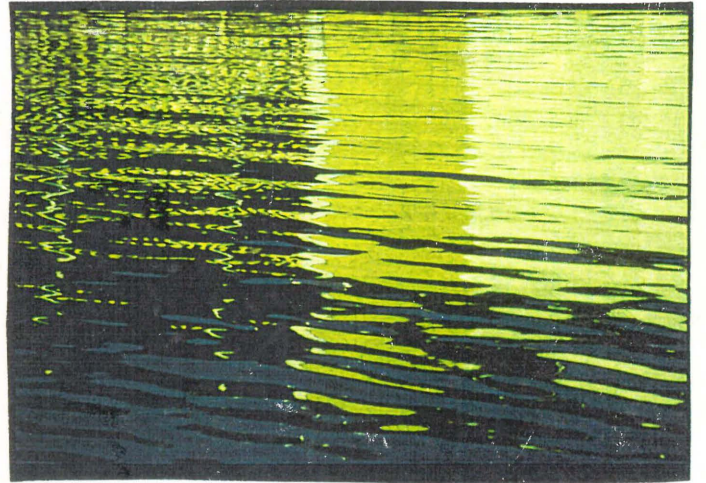


Voice



Archive Copy -
YDS Women's Center

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This journal strives to explore the experience of voice and voicelessness in women's lives. It delves into the times in our lives when something or someone has affected our sense of self; has moved us to do, to become, to feel, to see, to know differently, or to know more of ourselves—whether it leaves us to grope in the seeming darkness, or to shout and holler from clarity.

Its founding emerged from a series of conversations among the women at YDS who came each week to a discussion group at our Women's Center. Each woman expressed, poignantly, moments when voice was lost and the various struggles to reassert oneself and one's creative living.

It is our hope that the space provided in this journal captures our cries and our "wild barbaric yawp."

VOICE is a forum of writing, art, and ideas published by the Women's Center at Yale University Divinity School. It is a yearly publication. Submissions of poetry, fiction, sermons, photography, and art are encouraged for Spring 1998. It is open to present students, faculty, staff, spouses, and graduates.

VOICE
The Women's Center
Yale Divinity School
New Haven, CT 06511

Voice

Spring 1997

Woman must not accept; she must challenge. She must not be awed by that which has been built up around her; she must reverence that woman in her which struggles for expression.

Margaret Sanger

In her spirit of art, creativity and honesty, we dedicate this
journal of voices in memory of Anne K. Zirkle,
January 27, 1972-April 7, 1997.

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Cover Photo: JANN WEAVER *Water: Parguera, Puerto Rico*

Editors' Notes

In bringing together the second annual edition of Voice, the editors noticed two interrelated themes emerging in the works shared herein. One we have termed voicing: the speaking of an already defined, pointed and purpose-filled women's voice about what we uniquely know and see. The second we have termed struggling: the joining together to find, expand, re-define, and change women's voice and the social structures within which we find ourselves. We see these as different rhythms of the same movement: the movement which combines to create and re-create the different spaces women inhabit in our daily lives, and which seeks to give value to these spaces.

In one rhythmic theme in this journal, we see and applaud women voicing. Through voicing, women press upon the cracks and fissures in the lines and strictures of social structures which hold down the undercurrent of diverse voices pulsing through society. This voice presses in such a way as to bust wide-open possibilities for women. It is flagrant laughter; a snarl; an indignant voice romping across the falsely framed questions and inappropriate behaviors that surround it—rendering the structures less powerful.

In the other rhythmic theme we see and applaud women struggling to find and name the cracks and fissures in the lines and strictures of these same oppressive social structures; to find and name, so as to provide empowerment and voice for all women. This struggle plants the seeds of resistance and re-creation that gives space to other women to come and speak, to breathe, to tear at the web of oppressions holding us down, drowning our voices. It is our hope that this journal will plant those very seeds.

Lillian Fuchs

I was reminded of an old Girl Scout Camp game as I looked for the theme of voice and voicelessness in each submission. Standing in a circle and sharing one ball of red yarn, campers would take turns picking another person in the circle, sharing something about her that was unique and wonderful, and then throwing her the yarn. When everyone had spoken, what we had was a circle full of girls who had voiced their appreciation of one another. We also, as it happened, had a unique pattern of red yarn draped and knotted in the spaces between us. Someone always pointed out that if even one person were to let go of the yarn or change positions, the whole pattern changed. At the end, we each cut a piece of the yarn and wore it as a bracelet to remind us that we were unique as individuals, and yet an integral part of our community.

