

vol. 5 no. 1

1983 ✓

AZALEA:

JOURNALS

**JOURNAL PIECES
and LETTERS**

***a magazine by and
for third world lesbians***

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the AZALEA COLLECTIVE:

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We try to remain non-elitist, non-traditional, rotating the responsibility of "issue coordinator" among collective members with each issue. This issue was coordinated by Sapphire.

We print what YOU send—work that is important to us as 3rd World lesbians.

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A self-addressed stamped envelope (SASE) with enough postage for the return of your work — otherwise it will not be sent back to you.

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Make checks/m.o.'s payable to: AZALEA, PO BOX 200, COOPER STATION, NY, NY 10276

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"LIMITES DE ABORTOS MEDICAID REITERADO POR LOS JUECES"

The New York Times, Martes, Primo de Julio, 1980

Los Jueces
por supuesto
no hacen mas
que hacer cumplir
las relaciones de la Justicia

En defensa de la Justicia
Los Jueces ejercieron sus derechos
para decidir
el destino de la mujeres

Los Jueces
por supuesto
no han hecho más
que hacer cumplir
las sexistas relaciones
de la Justicia

En defensa de la Justicia
Los Jueces han reiterado
que los abortos
pueden ser obtenidos
por los ricos

por supuesto
Los Jueces
ho han hecho más
que hacer cumplir
las relaciones de clase
de la Justicia

En defensa de la Justicia
Los Jueces han reiterado
su poder
sobre la reproducción
de los oprimidos

Los Jueces
por supuesto
no pueden hacer mas
que hacer cumplir
las racistas relaciones
de la Justicia

En defensa de la Justicia
Los Jueces no pueden hacer nada mas
que ejercer
las relaciones de poder de la Justicia

Translation: Taller Latinoamericano
From, "Wide Views - Short texts" by I. Rose
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JOURNAL

by Myrna Hill

There have been only three things that I have ever really wanted in my life.

The first is to live to see revolution. To see the ugly tree torn up by its roots and a beautiful new society growing in its place. To see the change finally come that can wipe away tears, my own and those of the people I have loved and do love.

The second is to know the love named in Donna Allegra's line, "and knowing that their love would be for always," and to have it be for always, in spite of all this society can do. In defiance of it.

The third is to create something beautiful with my words, my sensibilities, and my passions never ever crushed by America. To create something so beautiful that it will give back the intensity of pleasure that others' words have given me.

In light of these three passions that I think we share, I tell you the following experience.

For background, the U.S. government spied on and did its best to destroy the Black and Women's Liberation Movements and movements of all kinds for socialism, and it hounded those who participated in them. In all probability, it is doing the same to Homosexual Liberation, Environmental, and Anti-nuclear Movements right now. During a highly publicized court case, the Socialist Workers Party, et al, Plaintiffs, versus Attorney General of the United States, et al, Defendants, the F.B.I. was ordered to stop this harassment. That was in September of 1976.

Ten years ago, I was a member of the Socialist Workers Party. A year later I dropped out of the conventional work force and went off with the lover of my choice. Four years ago, without the lover and over thirty, I was simply unemployed in an unfriendly economy. In 1980 I took the PACE (Professional and Administrative Career Examination) and finally got a decent-paying civil service job. Then, on October 9th, I got a call from an Inspector Somers.

Somers wouldn't say what she wanted to talk to me about. "A couple of things have come up in your security investigation," she said. I made an appointment to see Somers that same afternoon. Then I called the Union and got myself a lawyer.

Union Attorney Shiels asked me what I thought Inspection wanted to talk to me about. I had been called in for questioning by our Inspection Division, which spies on federal workers. At that point, I mentioned only my history of activism in the Black and Women's Liberation Movements. I wasn't too sure how the Union would react to the idea of defending a socialist. Then, too, the Union is not fully trusted by Black workers, now

that white employees have started filing reverse discrimination complaints. The possibility also occurred to me that the issue might be my involvements with lesbian groups. I work for one of the most conservative agencies, and Reagan is not prone to Executive Orders protecting the rights of homosexuals. I called Somers back to tell her my lawyer would get in touch with her. She said, "He already did. And I wouldn't tell him what it's about because it's confidential, but I'll tell you. It's membership in questionable organizations."

Came the day for the appointment. I met with Shiels, and he asked me again what they might be questioning me about. This time I talked more openly—about everything but the lesbian groups, that is. I felt the Union would withdraw its support if I was under attack for sexual deviation. I hope I was wrong. Shiels advised me on how to answer if asked various types of questions. Then we went to the appointment with Inspection.

Inspector Somers is Hispanic and in her early twenties. Inspector Jones is white and about forty. Ironically, both are women who work in formerly all-male jobs won for them by affirmative action. My lawyer is liberal, about thirty and white. I am overweight, thirty-seven and scared.

The following is as nearly verbatim as I can get it. I, at least, was not taping the proceedings.

Somers: Read this and say you understand. (I read a short, intimidating form filled with dire threats if I lie or refuse to answer their questions.)

Somers: I will now put you under oath. Raise your right hand. Do you swear the information you are about to give is the truth?

Me: Yes.

Somers: Were you ever a member of a group called the Socialist Workers Party?

Me: Yes.

Somers: Are you still a member?

Me: No.

Somers: When did you stop being a member?

Me: I'm not sure. It was rumored I was thrown out for non-attendance in 1972.

Somers: Are you now a member of any similar groups?

Me: No ... Like what? What kind of group do you mean?

Somers: Like the Socialist Workers Party.

Me: What do you mean?

Shiels: Clarify exactly what groups you mean.

Somers: (reading from a folder in front of her) That would be organizations with a Marxist philosophy.

Me: No.

Jones: Alright.

Me: May I ask a question?

Inspector Jones: Yes.

Me: How did this come up?

Jones: The F.B.I. used to keep a list of organizations they considered subversive. In 1971 the Socialist Workers Party was on that list and at that time your name was listed in the membership for that organization. The F.B.I. kept surveillance of people in those organizations for reasons of security. At the time of your security check, the F.B.I. notified our Chief of Security in Washington and this was so unusual that he notified us to call you to this meeting. So if we ask you odd questions, it's because of the issue of your loyalty. We have to ask to determine your suitability as an employee.

Me: The F.B.I. had a list of the membership of these organizations?

Jones: Yes. It kept lists at that time. But it doesn't do it anymore.

Shiels: (bursting out) It still does!

Me: O.K.

Jones: Well, that's all.

Shiels: That's it? There isn't any more?

Jones: (getting up) No, that's all. Thank you. We just sometimes have to ask odd things whenever we're directed to. Good-bye now.

Me: (out in the hall) Do you think they're telling the truth?

Shiels: Yes. When they say that's all, that's all. They really can't fire you for that. And if they try, the Union will represent you.

I believe that what I've loved, cared about, fought for, is the meaning of my life, and that whatever I've fought for, I was fighting for my life. I have a right to my life. I am proud of it. I should not be harassed for it. And neither should you, for yours.

If any of my sisters who read this have had a similar experience due to your past or present activism, I would very much like to hear from you. I'm at **4086 Hillcrest Drive, Los Angeles, California 90008**. And if you would like to get more information about what the U.S. government is now doing to victimize political activists and what can be done to fight back, get in touch with the **Political Rights Defense Fund, Box 649, Cooper Station, New York, NY 10003; (212) 533-2902**.

