like Laphonya, sensed something more was about to happen because this time the invitation was addressed to Lizzie too.

The Ibo masks glared down from the wall of the apartment at the pretty brown boy playing alone in the playpen that stood next to Wintergreen's drum from Senegal.

The hanging masks, the smell of scented candles, and the drum gave the room a ritual effect. The boy, king of



Cherry Muhanji

all he surveyed, received one and all. He looked up at every coo and attempted tug at his chin, giggled, and went back to his investigation of why the stuffed shaggy dog's eyes closed sometimes and opened others.

Most of the women here had been part of the first wave leaving the South. They had entered Detroit as young girls, and it had disrobed them with cold hands. But they had beat this city at its own game. They owned businesses, some were their own bosses and, each in her own way, took no shit from anybody. But they paid the price. They were haunted by a ripened sexuality buried beneath the eaves of wall-to-wall urban living. It demanded room and that was the one thing they didn't have. Instead, it remained curled up, closed—decaying—daring to surface at rent parties where they could shake their "thang" and prayer meetings where they could lift themselves up—out from the world. Even their children

were born closed, crowded in cement buildings like tombs. And all the things that had been so natural about them were somehow not that way anymore.

Outside, they stifled that good feeling about being a woman and exchanged it for "respectability." But inside, it insisted—demanding a place. And when they could no longer hold it in, they rouged their cheeks, put their red dresses on, and their high heels, pompadoured their hair, and stepped out for the evening. But "out" didn't fit anymore, didn't fit well anymore in this frozen wasteland. They remained isolated in their respectability—languishing. Either bending their minds South to yesterday or turned toward this new northern wave—integration.

They were women born after slavery and before civil rights. Segregation was what they understood. And they were in danger of losing it. What were they supposed to make of these "rights?" They had followed the dream and come North believing that everythang was gon' be all right. At home they knew where they stood—nowhere, and they expected and accepted that. Here, white folks said one thing and did another. No rights, as far as they could see, was gonna change that.

So now here they were, collected together. What now? Wintergreen had called, and because she followed different rules and looked like she knew what she was doing, they came—to find out how she did it and looked so good doing it. Naturally, they were disturbed when she hobbled in from her bedroom in half-glasses and between two canes.

The conversation in the room was like the nip of biting flies. One would start, and before that one finished another bit. But underneath each nip were the same two questions, though never spoken: "What does Wintergreen want? And what happened to her?"

There was Mabel, owner of her own laundromat. Steady. Clear. Washed the big plate glass window, swept and mopped the big concrete floor twice a day. Put a shotgun in a niggah's head who

sprinkled Tide all over the floor after her second mopping. He explained he was covern' evil tracks with goober dust. He dared anybody big or small to mess with his mess. So she cocked the trigger back, and he swept the place clean.

There was Sam, the white woman, who had, Wintergreen suspected, more business on John R than an escort service. It was in her eyes. Patched and flecked with some secret war frozen behind the pain. She was bitter, all right. And Wintergreen knew a woman who was bitter was a good bet to get things done, as long as she wasn't bitter over a man. Black women hung up on a man get immobilized. Get drunk. Get mad. And finally get busy. Somebody's got to pay the rent. White women she wasn't so sure about. They were used to somebody else doing it for them. But Sam was a Jew and had her history in the blood—maybe she could hold her own and separate men out.

Maxine sat, crossing and recrossing her legs. She had chosen to dress, and closed early, obviously thinking the note meant something else. She ran a small beauty shop—a salon, she called it. She catered to the moneyed people in and around Woodward Avenue throughout the week, but made most of her money from the day people who came in on Friday and Saturday, getting ready for Saturday night and Sunday morning.

Silent, but noticed by everyone, was Charlotte's neighbor. Later everyone learned her name was Mei Ling.

Laphonya came, stepping in with Lizzie. Now how had she got her to come? Lizzie sat next to Ruby Red on one of the sofas, spoke but received no answer. Red had her palms pressed together, softly repeating a chant that drifted into silence while she dozed. Lizzie leaned over to Laphonya and whispered, "What's wrong with her?" Laphonya shrugged her shoulders. Lizzie turned up her nose, but after a few minutes questioned Laphonya again. "She ain't no devil woman too, is she?"

Laphonya beckoned for Lizzie to lean over, and whispered in her ear, "Why don't ya tell her 'bout

Jesus?" Lizzie's eyes widened, and she snatched her skirt tight—wrapped it around her thighs and crossed her legs, moving closer to Laphonya.

Mildred had come, but Mrs. Wintergreen was uneasy. Mildred hated the Monkey too much. Mildred kept her lips permanently in a straight line. They were situated in a good-looking face that had aged before its time. Behind her back, folks called her a "mean, nappy-headed gal." It would take Wintergreen too long, she decided, to turn that personal anger into something she could use. Mildred would have to go.

Charlotte entered with a brilliant white scarf on her head—tied wonderfully, Wintergreen thought. Beneath her coat she wore a cool cotton dress to match. Wintergreen patted the peach leather chair next to her, and Charlotte seated herself.