I am thrilled with the submissions we have received for Voice, yet recognize that this journal does not represent everyone's moment with the yarn ball. From some women we hear bold, unquestioning proclamations, or swaggering challenges to social structure and the status quo. Others are more contemplative; questioning society, or one's place within it, or one's God. For me, the journal is reminiscent of what we as women grapple with at YDS and in our individual lives on a daily basis. It is my hope that this journal shows a firm grasp of the metaphorical yarn from many places in the circle and reminds us how each voice adds to the shape of our daily reality.

Kelly Burd

Oaks of Righteousness: A Sermon

They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display the Lord's glory. Isaiah 61:3

Sojourner Truth, the nineteenth Century abolitionist and outspoken advocate for women's rights, is a woman who has come to represent the spirit of America, although she has often been misrepresented in American history. I am not sure how you learned about her in school but I was always given such a vague idea of who she was, that I assume that she was a slave and from the South, since she helped to free slaves upon her own emancipation. This is not altogether true. Sojourner Truth was actually born into slavery in New York State somewhere near the year 1797 and suffered innumerable attacks of physical and emotional abuse before she eventually bought her own freedom from her master. She continued to live in the north all of her life, helping the cause of emancipation for slaves and advancing the cause of women to vote and hold property.

Sojourner Truth has come to represent many things to us such as freedom, strength, hope, and possibility. And she was recognized for these things in her own life too. Sojourner did not come to represent these after her death, when her deeds were done, but during her life as she sought to act on her impulse and duty to help others. She was known for her towering height, her quick wit, her ability to speak plainly in front of a group about the issues for which she cared deeply, and knew most about: freedom for women and slaves. She could not read or write but Sojourner Truth was a representative for millions of African-Americans who were seeking hope in a time of hopelessness.

The slaves of Sojourner Truth's time were not unlike the Israelites to whom Isaiah was speaking. They too were living with division and unfulfilled hopes like the Israelites returning from exile. Truth's efforts spanned the time frame from twenty years before the Civil War to twenty years after and she saw the

spectrum of hope and so called deliverance for an entire nation of slaves. They have been hoping for freedom for generations and finally gained it through the Emancipation Proclamation and the eventual end of the Civil War. However, they, like the Israelites returned to places where they believed they would be opportunities for work. The conditions in which they lived were wretched, in shanty towns with little food or protection from the cold. Truth spent her time during the post-war years initiating relocation programs for former slaves to send them west where land was plentiful and opportunities looked bright, or at least brighter than in their present condition. Sojourner was a representative for millions of people, both black and white, of what the human spirit can achieve out of extreme hardship and pain.

The slaves in the 1860's and the Israelites over two thousand years prior were in need of the same thing - representative. Both knew that they were free but when they looked around them all they could see were the awful living conditions that surrounded them. Where was God in all of this? Who was to represent the hope and future promise of God when everything seemed to be in such a pitiful condition?

“They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory,” Isaiah writes. Oaks of righteousness God called those who were to be God’s representatives. This is quite an image if you have ever seen an oak tree. Tall, towering, broad, one of those trees that you can never look over or around or even through because of the mass of its body. Isaiah writes that those who were once oppressed, brokenhearted and in prison will now be called “oaks of righteousness” to display the glory of God. They will become the representatives of God’s glory in the world and bear the message of God boldly, as an oak tree. One thing that is unique about the oak tree is that it is utterly shade-intolerant, meaning oak trees cannot bear to be under any kind of shade although they produce much shade themselves. This is the way it is to be for God’s representatives.

The representatives of God will not tolerate a position in the shade. Those with the message of God must speak truthfully and forcefully about the realities of God’s steadfastness and love toward all people. But they must also live the example of the message, live out the faithfulness of God and the truth of God’s love they must be as oak trees, unable to tolerate shade because of the strength of their message. They must be oaks of righteousness.