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MYRNA HILL, "I'm a poet and writer. I've been active, at various times, in the Black Anti-Draft Union, Redstockings, the 3rd World Women's Alliance, the Socialist Workers Party, Jemima Writers Collective and more recently, the N'd Black Independent Political Party, the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, and Lesbians of Color. My work has appeared in Women's World, Majority Report, the Militant, International Socialist Review, and AZALEA. I live in Los Angeles."

Journal of Mamie L. Anderson
November 17, 1980

The Funeral

It was the season for hot apple cider and ugly white men running for office. The funeral began on a bright Saturday morning. The autumn sun shone Harlem-bright, illuminating every wind-strewn scrap of refuse along Lenox Avenue. I stood in the doorway of James Funeral parlor until my eyes adjusted to the darkness of the chapel. The gospel strains of an ancient organ filled the room and a sister scaled this wall of sound, her shimmering soprano giving voice to our collective sorrow. The congregation moaned in unison, "Just a Closer Walk with Thee/Grant it Jesus if you Please". Rows of the fellowship ebbed and flowed like waves in an ocean of despair.

This death, sudden and senseless, drew us together to recognize the tragedy of Sonia Lindeman. She would have been thirty this year. A jealous lover, in a fit of nigger-maddness stabbed her nine times before the terrified eyes of her children. Then, stunned by his own violence, he dropped the kids off at his mother's house. Another murder in the Bronx: domestic violence, common as dirt.

Joann Clark was such a lovely brownskin girl when we were little. Most of all, I remember her laughter. It was resonant and carefree with a hint of the islands: akee and breadfruit. Today she charged into James Funeral parlor like a frightened buffalo. We sat together, remembering the girlhood we shared with Sonia. Jo has grown unrecognizably fat with unhappiness. She grabs my hand which disappears into an inflated paw with nails scrubbed bone white. She is not the child I remember, but a woman much older than her years. Her eyes roam the room, hunting the elusive past, the friends we shared and enemies we dared, all grown and battered if not beaten by hard times.

The good reverend intones, "You got to believe. The Lord, I say the Lord works in mysterious ways his wonders to perform." I shiver as Jo Ann nods, "That's right!". We sense such opposing truths. The minister: "No matter what degree you got hangin on the wall. No matter how much money in the bank. No matter what your station in life, you will be called on God's time". And the congregation affirms this fatalist conclusion, accepting, without question, the antedelluvian logic which somehow enables them to face this day and live beyond it.

"I Want To Be Ready". Jo Ann repeats, over and over between the verses, "Cry for the Living. No hope. No hope!" And I gather from the tone of her voice that she is personally suffering to the degree that death is seen as welcome relief, indeed, a liberation from some irreducible pain.

My mother, who sits behind me, gives me a reassuring pat on the shoulder. I am void of feeling for anyone but Sonia. She was so gentle, so lovely, so young. Jo Ann uses up all the tissues my mother thought I'd need.

Education creates such emotional distance from the immediacy of moments like this. I live in a glass cage among my own people, within my own family, seeing double-details magnified by analysis. I am an observer, no longer touched or touching. The separation occurs divide and conquer, and a suspicion takes root in the minds of the folks I thought I understood and who, perhaps once, loved me without reservation. I am observable. A curiosity. Every difference, every imperfection, every foreign experience becomes glaringly visible under the scrutiny of the old neighborhood. At least I feel this way: transparent with guilt for having left so many behind in the escapable projects and tenements and traditions and rituals. By some strange twist of fate I journeyed to worlds of thought and activity they'd never know. Living on the crystal edge of history, the other side of the glass, something missed and missing. Someone saved, not safe.

In the world of academic idiots, we take on the dimensions of a funhouse mirror, reflecting the personal details of a people's struggle for strangers to distort. Every day among the folk is a telescopic vision of self, perception twice removed. Worst of all, one becomes suspect, suspended in a middleclass joylessness, knowing (intuitively certain) a salary increase or an apartment on the upper west side will never immunize you from social diseases like racism, sexism, classism or homophobia. Politically myopic perspectives of the black experience will never reveal a sane explanation for deaths like Sonia's because the murder of black women is an act of madness.

Suddenly, miraculously, the lament of the gospel singer and the sway of the congregation pierces the heart, shattering years of invisible ice that have encased the consciousness and a river of tears streams down quivering cheeks, before I am aware of crying. Cry for the living, for the dead, for the living dead. Such relief, this feeling deep for others. Uncalculated

mourning: organic connection. Grief heartfelt beyond the stylized precision of glass cutters.

Sonia's baby sister, Spring, in the winter of her young life, rides the terror of her grief like a hag on a broom. Her face is ashen, yellow, stark-boned and terrible against her black turtleneck, choking tears. Her eyes, her eyes - rage - red and wild in this sacred place. She is the spiritless daughter of a mother whose heart shattered long ago into tiny slivers of pain that draw blood. Spring perches like a gargoyle on her father's lap. Mr. Henry, the only Jew in the chapel, surrenders to the awful weight of a young woman grown thin from poisoning herself. He wonders, no doubt, had he remained in the family, if his fatherly presence could have sheltered Spring from drugs or Sonia from murder. He is limp against guilt.

Sonny stands sulking against the wall, hands digging into his pockets. His parole officer breathes down his neck at his wife's funeral. Sonny ... so respectable-looking this day in his baggy - brown - borrowed suit jacket. I am surprised at his appearance. I would have thought the years of drug abuse would have left some mark of decay, some horror about the eyes, scales of fire-breath or shrunken limbs. Maybe he joined the Nation in prison, or became a revolutionary. I don't know.

In fact, I can hardly remember when Sonny swept across Sonia's adolescence like a tidal wave, uprooting her fertile dreams with drugs and poverty and teenage motherhood. Yes, I must say Sonny looks quite well, considering the damage he has been accessory to. Maybe he changed while I was away at some school. Maybe the birth of his special needs baby brought him to his senses. Maybe he is a master of disguises, masquerading sobriety on this most solemn of occasion. Anyway, I avoid him.

Sonny was a turning point in Sonia's life. People used to say she didn't have a mind of her own, but before he charmed and chained her with his streetwise ways, Sonia was one of us - in the playground, on the bench, at the center, at the house parties, in the schools. The girls from 2205 second avenue, cultivatin eroticism on the roof (100 proof), in the stinky hallways, under the bed (Truth Dare Consequences promiseprivate or repeat), dancin in street to Martha and the Vandellas, Gladys Knight and the Pips, teachin each other to "Latin" to Symphony Sid's radio show. Buyin "vines" at May's with money we earned in the summer jobs with the Neighborhood Youth Corps. Displaying report cards with pride,

talkin about each other behind our backs, cashin bottles to buy Mary Janes when they were still a penny apiece, tradin comic books and boyfriends.

We played hard together in the Jefferson projects on Second Avenue: Highwater Lowwater, Hot Peas and Butter, Saloochie, Red Rover (Red Rover, send yo mama right over), Ringalevio, War, Knucks, Loadies. We played rugged until the boys began to call us unladylike and threatened to get their stuff from the girls cross the way in Johnson. We ran the streets until our fathers started layin curfews on us, and our mothers harnessed our arrogance with girdles and bras and garter belts and sanitary napkin belts.