Mrs. Wintergreen slowly began to stand, dropping one cane. She wobbled, and Charlotte reached to help her. She waved Charlotte away, and the women eased. They watched as she pulled an ivory holder from her pocket, placed a thin brown cigar in it, leaned down for Charlotte to light it, and slid the ivory between her teeth. This was the Wintergreen they knew.

"I've not let many people help me in my life," Wintergreen began, "but I'm starting tonight. Ladies, hear me out..."

Just then two young women, who were not invited, walked in. They were students who thought the world could be changed in a day by voting. Their hair was a mess, and they looked like they had slept in their clothes.

Damn students, Wintergreen thought. "Ladies, we are having a meeting. A private meeting."

"We want to help get rid of the exploiter of our people," the one who looked older, and should know better, said.

"Yeah, he's a pig," the other one said.

"Why don't ya comb yo' heads first?" Laphonya laughed, slapping her knee.

"This is an Afro." The younger woman turned

They were women born after slavery and before civil rights. Segregation was what they understood. And they were in danger of losing it. What were they supposed to make of these "rights?"

toward her.

"No, that is a nap-o," Laphonya said, unable to help herself.

Wintergreen, sensing trouble, said, "I'm sure there are enough things going up on Wayne campus to keep you ladies busy."

"She invited us," the first one revealed, pointing to Charlotte. Charlotte smiled at them and turned to look up at Wintergreen who had stopped, changed the position of the cane and shifted her weight, waiting for an explanation.

"Maybe they can..." Miss Charlotte offered.

"It's not their business, Charlotte."

"But ya ain't heard what they got to say," Charlotte protested.

Just then Opal Henry arrived. Rich and dark; the color of plums. Her hands seemed wedded to the calabash she carried. She was sandwiched in between a day woman who had that just-scrubbed look. Her clothes were crisp, starched stiff; and she stood with her arms folded and sat down with them that way. On her other side was a woman who had circles faintly outlined on her cheeks. All three must have come through the bar (with Jake's permission) because they stood at the top of

the back stairs, directly in the line of vision of the two students. Both young women slowly looked around. These women were an odd lot to them. And they only knew the one who had been at the Barthwell thing. She had asked some good questions, so when she had asked them to attend, they had jumped at the chance to go out and organize. But now they realized that none of these women had much education, except maybe the one limping on a cane. They were uncomfortable with uneducated women and didn't have a clue how to go about organizing them. They had come from homes where their own mothers had managed an education. And the women here were old. What could they expect from a generation that took all that shit offa white folks? they reasoned.

Charlotte spoke up. "I think maybe I made a mistake and we oughta do this some other day. But thank ya'll for comin'." The students not knowing what else to do, moved through the women and went down the back stairs—glad to get out.

"Let me speak of what has recently happened in our community..."

Kali's tale, like so many tales along the strip, had gone in one ear and out the other. Now their sins of omission had come home to roost. They were exposed. And nobody liked it. How did this child, who, on her own, had decided to turn tricks for a pimp, become a wart on their collective noses?

Wintergreen would call downtown, Sam would speak to the women who used her escort service, and they in turn could put a bug in their husbands' ears—who would hear it twice because all of them worked downtown. Maxine could reach the moneyed people along Woodward Avenue who came into her shop throughout the week. Mabel decided she would give Jesus a script, so he could make one of his impromptu sermons in her laundromat.

Laphonya, twisting in her seat, finally stood up. "Wait one damn minute! Ain't we movin' too fast here? Miss Thang done fell from sugar to shit. I can't see that it's my fault. Everybody got somethin' goin' on in their life. But that don't mean

they ho'. Far as I'm concerned she was asking fo' it," she said, spitting out her words. The room let out an aborted sigh.

"Watch it, Laphonya," Wintergreen shot back.

"Ya turned her out, Wintergreen."

"What!" Wintergreen exclaimed, dropping down in her chair and raising her cane like a sword, pointing it directly at Laphonya.

"Cut the 3-6-9." Laphonya said, stepping forward and moving the cane out of the way. "We all know that Kali was in the Chesterfield made up to look like ya. Wearin' yo clothes. Now how did she do that on her own?"

Wintergreen sat stunned into silence.

The day woman, nodding her head in agreement, folded and unfolded her arms. Miss Charlotte turned a false and overly sweet voice on Laphonya and asked, "What ya got 'gainst the chile, girl?"

"Child, my ass. What do I got 'gainst the chile? Tell us, Charlotte, when was the last tim'e ya saw that child or that one? Laphonya yelled, her voice changing octaves by the minute. She pointed to the baby who was responding to the loud voices in the room by rattling the bars of his playpen and throwing all of his toys out. "Remember when that chile streaked up yo' parlor with paint whilst ya sat on yo' fat ass?"