Women at Yale, women in New Haven, wonder how on earth we are to be “oaks of righteousness.” We feel division within our academic, social, and professional communities. There is the monolith, Yale University, that represents many things at once. It represents opportunity and promise to many but at the same time it denies many the very necessities of life by dealing unfairly with the unions and the workers of Yale. We, as women, are its students, professors, and service providers. The community of New Haven is facing both economic and social hardship. It is violent at times, unstable and difficult. Women are often the victims of this violence. And where is God in all of this? Where is our message of hope and promise in such a time? Who will be our representative?

Isaiah says that the oppressed, the brokenhearted, the captives, and the prisoners will be made into oaks of righteousness for the glory of God. Women of New Haven who experience hardship of all sorts are those oaks of righteousness. We are called to be the representatives for an entire community that is hungry for hope. We have many examples before us: Isaiah himself, Sojourner Truth. These representatives are powerful for us because they symbolize the possibilities of all of humanity. In their lives people found strength and comfort. They represented a message of hope in a time when life was difficult, in a time when God seemed to be nowhere near. As women of Yale and women of New Haven, we are called to be oaks of righteousness. We must stand up for other women and for all of humanity in order to secure justice. Just as Sojourner Truth

gathered her strength from God in order to represent women and men who were abused and neglected, we must be the ones who proclaim the hope of God to this community in this place.

Cynthia Weems

A Devotion for Lent

*"For in you the fatherless find compassion."
Hosea 14:3 (NIV)*

During this most sacred time in Christendom, an indelibly memorable scene from the motion picture, "The Color Purple," comes to mind. In this particular scene, Sophia (a Greek name meaning wisdom) refused to be the maid for the major's wife. In fact, her emphatic refusal placed her in danger of losing her life. Yet, in the midst of racial slurs being shouted at her, accompanied by death threats that were being hurled her way, this wise woman took time to shout out, "Get my children out of here!"

Now, if a fictitious character from a novel can take time to take care of her children even in the face of death, how much more did our heavenly Father take time to care for and to remember His children, even while on the cross. It is overwhelming to think that even while Christ was dying that horrific death, he thought about me, a little girl from Mississippi...me, a sinner...me, and my future, my happiness and fulfillment,...Abba Father.

There is a contemporary song which The Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir sings entitled, "When He Was on the Cross, I Was on His Mind". The words say:

He knew me. Yet, He loved me;
He, whose glory makes the heaven shine.
I'm so unworthy of such mercy.
Yet, when He was on the cross, I was on His mind.

There's no one great among us. We're nothing on our own.
We make mistakes and often slip, just common flesh and bone.
But, one day I'll prove just what I say, I'm of a special kind.
For when He was on the cross, I was on His mind.

A look of love was on His face, the thorns on His head.
The blood was on the scarlet robe, and stained in crimson red.
Though His eyes were on the crowd that day,
He looked ahead in time.
For when He was on the cross that day, I was on His mind.

He knew me, yet He loved me.
He whose glory makes the heaven shine.
I'm so unworthy of such mercy.
Yet, when He was on the cross, I was on His mind.
Yet, when He was on the cross that day, I was on His mind.

Awesome!

Sharon J. Reives

I Have Learned

One year ago today, I was finishing my degree at the Divinity School, worrying about finding a job, surviving a summer wedding, and moving all my belongings to my fiancé's apartment in a small, working-class Massachusetts town. And, like everyone, I had a couple of 20 page papers to write. Fortunately, I was surrounded by a group of amazing and bright women who supported me in the ways that academic women do so well--long discussions over coffee and philosophical "not-a-bridal-shower" showers in the haven of the Women's Center. As someone who never had many female friends in high school, I appreciated the strength of the women who helped bring me through college and graduate school--feminism came to mean friendship for me, and to be a feminist was cherishing and uplifting my female friends.

Today, I am circled by a very different group of women. The bumpy ride of the last year has brought me married, to sunny Arizona, and into a position at an urban community college with roughly the same number of students as Yale. My work is in the Learning Center, a building which serves as an umbrella for several federal grant programs which provide services for students with special needs. And *needs* is the crucial word. I manage a flotilla of fifty tutors who daily throw out life rafts to hundreds of sinking students in an attempt to keep them from dropping out of school. My co-workers provide interpreters for deaf students, tape recorders for visually impaired students, test accommodations for learning disabled students, financial aid assistance and advice for students in economic need (which includes practically everyone), and a million other solutions to problems I never even thought about being grateful for not having to deal with when I was a student.