Gradually almost imperceptibly, expectations of femininity began to encroach on our freedom of expression, turning taut muscles to soft, fuckable flesh, stretching bellies with love-child, mutilating dreams, suffocating our love for one another, twisting us into high-heel wearing teenagers too grown for our age ("too grown for our own good"). In our urge for popularity, we conformed to the "custom" of female cat-tiness and competitiveness. We conspired against each other, grew up and away from each other, forgot we ever needed each other and braved the solo flight to womanhood. We believed in our newly-created powerlessness and forgot the athleticism of double dutch and relay races. As the teens stretched to the twenties, memories of picnics along the fence on Wards Island, or walking along the East River steamy summer nights, sippin Thunder Bird on the bench while we braided each other's hair. All these faded to vague recollections of girlhood comraderie and possibility. "Bitch!" entered our vocabulary to negotiate our fear of emotional and sexual bonds. Pat and Vickie and Jo Ann G. & C., Dot, Yolanda and Natalie, Sylvia, Vivian and Marie and Me. Today, there are few survivors and I may be the only tomboy left from the block. I wonder if Sonia lost her nerve or if she died defending her right to ferocity.

Bernice rocks herself like a baby and I know she is thinking about my sister, Pearl who now lives on the verge of hysteria and, as I recall her, always has. She calls her man "God". He calls her "earth". He is the master of a polygamous marriage in which the wives scrape together their bare existence from the Department of Welfare checks. There are many children to feed. What Lord Kundalini can't get from his wives, he hustles in the street. My sister has always been dazzled by "street niggas". My

mother calls her a "dumb bitch". Sonia's death alarms my mother who has predicted some terrible consequence to Pearl's temper and lifestyle.

We rise to file past the coffin. One by one we pay our final respect to Sonia. The mortician could not recapture her beauty or perhaps the youthful radiance faded sometime during the 10 years of my absence. I realized I had never seen her full grown. My journey from the projects began with a scholarship to prep school. Spring grabs my hand as I pass before the family. "You should have taken her away with you." This accusation haunts me. Sonia's ghost. I realize I am not responsible for Sonia's death, but I cannot cringe from the responsibility of my sisters living full, healthy and free lives. We are all accountable to each other in matters of life and death and it is this investment that can prevent the carnage of Black women's lives, spiritually and materially.

Goodbye, Sonia. I will shout what the preacher did not: THESE KILLINGS MUST STOP! We must come together on every level to end these self-destructive and misogynist outbursts. We will live. We will become more conscious, more committed to the perpetuation of our lives, expression, creativity and community. You are gone, but there are so many of us daily avenging the deaths with courageous and selfless acts of love. You were loved too well. Not well enough.

There are folks milling around outside the chapel after the recession. Some are saying this tragic death did not surprise them. "She was getting herself together. Went Back to college, she did." Some say: "I'm glad to see everyone ... Too bad we had to come together under such circumstances." We are privately measuring the toll maturity has taken. I am a freak, healthier in appearance, more youthful than even those in my younger brother's and sisters' age group. I am embarrassed by my looks. I am anxious to leave. We put my mother into a car heading back to East Harlem. My father and I walk down Lenox Avenue. He is grumbling about the younger generation of black girls and boys that won't even reach his age. I am counting the caravans of hearse-led limousines rolling down the avenue on a Harlem-bright Saturday in the fall.

Copyright © 1980 by Mamie L. Anderson

MAMIE LOUISE ANDERSON, "I grew up in Harlem... Am Mommy to a nine year old boy ...I'm a performing artist and teacher ...A Capricorn. Journal writing has been a necessary tool for many years."

Dear Sisters,

I found a KKK warning on one of my job sites a week ago. I informed my "boss", the RR. The warning took the form of a "joke". It is as follows:



Q. What is this?

A. The last thing a nigger sees when the KKK throws him down a well.

It was not without some trepidation that I've kept this confined to my immediate family. At first I wanted to write you and everybody else I knew. But I decided to give myself time to re-group.

Now a week later, I'm still a wreck. I don't always work during the day and I'm always working in an area that is non-residential. My vulnerability is self-evident in that I have no communication device and in some cases (3 out of 5) no electricity.

I am also one of two black women who work for the B & M. The other woman has not extended much in the way of sorority. She works downtown in the central station. To my knowledge, I am the only non-white woman besides her employed by the B & M, and they have stuck me out here ... in the DMZ, so to speak.

I've tried telling myself that these people, whoever, are ignorant savages. However, I grew up under the shadow of those cone-heads and I have some personal experiences with them.

There is a women of colors group here in Beantown, but my contacts with them have not really established a framework for me to share things personal. I don't think they realize that a situation like this is real or viable. Their worlds strike me as being confined to occasions of overt racism.

I'm out here with a dog and a stick and I'm scared. This is not a situation that warrants group analysis. Yet, what else can they or I do?

I know that some of the men (white, of course) resent me. They lay me off, don't call me for work, and fuck with my time and pay. I know that some white women who worked for the RR have quit. But I can't do that. It took me a year and a half to find this job.

I don't know if you are aware of what it's like in Massachusetts. In my humble opinion, the only place worse is Pasadena, Texas, where I've seen Nazis in full regalia strolling the streets. Since coming to Boston, I have seen some things which made me wonder, why stay? I've seen black people swarm all over a young black faggot, knocking him to the ground, and stealing his pitiful packages. This, combined with the variety of rabies displayed by white folks, has not made me any more secure. I, myself,

have had to slug it out with white men on more than one occasion. And it's not like you see them coming, either. There have beentimes when they just walk up to me and give me five minutes to split.

I left my home state because my being a colored, out-spoken lesbian was going to endanger my entire family. I have less to lose in terms of numbers of lives here. I'm not budging. I'm not going to stop writing or reading. I refuse to scape-goat other colored folks for the sake of personal gain. In short, the committee of 15 or 20 white men in control can suck out of my ass.

However, when I'm alone and my super-nigger suit's in the closet, I begin to quake. Right now I'm so damned tired of being scared, I could cry.

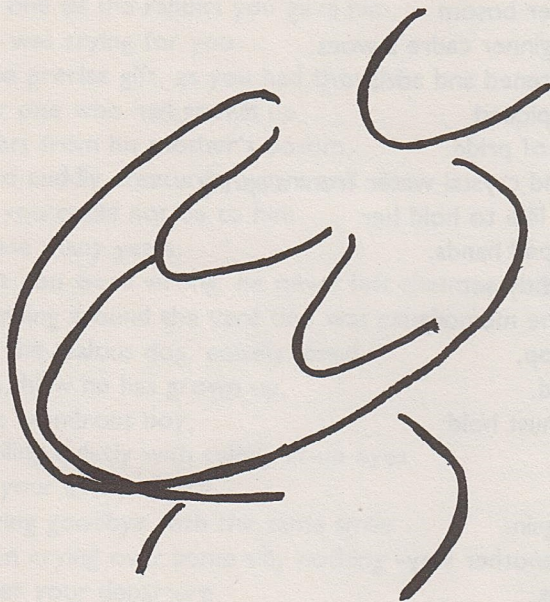
I know there's other colored lesbian women who share occupational hazards like mine. I know they must share some of my experiences.

As for the situation at hand, I will continue to deal and not give up. I will take whatever measures necessary in pioneering this job to ensure a future for other colored women to come. I just keep reminding myself that I'm not alone. I have a few friends and family and AZALEA.

Please feel free to share this letter with people you know. It might be a shot in the arm for them.

Love,
Stephanie Byrd

STEPHANIE BYRD, is a Black lesbian writer living and working in Dorchester, MA. — *Azalea*



Only Us © Sapphire 1983

Sapphire is a member of the Azalea collective, a writer and a dancer living and working in NYC.