"Now, both ya stop," Lizzie demanded, bumping Ruby Red, who was looking over at Opal Henry with sad brown eyes filled with tears. Lizzie, shaking her head and leaning forward in her chair, continued in her Sunday-go-to-meeting voice, pronouncing a warning on both of them: "God don't like ugly!"

"Then He got trouble with you," Maxine said before she could stop herself. Lizzie was also the church secretary and worked closely with the very fair and rather young Reverend Midas, which Maxine couldn't understand, considering that Lizzie was nobody's baby and ugly as sin. Lizzie lunged at Maxine, knocking over a chair.

Sam began to stir in her seat, while Mabel

gathered her things. "Who needs this shit?" she asked to no one in particular.

"Cut it out, all of you!" Wintergreen shouted, rising from her seat with very little effort. "I asked you here to see what we could do together. This shit stops now!"

Mei Ling sat amazed.

"I'll take care of it," Opal Henry said. Only the day woman, sitting with her arms still folded, heard her. Staring straight ahead, waiting for something else she could agree on, she turned to say something to the woman with the circles outlined on her cheeks. The woman was looking at her purple fingernails and trying to steady her unsteady leg.

"I'll take care of it," Opal Henry repeated—this time getting everyone's attention, including Wintergreen's.

"It's a joint effort, Opal. Or it will be no effort at all." Wintergreen finally said.

"I know what to do."

"That may be, but this is our responsibility."

"Can somebody shut her up?" Lizzie asked, announcing her request to the room.

Everyone thought she meant Opal Henry. But she meant Red, who was nodding out and humming to herself.

"No, I'll take care of it!" Kali stood in the doorway. "I'm past needing your help. I needed you when this happened." She ripped the loose-fitting gown over her head and stood there naked, slowly turning her body around so they could see the black and blue marks that lined her back and buttocks. Then she changed her stance—bending, she stuck her buttocks out at them and rotated her body so they could see the unmistakable initials, M.D., branded on the side of her buttocks.

The women reacted in various ways. Lizzie ran out of the room to the bathroom. Maxine shouted, "Good God!" Laphonya sat stunned. And Charlotte, much to everyone's surprise, broke down and cried like a baby. All looked except Red, who sat nodding out, intermittently wiping her nose.



(cover model is Aché
Senior Editor
DeeAnne Davis)

"Not so fancy," Mildred blurted out and moved into the circle alongside Kali. Slowly she removed her own clothes as the women watched silent as stone. Laphonya caught her breath as did Wintergreen and most of the other women when they looked in horror at the backside of Mildred's body all covered with small cuts made with curlicues at the ends—healed now into older scars. The letters M.D. were branded in several places down her sides and into her buttocks.

"God, Mildred!" Kali said as she reached over to feel the scars. Removing her hand from them, Kali looked over at the stunned women and said, "I hope all of you are satisfied. As for me, all of you can kiss my royal yellow ass." Still naked, Kali snatched up the baby, who had managed to rescue the eyeless shaggy dog he had thrown from his cage, and stormed out.

"Kali, hold up," Mildred shouted as she rushed—stepping into her panties and skirt—half running to catch up with her.

No one knew what to say.

"I said I can take care of this, Wintergreen." Opal Henry broke the silence, her long gray braid hanging down her back like a long twisting road. Her face, cast against the deep purple of her skin, was serious, but her eyes were red from the tears she had shed for the two women.

"No, Opal, we'll take care of it," Wintergreen repeated. "But you can tell us what we need to do."

CALENDAR

ART

OCT. 13/SUN.-NOV. 30/SAT.

Koncepts Cultural Gallery presents: "REMEMBER: Osage and Pine: The Philadelphia MOVE Bombing." A photo-documentary by photographer/filmmaker Delcina Wilson. A reception for the artist will be held Sunday, October 20, 3-6pm, which will include live jazz piano. The artist will be on hand to give a lecture, take questions, and show a film concerning the exhibit. The gallery is located at 480 Third Street, (at Washington) in Oakland. For more information call: 451-5231.

OCT. 25-27/THUR.-SUN.

EBONY MUSEUM OF ARTS "In Celebration of the African-American Artist: An Exposition of the Visual Arts (EXPO)": 11am to 6pm, Kaiser Convention Center Arena, 10 Tenth Street. For more information call: 763-0745.

COMEDY

MONDAYS

Gay comedy open mike with Emcee Karen Ripley, 8pm, \$4. Performers sign up by phone by 7pm. Josie's Cabaret, 3583 16th Street at Market, SF. Info/reservations: (415) 861-7933.

THURSDAYS

Artists of Color Open Mike Night at Ohama Cultural Ctr. Every 2nd and 4th Thurs of month, 7pm, \$5. 4345 Telegraph Ave, Oakland. Info: 658-1868

OCT. 10-NOV. 3/THUR.-SUN.

"Pretty, Witty & Gay" - a new one-woman comedy extravaganza with Marga Gomez plays Thursdays through Sundays at Josie's Cabaret, 3583 - 16th St., SF. 8pm, plus 10pm show on Fridays only. For info/reservations call 861-7933.