In three months at the college, I have met hundreds of women. I know a middle aged white mother returning to school to learn how to read. I know a Vietnamese woman with a young baby,

meticulously making her way through a second bachelor's degree in Chemistry because her Vietnamese pharmacy license is not accepted in this country. I know a nineteen-year-old Ethiopian woman going to school full time and singlehandedly raising her younger brother a continent away from the rest of their family. I know a Turkish woman who fled religious persecution in her homeland who is now studying Biology and Anthropology in a language she first heard seventeen months ago. I know a seventy-six-year-old woman fighting her way through Algebra for the first time to reach her goal of an Associate's degree. I know women who have made painful breaks from Reservation communities and their highly-valued family life there to become the first in their family to receive college degrees. I know a Mexican deaf woman struggling to learn English and American Sign Language as her second and third languages.

I have also met women who have not been able to manage their juggling acts quite so gracefully. I know a young and insecure learning disabled woman being torn apart by her mother's third divorce. I know a teenage mother of two whose marital problems and children's illnesses forced her to quit her job and then eventually drop out of college. I know an extremely soft spoken Afghani woman who can do no studying at home because as the youngest female she must clean for the family and defer to and literally wait on her older brothers. I know a psychologically disturbed woman who on some days perceives nothing but hostility in the world around her.

As a whole, the group of women here present needs that I alone cannot hope to fill. No more could the efforts of all my co-workers combined ever hope to afford each woman an *equal* opportunity to receive an education. The successes we see are rewarding and inspiring, but are always tempered by the knowledge that regardless of what we give, some needs will go unanswered, some women will not even make it to the door of our offices, some women will not learn.

I don't have too many long conversations over coffee with anyone anymore, and I don't read a lot of Mary Daly or Judith Plaskow these days either. But I try to ask about the health of my students' children. I try to translate the notices my work study student receives from the Department of Economic Security into plain English. I hold the tutor meetings in the round. I learn the students' names and how to pronounce them properly. I resist the constant temptation to give up on the students who seem hopelessly lost, slow, or burdened. I have learned that systems don't collapse when rules are bent to provide extra help for extraordinary needs. And I bend them all the time. In the diverse population in which I work, I have seen all my prejudices come pouring out, and in the process I have learned that reserving judgment and extending personal respect are both infinitely more difficult and more critical than most of us realize.

I left Yale thinking that I did not want to go into the ministry, in part because I felt that even in the more "liberal" congregations, there was only a small place for feminism in the church. But, of course, ministry is not only in the church, and for me, feminism cannot be separated from ministry wherever it takes place. So, perhaps I have surprised only myself in becoming a feminist minister. I do love my new community of women' at the same time, I still hope to return to a more heady strain of feminism in Ph.D. program. I hope the voices of the women of Phoenix College stay with me and remind me to put "feminist minister" in my job description, regardless of my job title and the letters that follow my name.

Kristen Kingfield

On Young Souls and White Swans

In the past year and a half my faith has been churned and challenged by my work with children at Christian Community Action, a homeless shelter for families in New Haven. There have been many times when the care and mentorship of these children have left me wondering, where is God in the brokenness of these young souls? This is a reflection on my struggle to answer that question.

An innocent childhood
playhouse with a white picket fence
dandelion necklaces, underwater tea parties
big backyard
saying what I thought,
being listened to.
I learned I was good
strong, able
blessed.
Sowing seeds of potential
Now...
I walk among many childhoods
torn, stolen, tormented
denied.
food pantries, food stamps
no food.
crack houses, crack babies
bullet hole-punched windows
untreated ailments.
Thoughts unspoken
Words not listened to.
(Why?)
The arms embrace frail, growing bodies
craving affection.
The eye watches seeds of potential
drowning in despair,
violence, hunger, tears.

The mind screams
what the hell am I doing here?
Thank God...
the heart knows.