Dear Friends:

I enclose samples of poems by a Filipina revolutionary, Clarita Roja. She is active in the underground resistance against the U.S.-backed Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines.

In Solidarity,
E. San Juan

SOMEONE THERE IS

Someone there is
Whom you cannot forget,
The way she'd slide her hand in yours
How soft her bosom
To your beginner cadre's woes.
How she listened and advised
And gently piqued
Your sense of pride.
Like cool and crystal water from a spring
How you'd like to hold her
In your cupped hands.
Your lips lightly set
Sipping of the memory
Drop by drop,
Without end.
But hands must hold
Gun,
Then pen,
Then gun again.
Cupping in another way
Harder goals,
You talk and
Practice revolution
More determined at each step
To hold firmly to the gun
But in your mind's eye
The shadow of a love
And the necessary parting
Because she would like to be
Only water from a spring.

—Clarita Roja
Manila, Philippines

SON OF AN UNDERGROUND WORKER

When he cried over the death
of one of the rabbits you gave him,
he was crying for you.

The precise gift, as you had thought,
for one who had grown up
apart from his mother's bosom,
two cuddly creatures, warm and alive
as you could not be to him
these many years.

But you were wrong, he never left them to waste,
jumping around the yard one was caught
by the jealous dog, equally loved.

Ah, how he has grown up,
the wondrous boy,
smiling quietly with calmly lit-up eyes
at your every arrival,
saying goodbye with the same smile ...
then crying over some silly nothing --
after your departure.

—Clarita Roja
Manila, Philippines

ARE YOU MY MOTHER?

Are you my mother?
We have not much in common.
You strut around
Boasting of the riches of your sons and daughters,
Priding yourself in their careers.
Your world is of marble and parquet floors
Polished and scrubbed day after day
By a retinue of meekened maids.
And the cushions,
The thick abominable cushions
That slitheringly whisper your treacherous language of
Surrender, surrender to the heathen god.
You are not my mother.
My vision is not your vision.
My lingo is not of creams that banish scars
But of scars that banish bourgeois dreams.
My mother is she
Who waits in a hut by the hills
with a cup of her mulunggay soup
And urges me always to
Fight on, daughter, fight on.
The hills are filled with huts
Inside of which are mothers
And so everywhere I go
The atmosphere reverberates with the warmth.
Of soup and revolutionary understanding.
And always, the eternal echoing call:
FIGHT ON, DAUGHTER, FIGHT ON!

—Clarita Roja

The Beast Goes Down

The Beast first appeared four years ago when I was fine and my family started dying off around me—dropping off dead before I had a chance to know them too good. This Beast tore loose chasing children and colors through the streets of Harlem. Saw jet bombers silhouette across the sky come to destroy our paradise. Saw the sunshine on half a street (the good side) and absolutely neglect the better side of equality—the shades that hide shadows. Saw my shadow with the beast behind it that day. That oh so hot and heated day. Stood on the corner and didn't know where I was. Stood on lots of corners anywhere, all in a circle of time and streets I had passed before and over and over again. Till someone took notice and called me in with their eyes—voices having no effect in the psychic void of becoming real. This all happened that first day when the beast became real, refusing me entry into peoples lives, leaving me isolated and running door to door panic, searching for my friends—friends who were long gone, and who in fact never lived in Harlem, but who, somehow, should have been a part of this panorama, this spectacle of events on this on lord! So hot day-into-night-day.

Someone offered my head an Iron pipe too big for my head, so I left their house and their young girls all dressed in Navy blue and white stripes—three of them. I only wanted the bed to lie down, but it was their house and rooms and they couldn't see me in it too comfortably that day, so they got annoyed and threatened to explode if I didn't leave. So I left kinda like in a hurry down the stairs and out into the street and the lights of day once again.

Hot and heated and hurried and no place to go in particular, which is a crime and can become a crime if you stay at it too long, which I was beginning to do as this beast kept running me hard. Like it didn't want me to get too friendly with no one that day. Not even my own kind, which they all was, being as I was in Harlem. But nobody seemed to recognize me. They all recognized the Beast though. The Beast was a pretty popular character up and down the streets and corners of Harlem; especially on this day. The Beast went to a bar and just sat, was refused a drink that didn't belong to it and left for parts unknown. I came along afterwards and asked for the same drink with my eyes and was refused both stool and drink and I left with a napkin that was party shaped at the edges and pink in the center.

The Beast waited for me. Evening was coming and unfamiliar familiar faces was becoming concerned about strangeness in their community. Mouths began to move in unison and at each other. Eyes moved in my direction from stoops and corners and sidewalks. The air thickened and my nostrils began to quiver. Heart pounding quickly someone began to approach and became more than one person. I was docile, I was gentle, recognition at last. I was being me here on the corner and I was being recognized at last. The police came and got me. The cops came with people, gentle people of the community who led me back to an awaiting police car and asked me in soft voices if I was ok, and I didn't know if I was ok. I felt alright but I didn't know if I was ok or not. The beast was gone, disappeared, vanished in thin air and I felt ok but I didn't know. The man with the iron pipe and the girls was there—he was tall and wispy and had straightened hair that was reddish brown and that stood out long from his head like a woman's hair-do. A little old lady with a black straw hat and thick stockings was there and a roundish kinda loveable looking uncle kind of man with a square head and yellow shirt and eyes that smiled when he smiled which was often—they all was there, asking me how I was, if I was ok and I didn't know to all of them, till I got into the car and was gone with the police to the hospital, I later discovered, but only after stopping at the police station, where I was checked for criminality it being night time now.

I heard a lot of gun shots that night, more than ever before in my life. Saw a lot of blood at the hospital. Somebody got shot. It was Saturday and the war was on. A lot of sirens whirring. Somebody got stabbed and I didn't want to see, but there they were hanging over tables and stuff looking bloody in the middle and too painful to be viewed. But what could you do? This was the first night of the day where the Beast had appeared and disappeared just as quickly.

I saw the doctor, and doctor one said I was normal in a physical way—my body functioned normally and responded correctly when summoned to perform for the doctor. My blood pushed back when pressured, my heart pounded, my knees kicked and twitched when knocked, and my eyes followed all lights, fingers, pencils and other objects which the doctor saw fit to amuse us both with. So I was ok to him. Doctor one referred me to doctor two in another building and doctor two wanted to talk. He said I shouldn't drink too much at all and that voices were bad for me. He asked me questions about my chemistry and called for help.

My brother and my uncle arrived and sat for awhile in the anteroom or antic room, a room designed for waiting. They came gladly when called and just sat patiently for a time; a long time it seemed. They asked me if I was ok and I didn't know, but I thought for awhile; they didn't know the Beast had been loose today. My eyes saucered little girl and I felt lost. So they put me away for awhile—to rest. The doctor did. A nurse took my clothes. And they wheeled me away upstairs to a larger place of halls and beds and people lying around being calm.

It was hard that first night being away from people I loved and in the arms of strangeness. They strapped my arms to my sides that night and laid me down to rest with a needle in my behind. I fell to sleep and became a part of the night. I dreamt of a lady with a parasol that night—a black french lady with a parasol for sunshine and a bussled butt for femininity or anonimity. She had one of those classic french 1890's hair-do's - upswept - and was cherry wooden complected. She just strolled back and forth like she was one of the fixtures there ... Scared me. I must say. I never knew anybody like that in real life, or made-up life either. Anyway I gave up life for awhile and became a part of the hospital community. Till I was released into the world once again, safe and sound and almost together.