DANCE (coming in Feb.)

FEB. 4/TUES.

American Indian Dance Theatre 8pm, \$18/\$15/\$11. Zellerbach Hall, Uni-

versity of California, Berkeley. Reservations: 642-9988.

FEB. 19-23/WED.-SUN.

Dance Theatre of Harlem 8pm, Wed-Sun, 2pm, Sat & Sun. \$25/\$20/\$14 (Wed, Thu & Sat matinee); \$30/\$25/\$18 (Fri-Sun evenings & Sun matinee). Zellerbach Hall, University of California, Berkeley. Reservations: 642-9988.

EVENTS

OCT. 17-20/THUR.-SUN.

The 7th annual ON SCREEN, co-sponsored by Northern California Women in Film and Television and Union Bank, is a three-day festival celebrating the work of women in film, video, and television through screenings of national and international feature films, shorts, music videos, documentaries, and television programs; two seminars ("From Stage to Screen" and "Career Opportunities"); a Career Achievement Award ceremony honoring several women artists; and special outreach programs in several San Francisco neighborhoods. The American premiere of "Grand Isle," directed by Mary Lambert opens the Festival Oct 17 at 8pm. Other major films include: "A Place of Rage" directed by Pretibha Parmer and "Hot Summer Winds" directed by Emiko Omori. Roxie Theater, 3117 16th Street at Valencia, San Francisco. 10/18: 4pm to midnight, 10/19 and 10/20: 10am to midnight. Tickets: Screenings \$6; Seminars \$15; Opening Night \$35; and Career Achievement Awards Ceremony \$25. Tickets will go on sale October 1st at the Roxie Theater, and at STBS, Union Square, San Francisco. Info: (415)648-6486. Res: (415)863-1087.

OCT. 19/SAT.

"Family Portraits from Contemporary Writers." The challenges and diversity of family life--and how these are reflected in contemporary writing--are the focus of this one day conference. From a lively variety of perspectives, nine contemporary writers illuminate the impact of childhood and family history on their own work. Featured on the panel are: Itabari Njeri, author of *Every Good-Bye Ain't Gone: Family Portraits and Personal Escapades*

and Mary Helen Washington, editor of three anthologies: *Memories of Kin: Stories About Family by Black Writers*; *Invented Lives: Narratives of Black Women 1860-1960* and *Black-Eyed Susans/Midnight Birds*. 9am to 5pm, University of California Berkeley, 155 Dwinelle Hall, \$80.

OCT. 20/SUN.

"When the Moon Waxes Red: Representation, Gender, and Cultural Politics." In this new collection of essays on Third World art and culture, award-winning filmmaker and theorist Trinh Minh-ha offers new challenges to Western regimes of knowledge. 7pm, Free, Modern Times Bookstore, 968 Valencia St, SF. Info: (415)282-9246.

OCT. 27/SUN.

African-American author Paule Marshall will sign copies of her latest novel, *Daughters*, from 4:30-5:30pm, followed by an Old Wives Tales Bookstore 15th birthday party at 6pm. 1009 Valencia St., S.F. 821-4676.

"Malcolm X: The FBI File" Clayborne Carson, author of *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* and director of the Martin Luther King Jr. Papers Project, will discuss his new book. 7pm, Free, Modern Times Bookstore, 968 Valencia St, SF. Info:(415)282-9246.

OCT. 29/TUES.

"A Woman's Work Is Never...Black Lesbians Read From Their Work" featuring Darlene Angela, Stephanie Henderson, Nrombi, and Stephanie Smith. Bay Area lesbian writers explore their lives and the lives around them through poetry and prose. \$3-10 to benefit Old Wives Tales. 1009 Valencia, S.F. Info: 821-4676.

OCT. 30-31/WED.-THUR.

Aché presents storyteller Belinda Sullivan in "Fright Night II: The Horror Continues." Meet an entire troupe of characters as they come alive through the voice of the teller. Belinda takes you on a journey down the dark way...but hell has never been so frighteningly hell-arious! Thursday's show will also feature Aché's 2nd annual costume contest--prizes for the fiercest & most original costumes!! \$8 gen./\$3 children 12 and under. \$2 discount with costume.

This show is not recommended for kids under 8. 7:30pm. La Peña, 3105 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley.

NOV. 7/THUR.

F8 address is designed to provide a context for the exhibition which runs from October 2nd to December 29th. The exhibition weaves together the threads of African art of this century, integrating the so-called traditional, modern, and popular arts, and focusing on the interrelationships among them. Lecture: 7-10pm, University Art Museum, Berkeley Campus.

NOV. 22-24/FRI.-SUN.

THE GATHERING (an annual weekend retreat for Lesbians of African descent sponsored by the Nia Collective). The purpose of the Gathering is to: reaffirm our existence, create a safe atmosphere for growth and empowerment, and nurture an environment of continual solidarity and warmth in our community of Lesbians of African descent. Networking, workshops, information exchange, and recreation at the Headlands Institute in Sausalito, CA. The registration fee, (which includes the gathering, all lodging and meals) is as follows:

Now through October 15: \$ 95.