One afternoon, overwhelmed by the burdens in the life of one particular little boy, I went for a run on the paths by East Rock. My eyes dripped tears with each step, and I wondered, is God really with us all in our brokenness? And if so, how are we supposed to know? Just as I finished that thought, I saw out of the corner of my eye two white swans swimming toward me. I had seen them before, but always from a distance. I stopped running as the larger one stepped out of the water and waddled up to me. Both in awe and in fear I stepped back, and the swan came close again, not quite touching, but watching me. It wasn't startled, didn't seem nervous. It was calm, and calmed me. I had a sense all of a sudden that I was not alone, and that this was not just a coincidence. A friend told me later that birds have been long thought to manifest the Holy Spirit. After a few minutes the swan turned and went back to its partner. I had been deeply affected by this beautiful bird that didn't even speak my language, but merely presented itself to me. And I began to realize that if a swan had silently extended to me God's calming presence and beauty and amazingness, how much more can a person do for other people! Could it be that the healing presence I struggled to find in the little boy's life was there all along, in the time I spent playing with him, worrying for him, and being his friend? I am certain that it is the Holy Spirit working through me, and many, many other people, that continues to reach out, heal and minister to our young, endangered children. It's not merely a vocational choice, something one picks over, say, mechanical engineering or bartending. It is a combination of our gifts and the manifestation of the Holy in our lives that put us where we are needed. Where is God in all this? The heart knows.

Kelly Burd

Who is the person of Jesus?

That is a question I must ask?
who owns and defines the symbol of Christianity
the person of Jesus?

and
What does that mean to me?
I have framed an innocent question
or so it seemed to be

I look to my Lord for answers
I search deep inside myself
a curious introspection
an introduction to my creatureliness

I experience my breath entering into my lungs
my heart pounding in my breast
and suddenly I am cognizant of my finitude

God has created me
made me in His image
and extended an offer of grace
through the Incarnation of Jesus Christ

The Lord has met me in the garden
and
found me in the wilderness
He has answered me
when I have cried out
and shared my journey
on life's tempestuous sea

Yet, I am still perplexed
frightened by my inability
to articulate who Jesus is
What he ought to look like

I know what Scripture has taught me
I am aware of His presence in my life
but,
I am confused

Help me Lord!
I know not what I seek
man?
woman?
black
or
white

Is Jesus not an image of my savior?
a symbol of my faith?

The good news of the gospel
which rightly ought to belong to me
and my sense of who I am

or
even just
what I had always hoped to be

perhaps,

it is all of those things
all jumbled into one
or
then again
maybe it is *none*
perhaps even
something in between
or
could it be
a transparent shadow
that simply reflects

me!
And yet,
I just *don't* know
who is the authority
on authentic God-talk
whatever that might be

I could be wrong
Lord, comfort me
I am searching,
searching for my God
in this strange world called theology

I have entered the dialogue
articulating my experience
defining my religious consciousness
and discovering that
I do have a voice

and

I speak from a particular historical location

How is it then,
that I have transgressed
by questioning
white definitions of Godliness?

Amanda J. Miller

The following is taken from a sermon delivered by Letty Russell in Marquand Chapel as part of the Dismantling Racism Workshop at YDS last October. In her retelling of the Jonah story we find a voice which, knowing its own power, speaks on behalf of those who go unheard, challenges the attitudes that silence and exclude, and invites us to "re-imagine" God's hospitality in a way that leaves no one standing apart from the welcome table.

RE-IMAGINING GOD'S WELCOME
Sermon on Jonah 3:10-4:11; Mt. 5:23-24

Many years ago I heard Krister Stendahl quote a rabbinic saying that theology is worrying about what God is worrying about when God gets up in the morning [*Church in the Round*, Westminster/Jn. Knox, 1993, p. 196]. It would seem, according to the story of Jonah, that God is worrying about how to make every creature welcome, in spite of the mess that we have made of this groaning creation.

This morning I invite you to join me in *worrying with God* about the world we live in, and in trying to re-imagine the ways God's welcome is at work: in our lives, in the "Dismantling Racism" workshop, and in our gathering here at the welcome table.

THEOLOGY OF REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS

Repentant God/ Unrepentant Jonah. We all know about Jonah! He is a successful missionary who got mixed up with a big fish! A Sunday School teacher's dream, a sort of scriptural equivalent of "Free Willie," except that it is Jonah who needs to be freed. The story begins with an *unrepentant Jonah* who steadfastly defies God's command to go to the wicked city of Ninevah to preach repentance. He buys a ticket on the next ship in the opposite direction, and even continues to ignore God in the midst of the storm. This is not an unfamiliar story. I know for a

fact that some of you have been to the ends of the earth to avoid studying for the ministry at Yale.