The women they walk, glide, parade
Up and down corridors
Marching to an illusive dream
Freedom
Strolling away the narrow length of hall
The anxiety of time stood on end.
Each a Queen of her own Queendom—
Carrying the boundaries of providence—
Time and Agony
Beneath each step
To a forward stall
As they mark off the boundaries
Of their becoming empire
With each drop of the foot.
The unofficial law
Say
Stay within your lane

No moving in front of your sister Queen
No recognition allowed
No bobbing too much
 and definitely
No weaving!
Women! Ladies! We Walk Parade Up And Down Corridors
Back and forth
We feet feel the floor
We mind count the squares
We bodies cry for release
We bodies; sites, the lines of division.
Bodies of women we move.
Despair and resignation heating the air
Between us.
We hearts gone, no more
Splintered driftwood anchors,
Trail the corridor proper
We feet
Ball and Bunyon
Ghostly vessels
Trace their way down the floor
 smooth faced and shining
Finish Your Course!
Touch Home!
Turn Around And Start Again!
Women! We eat the silence
Whitted with the apparitions
Of our movement
Carriator forms we are
Women on the loose
Languid Searching Souls
Holistic figures
Queens without subjects
The floor yields us no recognition
Doors do not open—offer us no refuge
Walls simply end in corners
And become other walls
Time is an endless project

Divided by our pacing.
Women. We walk step heel to masters call.
Shall we gather at the window, sisters?
...When Nurse Aims arrives to save us,
We women, She woman too. We see her.
She sees us. Eyes shift from the horizon—
Face the woman in white, standing still.
Tomorrow you go home Forthright! and
Also you too Casual! Hardy! Headstrong!
Ecstasy Ripple among us!
Soon one of us be the one!
Soon all of us be the one!
Going home
Walking out
Moving freely in the open spaces
Air our only boundary.
Walk off the side of the earth if I want.
Walk into your house and back out again if I choose.
Walk around my house if I want. My own home.
Walk around and move things.
Move things around and take them with me.
Take them with me and talk about 'em.
Talk about 'em good when I get where I'm going.
Got lots of places to go now. Now that I'm free.
Got stores to go to. Got doors to open. Got
Floors that become streets.
Got lots of street to walk and walk and walk.
Got your house to find my lady.

My friend Emma, who had returned to me after some distance of thoughts between us was relieved to find me well, but said that I was permanently impaired and would never be the same—not at market price, I reckoned without really being hurt.

by Sandra Lebby

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SAUNDRA LEBBY, is a Black lesbian poet and writer, living in working in Bklyn, NY. She has been a member of the Jemima Writers Collective and has been published in a previous issue of AZALEA.

DIARY ENTRIES

2-5-76

I have feelings for women. Always have. I told this to Denise and learned of her feelings. (She told me she was a hermaphrodite and had a lady love.)

2-9-76

Denise is asleep on my bed and I wish she would stay. I would like to share my bed with her ...

4-1-78

Ma just called. Grandma has had a stroke. Paralyzed on the right side. Ma also tells me I'm sick for loving Sue ...

5-9-79

I want to write poetry and study Black Lesbians ... to learn more about myself and my relationship with Sue. I want to read everything I want to read and write everything to write and share these poems with other Black women and be seen as important.

5-16-79

I was reading Jane Rule's **Lesbian Images** at work and Vera (my supervisor) asked to see it. She wanted to know if the book described "what 'they' do." And she's a health planner?!

5-25-79

"The creative person is often lonely because he must be a world in himself and must find the way in life within himself." (Rollo Walter Brown, **Lonely Americans**, 1929)

6-13-79

I lay in my room, letting the early evening sun filter between my fingers. The dust floats as sparkles, each speck having its own spectrum. It's like looking into a box of multi-colored glitter. ... I've just had a much worked for orgasm.

10-10-79

First snow! First snows are significant to me somehow. I mark time this way as with menstruation and the first changing of the leaves. It's beautiful ... Takes the edge out of the sky. Makes me feel soft and light ...

10-14-79

It's after 2 am. Sue and I just returned from "Bonnie & Clyde's" ... Today Sue and I will bus to Washington, D.C. for the First Natl. March for Gay Rights ...

10-16-79

Less than a minute ago Sue told her mother over the phone that she had "a vested interest in the March on Washington" because she is a Lesbian and I am her lover! W-O-W!!

11-20-80

I've learned that my wanting someone else—in whatever capacity—will never be enough ... so that now I am striving to want myself.

2-12-81

Today I had my first meeting with psychologist Mary ... (I had insisted that my referral from the County Health Association be a Black woman). She asked me what I was looking for. I said freedom from depression and guilt (my Grandmother's death, 6-5-78). Acceptance and contentment. Energy and courage ... When I told her I had a white woman for a lover, she told me that her Christian morality prevented her from believing that my homosexuality was anything except a pathological and social problem. She asked me if I was aware that the majority of women addicts are bisexual or gay. She asked if there was alcoholism or drug addiction in my family ...

by Terri Jewell

TERRI JEWELL, "b. October 4, 1954, Louisville, KY. I have been a library assistant/writer, lifeguard/writer, counselor/writer, bloodbank worker/writer, claims examiner/writer. I want to be a Health Planner/writer. I am continually working on both sides of my personality.
d. October 2000, Boston, MA. "

Dec 17, 1981

Dear Azalea,

i enjoyed reading your Spring/Summer 1981 issue, which was my first. i would like to share with you an entry from my journal, that i wrote during my stay in Southern Oregon this past summer. it's called,

Dressed in Black

where can i go
and be welcomed
dressed in my Black skin
from north to south
east to west
back doors open to welcome me in
only as their token again
even my white political sisters fear the reper
cussion on their lives
if,
they are seen with me where the boys reign
with me dressed in Black.
for me to deny
being a womon of color
is more than ridiculous
some do,
those of us who pass
yet,
no matter where we go or who we know
we are still colored wimmin
there is no way to shield our color except
with the night
there
we are powerful
and sheltered
we become the night by rite

thanks so much,
La Verne Gagehabib
Sunnyvale, Ca.

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LA VERNE GAGEHABIB (summer storme), "i am from berkeley, now living in sunnyvale, ca. a lover of womin. also a printer, who has dreams of connecting with other black lesbian printers. my writing includes short stories, poetry & speeches."

From A Journal Of A Transitional Time

Introduction:

These pieces were excerpted from the journal I kept during the summer of 1980, a time when I was making a transition from a ten year teaching career, to a way of life in which my writing would be more central. During the time covered by these entries, I was hired as a part time messenger/xerox operator at a corporate law firm.

A few words about the other people I mention may be helpful. Becky is the name of my lover. Miriam and Kim are two children I came to know through my work as a teacher. Roxy is my sister. Kirsten and Birgit are the daughters of a close friend, with whom I lived for a brief time.

Saturday, August 9, 1980:

I've been reading Tillie Olsen. **Silences**. A book hasn't had this kind of impact on me since I read Rilke's **Letters To A Young Poet**, I guess seven years ago. The book is incredible. It's full of wisdom that no one else has ever stated, facts that no one has ever juxtaposed. Reading it is an exciting experience—I feel as if every paragraph of it is addressed to me, personally. It's just the book I needed to read now, at this time, undergoing this transition from the teaching career. A book to encourage me. To tell me I can do, I must do what I want to do ...