October 16-November 8: \$115.

For more information and a registration form contact:

Nia Collective

PO Box 20835

Oakland, CA 94620

Or call: (415) 530-3343.

NOV. 28/THUR.

International Indian Treaty Council will hold their annual "Un-Thanksgiving Day Sunrise Ceremony" on Alcatraz Island. Ferries will be leaving Pier 41 at 5:30 am. For tickets or more information call IITC at (415)566-0251.

FILM

OCT. 2/WED.-

OCT. 17/THUR.

Gay Movie Series at the Castro Theater, 429 Castro at Market, SF. Tickets are: \$6, bargain matinee \$3.50 before 3:30. Seniors and kids \$3.50. Info: 621-6120.

OCT. 23/WED.

"Africa through African Eyes," a month-long series of exhibits and films presents "Finzan" (Mall, 1989) which looks at the oppression and rebellion of African women. 7:30, 9:30pm. Pacific Film Archive, 2625 Durant Ave., Berk. Info: 642-1124.

NOV. 5-6/TUES. & WED.

A Tribute to Marion Riggs at the Roxie Theater, 3117 16th Street at Valencia, SF. Tickets are \$5.50 general.

November 5, 6:30 and 9:45, "Tongues Untied" and "Anthem"; 7:40, "Ethnic Notions", "Long Train Running", and "Affirmations"; 9:10-9:45 Marion Riggs will speak between shows.

November 6, "Color Adjustments" will play at 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9:30.

8:30-9:30 Marion Riggs will speak between shows.

NOV. 27/WED.

The Aché Series presents: "Voices of the Gods" a unique film exploring African religion currently practiced in the United States. 7:30pm. Donation. La Peña, 3105 Shattuck Ave., Berk.

MUSIC

OCT. 11/FRI.

Gwen Avery in Concert at Mama Bears: Hear her smooth sounds of r&b, soul gospel, & powerhouse piano. Tickets \$7-9 sliding scale. Also check her out every third Sunday at Josie's, 4-6pm, 6\$. 3583 16th St. at Market, SF. Info, reservation: 861-7933.

OCT. 19/SAT.

MANDELEO INSTITUTE presents "4th Annual Legends of Afro-Beat, Highlife, and Reggae"; 8pm, Oakland Convention Center/Parc Oakland Hotel, 10th Street & Broadway. Info./reservations: 763-3962.

OCT. 20 & NOV. 17/SUN.

GWEN AVERY IN CONCERT at Josie's Cabaret: Afternoon of r&b, soul, gospel, & powerhouse piano. 4-6pm, \$6. 3583 16th Street at Market, SF. Info/reservations: 861-7933.

OCT. 23-26 & OCT. 30 - NOV. 2/WED.-SAT.

Etta Jones and Houston Person,

blues duets at Kimball's, Franklin & Grove in San Francisco. Shows at 9pm and 11pm, \$12 (Wed.Thu) \$15 (Fri, Sat). Info/Resv.: (415)861-5555.

PERFORMANCE

NOV. 1-2/FRI. & SAT.

"Les Ballets Africains." Choreographer Kelta Fodeba's company is the living demonstration of Africa's prodigious cultural heritage. The 35-member troupe from Guinea blends traditional dance, music, and storytelling through spectacle, acrobatics, comedy, and drama. 8pm, \$20/\$16/\$12. Zellerbach Hall, University of California, Berkeley. Info: 642-9988.

NOV. 13/WED.

"BLACK POETS WITH ATTITUDES: 5 Women, All of Whom are Dangerous." 7pm, \$7, Potrero Hill Community Center, 953 DeHaro, San Francisco.

NOV. 15/FRI.

"Juke Joints and Jubilee: African American Music and Dance Traditions." Musical traditions of the house party, the road house, and the church—blues, juba and buck dance, and gospel—are presented by the Holmes Brothers, North Carolina bluesman, and juba dancer John Dee Holeman, singer/pianist Fontella Bass, and the a cappella gospel quintet the Birmingham Sunlights. 8pm, \$18/\$15/\$11. Zellerbach Hall, University of California, Berkeley. Info: 642-9988.

NOV. 2/WED.

"BLACK POETS WITH ATTITUDES: 5 Women, All of Whom are Dangerous." 7pm, \$6. La Peña Cultural Center, 3105 Shattuck, Berkeley, Info/reservations: 849-2568.

NOV. 24/SUN.

"Lesbian Cultural Uprising." An afternoon of art, readings, and performances by and for lesbians. 1:30 - 5:00, Francis of Assisi Community Center, 145 Guerrero (near Market), SF. Wheelchair accessible, sliding scale \$5 - \$10 (no one turned away for lack of funds.) Any artist interested in being on the program, please contact Laura at: 626-7821.