Jonah finally is saved and goes to Ninevah. He is so angry that the people repent, and that God repents of the punishing them, that he asks to die [4:3]. Jonah says to God that he fled to Tarshish because: "I knew that you were a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishing" [4:2]. In this piece of what Phyllis Tribble calls, "scriptural subversion," the author is *subverting the idea of God's election* or choice as a position of special privilege [P. Tribble, *Rhetorical Criticism*, Fortress, 1994]. In spite of what all the religious Jonah's may believe, God's willingness to repent and forgive applies not just to the Chosen People but to all the people, even those "who do not know their right hand from their left, and also many animals" [4:11]!

Imaginative, Constructive, Repentance. Right through the end of this short story, Jonah continues to cling to his own view that God belongs to the Hebrew people, even though it is the piety of the sailors and the citizens of Ninevah that become the example of what *imaginative, constructive, repentance* is all about. Jonah's anger at God's hospitality seems surprising until we notice that we, the listeners, may in fact be Jonah. As Christians we have often sought to establish our election to privilege over other religions. Many of us have lived without even thinking about the *unearned advantage* of being white, or heterosexual, or rich, or able bodied, let alone beginning to resist this advantage.

Like Jonah, and like the "brother or sister" in Matthew 5: 23-24, who are to leave their gifts at the altar to go and ask for forgiveness, we find that we need *to repent of the ways our privilege and power* has been at the cost of the exclusion of others [Mt. 5:23-24]. This repentance means that we need to act for justice and worry about the mending of creation in ways that

show the beginning to new life. Trying to find our way to new actions of solidarity in our own community here at YDS is what the workshop in dismantling racism is all about.

THEOLOGY OF CARE AND WELCOME

God's Double Surprise. This would be pretty scary for us, if it were not for the *double surprise* ending. The story ends with a conversation between Jonah and God. Here, according to the work of Phyllis Tribble, we can see that God is not only a God who repents and forgives. God is also, amazingly, one who *has pity* [the NRSV says that God was "concerned"] for all the inhabitants of *Ninevah*, just as Jonah pitied his shade bush when it died [4:10-11].

The second amazing surprise is that *God has pity, or is concerned for Jonah* even though the prophet is still wanting to die rather than to see how God cares for all people. This care extends not only to trying once again to get Jonah to re-imagine God's welcome, but also to caring enough for Jonah to leave him to find out how to begin living again! The story is open ended. Jonah still has a chance to repent of his narrow view of God's hospitality.

Re-imagining God's welcome. Such hospitality to Jonah, and to each and every one of us, is truly a *new kind of welcome*, one that is a whole new creation, where our relationships with God, one another, ourselves and the earth are made new. In worrying with God about the mending of creation, and of all the *Ninevah's* and *Jonah's* of our world, we discover that our old ways of privilege and exclusion are being transformed.

This welcome is acted out here at the table. Here we are called, not only to remember God's forgiveness in Jesus Christ, but to re-imagine what it means to *share the welcome table* with a God who is "abounding in steadfast love." We are

invited to share in re-imagining what it means to break bread and share the cup in a community where there is no reward of privilege or merit, but only what Elsa Tamez calls “amnesty of grace” for all [E. Tamez, The Amnesty of Grace, p. 194].