I found a new metaphor for my life ... I picture a tangled, knotted ball of string. Me trying to untangle it, picking out one string and following it, turning the ball over and over, putting the string through holes and loops, passing obstructions, getting out more and more of the tangles, until I get all the tangles out and it's a whole string. And I reach the end of that string. But (what I didn't know is that) there are other strings tangled up in the ball. It wasn't just one. So I followed one strand as far as it went. Now I've put it down. That was the teaching thing. It's time to choose another strand, see if it's longer, stronger than the first, see how far it takes me.

Monday, September 1, 1981

I have finally found what I believe I want. A job with the hours I need. I don't even have to work on Saturday or at night! The hours are 1 to 5:30, weekdays. The pay is very low. \$3.25 an hour—more than minimum wage, but just barely enough for me to break even working 22 hours a week. If my rent stays cheap, if I don't do any traveling, if I'm careful.

One thing that's hard for me is dealing with some of the stuff about money. [Becky and I] are still income sharing, and based on my hourly salary, my share of the rent is still very low. It makes me feel a little uneasy to be paying so much less of the rent and food, as if it somehow isn't really fair, though we've agreed that the concept of income sharing is fair. I want to remind myself that the reality of the situation is that I will be working many hours for which I will not be getting paid. That there is no pay for my writing, though it has enough value to be paid for, and that the long hours of unpaid work justify the lower shares on the bills: Because I'm not going to be getting paid for half the work I'll be doing.

There are a few things I have to keep reminding myself: That writing is work. That I have 2 jobs. That I am a freelance writer ...

The only other thing is the question of me and my relationship with my writing. Is it going to work—for me to really write for 15 hours a week? Will I be able to do it? Is it really what I want? Am I capable of taking myself that seriously? And I know what I want. I feel determined to do it

...The significance of this whole thing is not just that it's a new job, or even a new field for me, but a whole new way of life. I'm trying something I've never dared attempt—valuing my writing, valuing what I want to do. It's been a long year, full of revelations and changes. It's been a good summer, full of positive decisions and moving in a good new direction. I feel like I've covered a lot of ground, and gotten some things worked out this year, about what my work has been, about what my work will be, about my relationship with Becky. We'll enter our fifth year together this fall, and I think we're stronger for the year that's just been.

Wednesday, September 3, 1980:

One of the things that hurt about stopping teaching was the feeling that I was giving up a part of my identity. That I would no longer be someone who I had been for most of my life—someone who works with kids. So part of the novelty of doing a new job is taking on a new identity. Having to go there and be someone I never was before, someone I don't know yet how to be.

It's so different from everywhere else I've worked. It's different because I'm entering at the bottom of a hierarchy, and because I've never been a part of office workers, and because no one else is black, and

because all the women seem so different from me. Why do I feel I have to be phony? (Even when I was straight, I used to feel that way, on jobs. Could never understand how people could go on weekend camping trips or encounter groups with people from work ...)

Today was harder than yesterday. Harder for one thing because I had to there all day. Was tired by the end of the day, and the stress builds up. [There] was the question of overtime. I ended up working late again ... I'm afraid that a lot is going to depend on my assertiveness, which is never a good situation for me.

The other worry is the dress thing. ...I bought a pocketbook, and now the question is what to do with it

Somehow, I have to incorporate this new role into who I am, so I don't always have to be feeling as if I'm trying to be someone I'm not

I want to think some about if there's a way I can work there and not have to feel like I'm being phony. To be able to make compromises and be aware of them [as compromises], (like changing the way I dress, or not calling people on their sexism,) and ... still feel sincere, and still have integrity.

Tuesday, September 9, 1980:

Last night's dream. I had just returned from being away all summer. We lived in the same neighborhood as many of the parents that I used to work with, and a lot of them were outside and so were some of the kids. I decided to go out and talk with them ...

Later, I sat on a porch with two children, an older and a younger, two girls, sisters. I think both were children I had taught. We asked each other about our summers. I told them that I had made some decisions over the summer. ("Decided to change some things" was, I think, the wording I used.) I said I wasn't going to be a teacher any more. The youngest (it was mostly she I was talking to) said—why not? That I was a good teacher and why wasn't I going to be a teacher any more?

I told her I had decided to do a different kind of work.

She asked me what kind of work I was going to do.

I said, "I'm going to write books."

She asked if I would write books for kids. And I said yes, I would like to.

And that if she could think of anything she would like to read a book about, she should tell me, and I would try to write it, or maybe we could write it together.

In the dream, I felt relieved that I was still going to be able to be close to these children.

When I told the dream to Becky in the morning, I began to cry—when I got to the part where I said, “I’m going to write books.” That line seems significant, because I didn’t say, “I’m going to work at a law firm,” or “I’m going to work part time and write part time,” or even, “I’m going to write stories and poems and articles and book reviews.” In response to the question, “What kind of work are you going to do?” I answered that I am going to write books!

Who were the two little girls? They were Miriam and Kim. Kirsten and Birgit. Me and Roxy. Even me and Becky. Of course, the youngest was me.

I was very surprised when I began to cry when I was relating the dream. I didn’t know it was that moving. I did know it was important...

Monday, September 15, 1980:

A circular day. Evening returns me to thinking about my story again. This morning I typed it. It is only the 3rd draft, but seems so close to finished I will probably be devastated when I begin comments on it...

I realize I need to say something about my job. It’s working. My position was changed to librarian-clerk. My hours are stable I like my job. Every day I look forward to going to it. And every morning I write.

by Becky Birtha

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BECKY BIRTHA, is thirty-three and has been keeping a journal for twenty-three years. Her first book, a collection of short stories, is scheduled to be published this year by Frog In The Well.

"This Bridge Called My Back",
edited by Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldua

261 pgs.
Persephone Press, 1981

Reviewed by Juana Maria Paz

I cannot honestly say this book changed my life. I changed my own life several years ago with the help of a tribe of womyn warriors, which, perhaps, is as it should be.

It did serve to give me the focal point I needed and the answer to the following question: "Why am I doing this?"

The question that emerges from reading this book is -

If we were here all the time, why do we still feel so invisible, why do we need this book to document the commitment of Third World feminists? Did someone doubt us before? Does the act of publishing a book by radical womyn of colour validate our existence in a way that years of work does not?

What are we now, that we weren't before the book?

Why do I need this book to carry around with me and prove to the "real feminists" that I exist?

What the fuck is going here?

It is hard to take in all the messages and personalities of this book, possibly because I've been going to college this term and after that bullshit anything else is a mindblower.

Even though the book makes no pretense of being comprehensive and including every woman of colour's perspective, in some ways, it says it all. The seeds are there.

Or the basics are there. It just needed collating. This book does not trigger a movement or suggest a new thought or way of life. It was all happening anyway.

But it validates those of us who work so hard and always seem invisible, anyway. Why is that?

It says it all. It's all there - the pain, the horror, the fear, the decision -take power, go on, be one, the vision is clear and strong.

Now what the hell do we do with it?

I usually have some feelings of resentment whenever I read a womyn's book or publication that I'm not in. In this case, it wasn't necessary. I'm in

this book, on every page, in every word and thought.

You know, I never had anybody write me a book before - I've had love songs, hate mail, love letters, music dedications and a few flattering book reviews but I never had a whole book by dozens of womyn written just for me.

Thank you. It isn't enough. We have to continue the work. Now I understand all the people I truly loved who couldn't accept it - all the womyn and lovers I felt rejected by.

"I love the goddam woman," I cried, again and again, "How can she do this to me?"