BULLETIN BOARD

Aché AD RATES

Aché has decided to begin charging for some of our advertising services. We need the financial support. We also want to remain flexible and available as an inexpensive or free community outreach publication. So, we've decided to charge for two sections of the Bulletin Board; services provided and job openings, and to formally establish a sliding scale rate for flyer inserts.

BULLETIN BOARD: Service & Job Announcements. A message of 25 words or less costs only \$20. Any message over 25 words will cost an additional \$20. Announcements should not exceed 50 words. Please submit your typewritten announcement to Aché Classifieds: P.O. Box 6071, Albany, CA 94706 with a check payable to Aché.

In addition, Aché will continue to insert your event flyers for a charge of \$25-\$100 sliding scale. Please call Adalla Selket, (510) 601-6844 for more information.

GROUPS:

Multi-Cultural Bisexual Lesbian Gay Alliance: UC Berkeley. Women's social group every Thurs. 8-10pm. Women's Resource Center Library (Golden Bear Bldg. 2nd floor). All women invited for film nights, conversation, community sensuality, debates, play, and more...

Lesbians of Color/Third World Lesbian Support Group: meets Thurs. 6:30-8pm; \$3 donation (no one turned away); Pacific Center, Telegraph and Derby, Berk. For info call Camille Barber, 548-8283.

United Colors of Queer Nation: Direct action group for queers of color to bring common issues to the foreground and increase visibility. For info on mtgs and actions call John, 821-6108 or 985-7141

Black Lesbian Support Group for women in multicultural relationships. Meets 1st Sun of month in Oakland. Info: 839-3302/653-5732

BAYBLAG (Bay Area Black Lesbians and Gays) meet to network, socialize, educate, do political work, have fun. Info: Midgett 648-3658

Trikone: A support group for lesbians and gay men from the Indian subcontinent. Info: PO Box 21354, San Jose, CA, 95151 (408) 270-8776

Asian Pacific Sisters: For info on upcoming events call 750-3385.

Chinese Lesbian Social Group: for info call 826-2455

Japanese Lesbian Group: Maitsuki Daini Nichiyobi Meeting Ari. Denwa (Yoru) 563-8253

Vietnamese Lesbian and Gay Support Group: Group meets every 3rd Sun in SF. Info: Dung Nguyen 771-7256

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Koreans: monthly meetings 1st Sun month, 1-3pm. Lori 563-8689

JOB ANNOUNCEMENTS

SOCIAL SERVICE - DIRECTOR FOR HOMELESS YOUTH PROGRAM: Req. 2 yrs. min. managerial exp. in social service agency with responsibility for supervising 15 employees + \$500K budget, preferably as program director in youth services field, proven skills in staff development & grants management. Collaborative leadership style & good sense of humor a must. Bachelors degree in related field req. advanced degree a plus, \$32,000-\$37,000 + benefits. EOE. Send resume to: Personnel Dir., 146 Leavenworth, SF 94102

NOTICES:

The NIA Collective is now considering workshop proposals around the theme of "Empowering Ourselves" for this year's Gathering, held Nov. 22-24, 1991 at the Marin Headlands. The hope of the collective is that through the workshops offered participants will gain insight into the process, strategies, and tools they need to live more empowered lives. Although the notion of empowering ourselves is a heavy one, we would like to encourage workshops that are 1) informative; 2) humorous & uplifting; and 3) goal-oriented/problem-solving in nature. Workshop proposals can be on any subject related to our theme. We would especially like to encourage proposals in the following areas: community building, healing with laughter, stress management, the coming-out process (for both younger and older lesbians), and managing money. Workshops should not be longer than 2 hours. Proposals should include: description of the workshop, relationship to the theme, a brief statement about the facilitator, any resources needed, etc. Mail proposals to: NIA Collective, P.O. Box 20835, Oakland, CA 94620 or phone (415) 641-7265. Deadline is Oct. 31st.

CALLING ALL ARTISTS!! We need your creativity to transform the 1992 National Black Gay & Lesbian Leadership Conference in Oakland. Are you a cook, photographer, singer, dancer, seamstress, novelist, composer, healer, performance artist, poet, storyteller, filmmaker, videographer, drummer, musician, hairdress-



jean WEISINGER

painter / photographer

15 HILL ST.
S.F. CA 94110

415-695-2980

ser, designer, masseuse, sculptor, etc... For more information or to submit your proposal contact: Midgett, c/o NBGLLF, 104A Bennington St., S.F. 94110. Include address and phone number with all proposals.

UNITY NEEDS YOU to get involved and help create the 1992 National Black Gay & Lesbian Leadership Conference by volunteering on the following committees: banquet, housing, logistics, registration, security, Women's Institute. For further information contact Gypsy at (510) 437-2163 from 7:30am-3:30pm or write UNITY at : 4430 Telegraph Ave. #25, Oakland, CA 94609.

BOARD POSITIONS AVAILABLE with W.O.M.A.N., Inc., San Francisco's only non-residential 24-hour domestic violence agency. Seeking women who: are committed to developing and maintaining a multicultural Board, can provide fundraising skills, have an understanding of domestic violence issues. Women of color, lesbians, disabled women, older women and survivors of domestic violence are especially encouraged to apply. If interested, please call Cheryl Spear, Nominating Committee Chair, (415) 647-3491, or Teresa Scherzer, 864-3538.

