

ever we define as autonomy or self-integration, encounter painful and surprising and frightening knowledge. Often, the knowledge that most challenges us comes in some form of memory: body sensations, stories fathers tell us, words that shift meanings, forgotten facts that confront us. What we do with this knowledge is crucial, both in terms of the people we allow our Selves to become and the realities we then collectively shape. I wish for all of us, the opportunity and desire to explore and respect the complexities of memory. I wish for all of us the courage to use memory in all its aspects wisely.

<sup>1</sup> My use of 'Self' is informed by Mary Daly's definition of this term as "the Original core of one's be-ing that cannot be contained within the State of Possession." *Webster's First New Intergalactic Wickedary of the English Language* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987), p. 95.

<sup>2</sup> Be-ing: "Ultimate/Intimate Reality, the constantly Unfolding Verb of Verbs which is intransitive, having no object that limits its dynamism." be-ing: "actual participation in the Ultimate Intimate Reality." Daly, *WFNIWEL*, p. 64.

<sup>3</sup> I am indebted to Barbara Walker, *The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983) for these definitions.

<sup>4</sup> My understanding of the history of child sexual abuse and Father Right is rooted in the analysis of Florence Rush, *The Best Kept Secret: Sexual Abuse of Children* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1980)

<sup>5</sup> I first explored this concept in "What Survivors Can Tell Therapists," *HERIZONS* 4.3 (1986), pp. 24-27.

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LISA NAYLOR

## The Reality of Rape

(for Adrienne)

we have arrived at this place  
where hearts dance  
and smiles tug  
at the corners of our mouths  
when we see each other  
across a room

we have arrived at this place  
where fingers meet  
and entwine, hopefully  
and our stories spill out  
one over the other  
as we seek to share our lives

two strong women,  
brave and beautiful  
we seek new ground  
but our wounds stand between  
us

the memories of rapes and near  
rapes  
and racist assaults  
and misogynist terrorizing  
at the hands of  
an uncle  
a lover  
a brother  
a date  
a stranger

cripple our abilities to love or  
trust.

our bodies fill us with revulsion  
(though i like yours  
and you like mine)

and while we crave intimacy  
and touch  
our 'little girls' — the wounded  
ones  
can't risk that kind of trust

so we say goodnight each time  
and depart for the safety of

separate beds  
and all the way home  
i concentrate  
on not being raped again;  
i hope that you are safe in your  
home  
and that we both  
survive the night.

in my night dreaming  
you and i and all women  
are walking  
one by one  
or side by side  
under star-lit skies  
and gentle rain  
or we are slumbering  
skin to skin  
peaceful, we know no fear

and in my day, in my living  
we work to eradicate  
the violence — the raping  
of ourselves, our lovers, our  
children;  
our energy burns — fiery  
passion  
as we create new possibilities.

some of us have been made  
brave and fierce  
by the violations

others have died or gone crazy  
or retreated into traditional lives  
we each have found our own  
ways  
to survive...

and you and i  
have found a seed  
of hope in each other

will healing blossom  
or will the wounds,  
the violator's poison  
keep us apart?