

ANONYMOUS

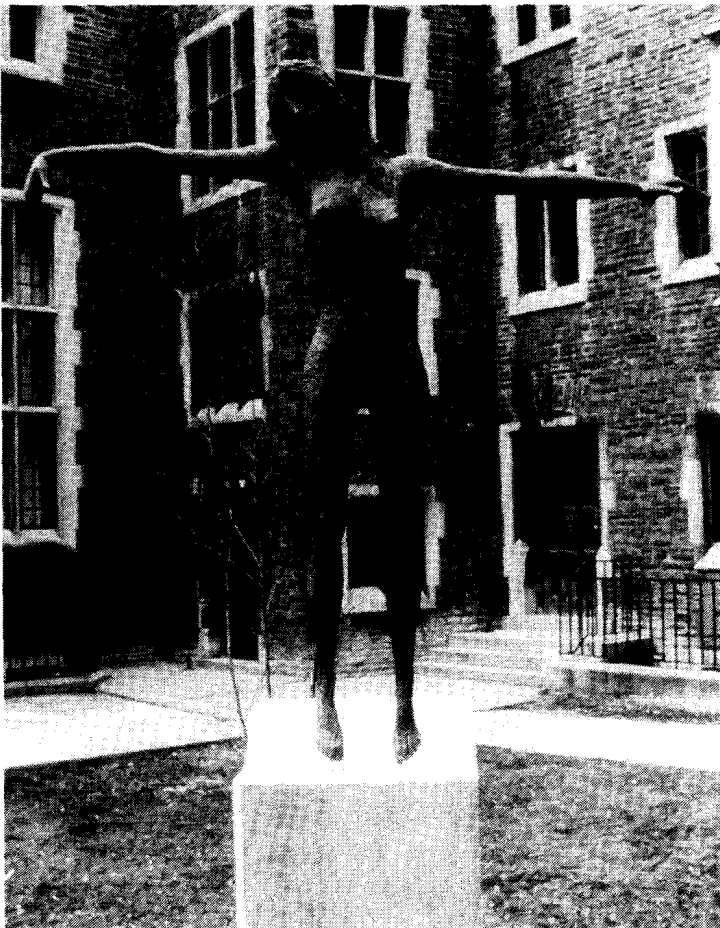
By His Wounds You Have Been Healed

—1 Peter 2:24

O God,  
through the image of a woman\*  
crucified on the cross  
I understand at last.

For over half of my life  
I have been ashamed  
of the scars I bear.  
These scars tell an ugly story,  
a common story,  
about a girl who is the victim  
when a man acts out his fantasies.

In the warmth, peace and sunlight of your presence  
I was able to uncurl the tightly clenched fists.  
For the first time  
I felt your suffering presence with me



Almuth Lutkenhaus-Lackey, "The Crucified Woman," bronze, 1976.

in that event.  
I have known you as a vulnerable baby,  
as a brother, and as a father.  
Now I know you as a woman.  
You were there with me  
as the violated girl  
caught in helpless suffering.  
The chains of shame and fear  
no longer bind my heart and body.  
A slow fire of compassion and forgiveness  
is kindled.  
My tears fall now  
for man as well as woman.

You, God,  
can make our violated bodies  
vessels of love and comfort  
to such a desperate man.  
I am honoured  
to carry this womanly power  
within my body and soul.

You were not ashamed of your wounds.  
You showed them to Thomas  
as marks of your ordeal and death.  
I will no longer hide these wounds of mine.  
I will bear them gracefully.  
They tell a resurrection story.

*\* In a Toronto church the figure of a woman, arms outstretched as if crucified, was hung below the cross in the chapel.*

*This poem has been reprinted by permission from Ecumenical Decade 1988–1998 (Churches in Solidarity with Women) Prayers-poems-songs-stories. Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1988.*

*This sculpture, "The Crucified Woman" stands outdoors on the ground of Emmanuel College, a theological college of the United Church of Canada in the University of Toronto. It was a gift to the college in 1986 by the artist who created it, Almuth Lutkenhaus-Lackey, who had completed it in 1976. Women see their suffering, they dying and their new life in a woman's body. It is a vivid expression of women's spirituality. It has become a gathering place for the annual December vigil remembering the massacre of the fourteen Montreal engineering students. —Lois M. Wilson*