Old Wives' Tales Discount Card Program-- Become an OWT Supporter-- for \$25 you'll receive a 10% discount on all books purchased for an entire year. For more info call OWT (415) 821-4675 or write: 1009 Valencia St., SF, CA, 94110.

Women's Peace Delegation: A Project of Middle East Children's Alliance: Want to travel halfway around the world with a group of wonderful women to work for peace in the Middle East? You'll spend two weeks experiencing the daily realities of life under occupation, as well as the courageous and inspiring vitality of Palestinian women as they build their new state alongside Israel. Visit women in cooperative communities in the West Bank and Gaza, medical clinics, refugee camps, kindergartens and talk with grass roots activists. All women welcome, but a commitment to continued work for Middle East peace is asked. When? Dec. 15-30, 1991. Cost: \$700 plus air. For more info call (510) 548-0542, or write Middle East Children's Alliance,

2140 Shattuck Ave. #207, Berkeley, CA, 94704.

SERVICES:

Saundra Leiby, MSW, psychotherapist-- interested in working with clients of color. Micaela Lovett, supervisor. License MFC 23665. Sliding Scale. (510) 534-5006

COUNSELING FOR WOMEN - "Let's break the bonds of the emotions of oppression and fly with the sun in our hearts" Simbwala, (510) 465-3933.

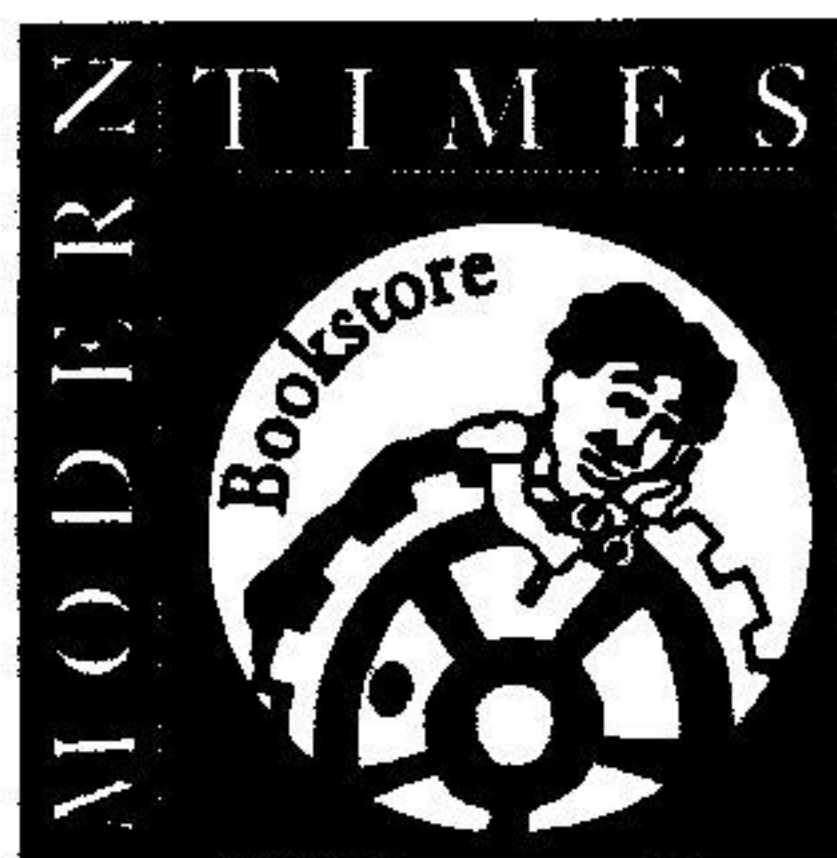
GWEN AVERY FOR HAIR
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SUBMISSIONS WANTED:

At the Crossroads is a brand new visual, performing and literary arts journal for women artists of African descent! Arising from the virtual absence of documentation of Black Canadian women's art, and the apparent need for a cultural and political magazine encompassing a wide range of issues, ATC aims to become a creative outlet for artists here and abroad. Manuscript of poetry, short stories, journal entries, experimental writing, radio plays, theatre, interviews, screen plays, transcribed performance pieces, and all other forms of creative writing are welcome. Also welcome are submissions of visual art-- line drawings, mixed media,

painting, quilts, sculpture, beadwork, photographs, etc. At the Crossroads is especially interested in receiving submissions from women in the Mar-atimes region who have not yet been published. Accompany your work with a brief bio and any other relevant info. Please send photographs or photocopies of art work-- no originals. All work not sent in self-addressed, stamped envelope will not be returned. All photographs will be returned. Send to: At the Crossroads: A Journal for Women of African Descent c/o Karen Augustine, PO Box 317, Station P, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2S8, Canada