It's hard to accept this much love and truth and caring and commitment because it demands and deserves no less than a total lifetime commitment. If I accept the precepts of this book I have to say I'm not going to fuck up anymore and go off and try to forget "all this bullshit" every time the womyn's community drives me up a wall (like this year, like last year, like every year, etc.)

It means I have to stand up and say for myself,

"Hey, baby, somebody just spoke to you. So what's your answer?"

This book requires a response and I am afraid to fail again. I have been wanting someone to come along and make it easy for me, hold my hand and tell me it's "okay."

Naturally, there are no takers and it is definitely not "okay." It is time. It has been time for a long time. It is long overdue for us to rise up and take power, not from others but from ourselves and use the gifts we carry with us to create a better world.

It is time.

It has been time.

For a long time.

It was time before the book. It is time after the book.

There is no external re-assurance. I look to white women and lovers to tell me that it's safe and I can be myself now.

It is time. The hand of God will not come out of the clouds and give me the message on a silver platter.

You are ready when you say you are.

Right here, right now, writing this, it is my time.

I am ready now.

And it is time.

It has always been my time.

I never knew that before.

I know now.

I await.

I am.

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author, "The La Luz Journal",
herstory of womyn of colour land
and The Matriarchal Book of Costume.

Juana Maria Paz
11 W. South St.
Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701

Journal of Mamie Louise Anderson
Oct 20 1981

Song for Ibis (lyrics)

Verse 1

The southern gal is soft & sweet
She churn the butter that I love to eat
The northern gal is quick & cold
She love her money but she lost her soul

Verse 2

The western gal, she wicked rich
She hoarde the pleasure but I spend she quick
The eastern gal got much to say
She stroke my mind in a spiritual way

Chorus

The island gal is fresh and ripe
She lips be wet with spliffs
But the love I had for my African gal
Sent me into fits

Verse 3

The earth is full, she big but round
I love the way she lovin sound
The mountains high, the valley low
When we stop rocking I be damned if I know

Verse 4

Turn to the east and to the west
Turn to the one that love you best
I roam she north, I roam she south
I roam she country with a hungry mouth

Chorus (repeat)

Copyright © 1981 by Mamie Louise Anderson

**At The Michigan Womyn's Music Festival
—1981—**

I looked into the sea of womyn
and saw images of myself in
short, tall, fat, skinny, white,
black and latin dykes.

They opened the spiritual space
within me through
guided fantasy, body massage,
spontaneous hugs and womyn
made miracles

Shay

Copyright © 1981 by Shay

Journal Entry October 20, 1981

I'm guilty of secretly wanting a perfect love. "Define perfect love", she (my lover) says. "Having everything go right." I say. "Everything defined by who?" she says. "By me", I say. "Good luck. How do you get a perfect love with too imperfect people?" she says. "It's my fantasy," I say defiantly. We drink weak coffee to the sound of Al Jarreau. Soon we move the music and ourselves to the bedroom where we lie on her lavender quilt in our thoughts and the music, now Pachelbel's yearning Canon. I kiss, muzzle, lick, suck and tease her creamy breasts and rose colored nipples. We talk and kiss lips and cling to each other. We both want to cry because I'm leaving in ten days, but are afraid for our own reasons. I love her so much it hurts, I want to be strong. We talk about black lesbians, a rare breed in this community. I tell her I often feel isolated, but feel lost not knowing how or where to find my third world sisters. Excuses? The worst that could happen is that I'd connect with professional closet cases (ie. "not into labels - being called lesbian/dyke/etc.") I'm out and feeling good about my sexual and womon-loving self and can't deal with closets now. I know that cliches exist, a closed circle of friends, of which I know little. I'll work on getting black and third world women here together - raise some lesbian consciousness and maybe even a little hell when I get back.

by Shay

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Excerpts from "Conversations with Various Wimmin"
(an unpublished prose/journal manuscript)
Copyright © by doris davenport

Essay on Wimmin & Imagination ...

One thing about us, our imaginations are superb. Sublime. Supreme. And overdeveloped and overactive. Otherwise, how could we "fall in love" so constantly? That's my drift. As Gladys Knight said, you got to use it/ to keep on keeping on. No. We don't "imagine" ourselves in love, either. Nor is imagination the opposite of truth. (See **Their eyes were Watching God**, by Zora Neale Hurston, 1st paragraph.) Imagination IS truth. Oh, sublime. oh shit.

The problem is, we are very good at acting on this imagined thing. Stop. This time i know i'm moving too fast. To go back - we imagine, or we think "what if", and we act as if/actually exists. At least, when it comes to Love. Primarily with love - we tend to be overly obsessed with the mundane on other levels. We imagine how good it would feel if this person ... & being ultimately pragmatic, we go ahead and act. End of lecture one.

11.1.79

(1)

"manic-depression" is actually
fluctuation between a sense of overwhelming
enthusiasm and a sense of
abject futility ... especially in writers

(2)

when you decide to do something
you know is a waste of time
you shouldn't complain
about the time
wasted ...

III. Another Essay about my Momma

Momma (Ethel Mae Diosa Davenport) was always alone, to me. She was tall and remote, and grand and dignified. Intent and brilliant and always alone. She was alone in a way that made couples or "together" be obscene. When she was alone she personified, to me, the essence of Being. i would watch her walk up Soque St., up the hill from town. Slowly, to an internal rhythm. Head held up, eyes looked through things. Sometimes, she had a faint amused smile on her face and always she was walking alone. Her walk up the hill looked like time. Eternity. Absolute time/slow-moving beauty. Another person beside her was unthinkable and unnecessary ...

Sometimes in the evening Momma would sit and stare in long silences, into the air... She was not there/she was not "daydreaming." When she did that, usually in the evening, on the porch, she personified thought. & she was always alone at that time. None of the 7 of us (her children) distracted her, then. We would start to call her name, and see what she was doing, and stop. So because of her,

i saw solitude as the natural way to be. To be alone was the only way ... Momma never seemed lonely, lonely, incomplete, frustrated. She seemed complete, intact, fulfilled, by silence and solitude. And totally sufficient to her self. Momma taught me, non-verbally, the beauty of solitude. The essentiality, the necessariness, of being alone.

"No. 7"

Physicality of the goddess/or The Goddess in Wimmin's Images

For example, the top of me is about a size 7. The bottom is at least a 14 or 16. Disproportionate & all that. Because i am a "throwback", or a remnant. An anomaly.

But, the goddess used to make lots of wimmin like that, a few years ago. Then around my generation (i'm 32) she stopped (or else, the wimmin "adapted" themselves). She stopped, because she realized, like with the word, and her first experiments, and after centuries, that people increasingly were not ready for the fullness of that kind of body. and the completeness ...

Wimmin's thighs were made full and round, strong and soft, so that we could work/aesthetically. That is, we could work, run, play, build, be amazons, and still be beauty, all at once. Also, we have full thighs because we were meant to stroll slowly, peacefully, and gracefully - like the goddess.

Wimmin's asses were made full and soft and round so that from the back/could be contemplated the roundness of the earth/grandeur of the universe. The goddess did not design/intend a predatory world, where her daughters would need to run away from anything ... She had no idea that anyone anywhere would have the sacrilegious arrogance to define us as "sex objects". She also had no idea that any of us would also be accomplices ...