Letty Russell

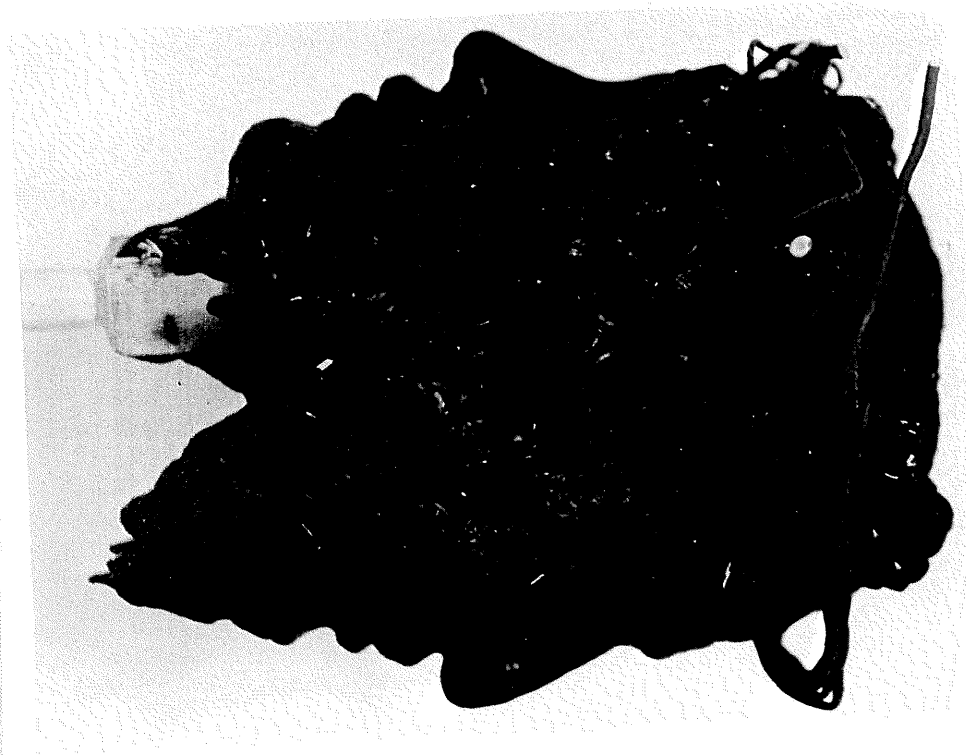
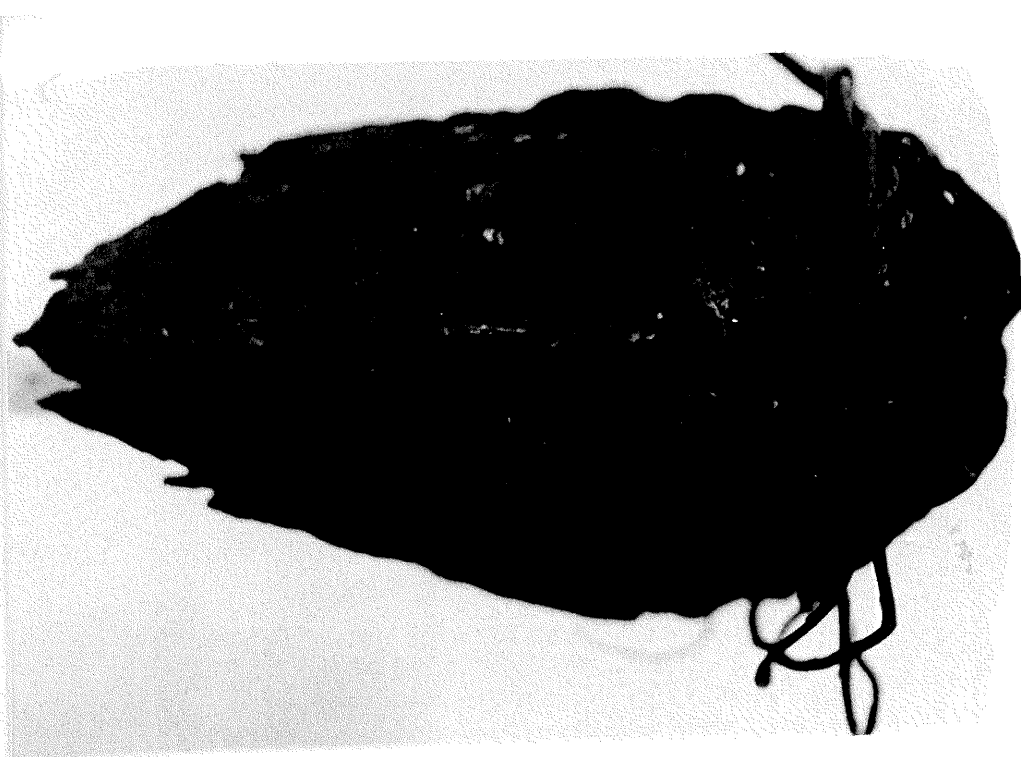
Christ/Christa

My sculptures attempt to artistically en flesh contrary spiritual longings--such as mourning and rejoicing in one form. Thus the attempt is always to give the viewer an experience of spiritual unfolding rather than static representation. An example of this unfolding is expressed in the "Christ-Christa" piece. Within the latter images are the feminine and masculine dimensions of Divinity--as experienced within every suffering believer. Thus, in this piece, we may share in one moment of our evolution toward wholeness in God.