CALL FOR PAPERS!!! "Making It Perfectly Queer," an interdisciplinary graduate student conference on Lesbian and Gay Studies will be held at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, April 2-4, 1992. Please submit one-page proposals for papers by Jan. 15, 1992, to: Natasha Levinson, Dept. of Education Policy Studies, 360 Education, S. Sixth St., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Champaign, IL 61801



Literature & Politics Culture & Community

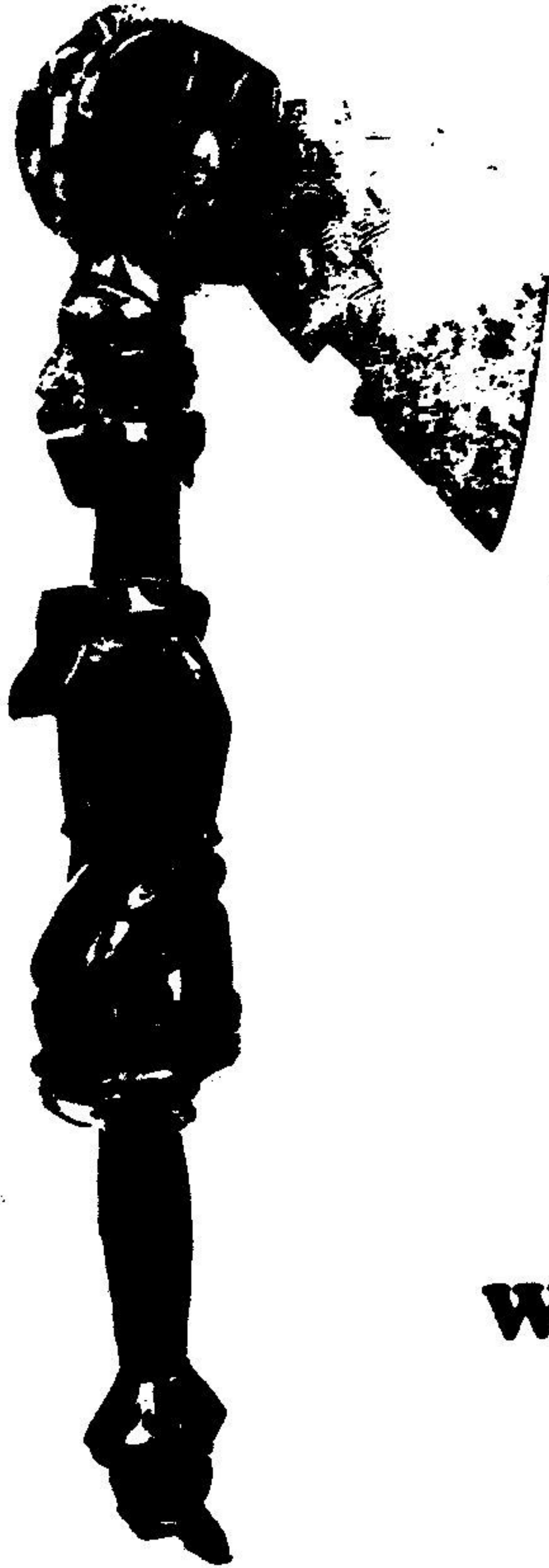
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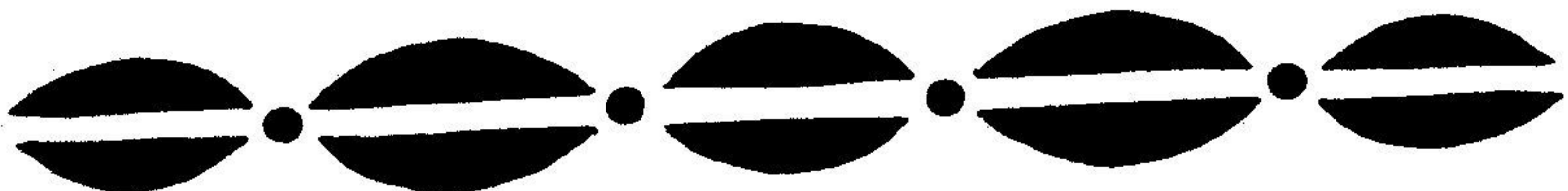
"Voices of the Gods"

(1985, 60 min.)

This unique film documentary captures the rich legacy of African religious traditions practiced today in the U.S. The film provides insight into the practices and beliefs of the Akan and Yoruba people through interviews with priests/priestesses and traveling to churches and ceremonies across the country. The film also illustrates how mass media has unfairly been used to ridicule the idea of African traditions and culture in the U.S.

Wednesday, Nov. 27th, 1991

7:30pm. Donation.
La Peña Cultural Center
3105 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley



"Ach ." Ach , vol. 3, no. 5, October-November 1991. Archives of Sexuality and Gender, link.gale.com/apps/doc/KNBDCX634000564/AHSI?u=umuser&sid=bookmark-AHSI&xid=6bc4534f. Accessed 8 Dec. 2022.