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My faith in lesbians is an absolute, like the "heathens" and their beliefs (like, christian, moslem, catholic, etc.). That is, i believe, yet i have not SEEN. Blind faith. literally. i believe, yet have no proof. i cling passionately to that belief, and when lesbianism shows up straight/limited/harsh/cruel/unjust and unwomonly, i-like the heathens, - chant, "Not my will, but thine." i believe, and almost everything conspires to stop this belief ...

So i wait, and write spells, and burn candles, and wait. i meditate, and believe, and write, and wait. Still ... i believe, have faith, and hope for a few signs, not even miracles. Something keeps telling me/my wait ain't in vain; my faith is not misplaced, even if it is an absolute

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The Question of Audience ...(3.14.80)

There is an Audience. i am always talking to someone/someone is always listening. Even if i'm making them up, that does not matter. At first, it was a "benign" spirit, neither female nor male, but then ...

She's sort of stately, or at least, sitting in that straight backed chair with her ankle length dress and head scarf on, she seems so. Could be the Goddess. Might be Yemaye (i call on her enuf.) Her face is in shadows; she's still, quiet, contemplative. Stored energy. She is faintly smiling since she finds me faintly amusing, but ultimately comprehensible. There IS someone. If i had to theorize, she'd be made of the basics of A. Johnson: her body, mind, color, laugh, smile, warmth and cynicism. The honesty and beauty of Tanya. The agelessness of Tanya. And the wisdom of us all. There's one, but there's several. Round, humorous, rich, like Sandy. Direct and directed, like Pam. One even giggles like Pam, and one has hands like Maggie. For some reason, they all have on long robes and dresses. Even the one who smiles ironically, like Sherry. They come and go, & visit and stay, and say - "What about this?" "Have you solved this?"

36

"Write this different." "Don't write this at all". And one of them is that woman in the grey cowl dress in the Martha Graham dance, "Lament". She is busy being sad and anguished with lotsa energy but she is also on my side. They are all stern, but compassionate. Still, but animated. Speechless, and constantly talking. Never seen, but always present. Never seen, but ever present ...

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doris diosa davenport, is a native of Georgia, living in Los Angeles, CA. Author of Eat Thunder and Drink Rain, her second book of poetry.

BOOKS

Again, books that have been sent to us.

In addition to cataloging an ongoing listing of current books that interest/relate to our readers—this booklisting functions as a resource for book reviews by 3rd World lesbians.

If a book appears on the list that you would like to review (we require a WRITTEN review, which would be published in an issue of AZALEA) - contact us: Tell a bit about yourself and why you're interested in reviewing the book, etc...

A new list appears with each issue. If you have, or know of a book that you think belongs on a list like this one, please send it to me at AZALEA.

lindajean brown
for AZALEA

In keeping with the policy of the Azalea Collective of not accepting commercial announcements or advertisements, names and addresses where further information and prices can be obtained are included.

BOOKS BY 3RD WORLD LESBIANS

BYRD, STEPHANIE

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Boston, MA. 02123

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McCONNELL, VICKI P.

Mrs. Porter's Letter

RAMSTETTER, VICTORIA

The Marquise and the Novice

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PO Box 353, Hull, MA. 02045

Feminary Vol.XI No.3
PO Box 954, Chapel Hill, NC. 27514

Lesbian Connection May, July, Sept, 1982
Ambitious Amazons, PO Box 811, East Lansing, MI. 48823

The Lesbian Insider Insighter Inciter #8 July 1982
PO Box 7038, Powderhorn Sta., Minneapolis, MINN. 55407

Rara Avis No. 5
PO Box 3095, Terminal Annex, Los Angeles, CA. 90051

Signs Vol. 7 No. 3, Spring 82 Vol.7 No.4, Summer 82
The University of Chicago Press, 5801 Ellis Ave., Chicago, ILL. 60637

Sinister Wisdom No. 17-20
PO Box 660, Amherst, MA. 01004

Womanspirit Spring 81-Summer 82
PO Box 263, Wolf Creek, OR. 97497

NEWSLETTERS

Changes Spring 82 - Fall 82
PO Box 1441, Winter Park, FLA. 32790

Corvallis Wimmin's Collective
PO Box 1767, Corvallis, ORE. 97330

Dinah - Special report on Homophobia May 1982
PO Box 1485, Cincinnati, OH. 45201

The Lavender Express Vol.5 No.2 February 82
PO Box 218, Kearny, NJ. 07032

lesbian feminist flyer May 9981-June 9982
PO Box 7216, Richmond, VA. 23221

Lesbian Herstory Archives Dec 1981
PO Box 1258, NY, NY 10016

Matrices Feb. 82
Dept. of English, Andrews Hall 202, U. of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE. 68588-0333

SALSA-SOUL GAYZETTE 3rd world lesbian newsletter June/July 1982
Chirlane McCray, editor, 533 Washington Ave. #4A, Bklyn, NY 11238

Telewoman April 82
PO Box 2306, Pleasant Hill, CA. 94523

Womynlovers Vol.1 No.3 winter 81
F.L.O. Box 10621, Oakland, CA. 94610

ANNOUNCEMENTS

UMEJA. Umeja was conceived in thought September 16th, my daughter's birth, when I found myself without support, because my child was a birth defect baby. It gets kind of hard dealing with children at all, and if the child has birth defects, or is dis-abled in any sort of way, things get tight. Tension can develop between mates, even feelings of frustration surrounding the child/children.

Umeja's primary goal is geared toward dis-abled kids, with a special outreach to children who are both handicapped, and also 3rd World. It also is aimed at providing the needed support to wimmin who are rearing dis-abled children.

Umeja is four lesbian-wimmin strong. One woman has been the director of a school for the handicapped; another woman has done extensive work with physically and emotionally challenged children. One woman has had her children taken from her. I have a daughter who has birth defects.

Any wimmin needing the support of Umeja - or for information or to volunteer to be contact dykes: Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to

Low Blackdykewomon - HCD

Broad River Terrace Apts.

Apt. J-3

Columbia, S.C. 29201

(803) 256-3765 (evenings after 6 and wkends)

LITERATURE BY BLACK WOMEN. Lists over 300 books of fiction, poetry, autobiography, and essays by Black women. For price and additional info write: Becky BIRTHA, 1933 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, Pa. 19103.

WEST COAST LESBIAN COLLECTIONS. The West Coast Lesbian Collections, a community archive, is now soliciting coming out correspondence; which includes sent letters, unsent letters, and diary or journal entries. If your letters have initiated any kind of written dialogue about your coming out process, the Collections is interested in preserving your initial letter and all other subsequent correspondence.

Please send coming out correspondence, and any other lesbian memorabilia that you would like to contribute to this project to: WEST COAST LESBIANS COLLECTIONS (WCLC) Box 23753, Oakland, CA. 94623.

LESBIAN COUNSELORS NETWORK. If you counsel lesbians and are a radical lesbian feminist or separatist, you are invited to join a network of radical lesbian counselors. We will be sharing theory, techniques, case consultation, workshop ideas, and personal survival ideas as they relate to counseling lesbians. For more information, contact: RUTH BAETZ, Box 242, Rt. 2, Burton, WA. 98013.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

LESBIANS OF COLOR

Los Angeles Lesbians of Color, an organization founded in 1978, is planning a national conference. This conference will be held during the 3-day weekend of JULY 4, 1983, in a camping site in Southern California.

The theme of the conference is "Sisters Bonding Together".

For more information and pre-conference questionnaire, write:

Los Angeles Lesbians of Color

PO Box 2344

Los Angeles, CA 90051

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**THIS ISSUE IS PARTIALLY FUNDED BY A GRANT FROM
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