I am a psychologist in theological studies which are informing my clinical practice; yet, the consummation of both theology and psychology is expressed in my art.

Irena Regina Delahunty

Photography by Gerry Anne Dickel



A Letter to My Fifteen-year-old Brother

Dear Zack,

As I tell you so often, I think you are awesome! I am soooo lucky to have you as a brother! You are happiness! My love for you is bigger than big and nothing will ever change that. You are my best buddy.

That's why I need to tell you how hurt I was when you recently told a joke that put women down. I tried to tell you about it then, but I got frustrated and all mixed up. You said I was "no fun" and making a big deal out of nothing.

This is a big deal to me. There's nothing funny about jokes that put people down because of their gender, race, sexual orientation, or otherwise. Jokes that put down women are particularly hurtful to me because--SURPRISE!--I am a woman.

But this is not just about me. This is about a world that excludes, demeans, and brutalizes people who are different. A joke may seem like a harmless thing when you look at the big picture, but it is a reflection of the attitudes of our society--attitudes that hurt entire groups of people.

Is this hard for you to understand? It certainly took me a long time to realize the power of my own words. (Yes, Bro, I told all the same jokes!) For now, even if you don't understand, I ask you to trust me. Please don't tell those jokes to me or anyone else. Don't even listen to them! Do it for me. Later you will do it for others. Someday, you will do it for yourself.

Zack, you have already accomplished so much in a short period of time. I can't imagine a big sister who is more proud of her brother than I am.

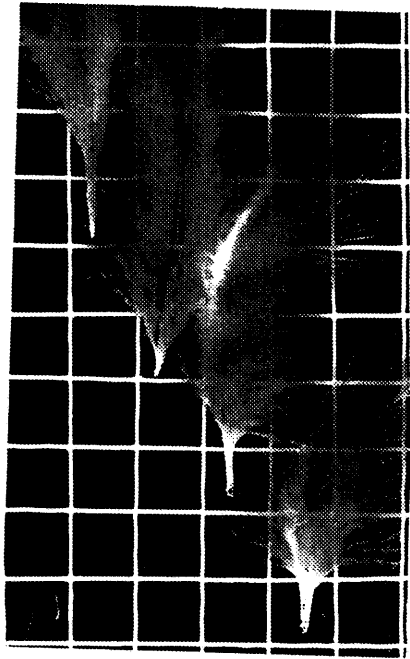
You have a chance to create a difference. You have a chance to

create a different kind of world. I know that you can, and I hope that you will. I promise I will be right in there with you trying to figure this stuff out.

I love you,
Aim

Amy Perry

Release by Andrea Wong



Art-Quake

I am
a wide bellied yelp
a starched white world
gleefully smeared in mud

All of me
razzed up
jazzed up
hard core girl act
bouffant hairdo
bright mauve rinse
Phat, p-h-a-t phat
the cat's meow
mi aow mi aow
I dare you.

Defy labels
what's in vogue
be ass kickin' bold
she-poet-bold
swagger
bite and
groan
with every spit of life
and dust covered bone
that hangs on you
PUSH
Hallelujah!
(its only life you know).

Each line I deliver
a punch
a powderkeg burst
honed sharp with wit and sass

posing
strutting
laughing
moaning

There's a quakin' in my bones
a rumble, tumble, fury
wham bam thank you ma'am
Honey,
We put courage in people for livin'
I dare you.

I dare you with your life
risk it
don't be duped
razzle 'em
dazzle 'em
with raw grrrrl energy
high octane soul
THRASH!
"Thrash in the narrow tunnels of our experience"
fracture the tune.

I dare you.

Lillian I. Fuchs

Billboard: Berkeley, California, by Jann Weaver



For a Girlchild in Progress

Coltish indignation,
what ever do you kick for?
Once it was for pure joy
making you a victor
that fomented for an outlet well beyond the quivering capacity
of your matchstick legs.

Born into plural truths
Prone to distill each one, all,
Installing none--Go on, then:
 Lick the fences
 sniff the wind
But always know where to find the gate.

K. L. Mulder

Lilith is a character of Jewish mythology and rabbinic teachings, commonly considered to be the first wife of Adam. The only biblical reference to her is Isaiah 34:14. She is also found in the Talmud and the Alphabet of Ben Sira, written between the eighth and tenth centuries C.E.

What Ever Happened to Lilith?

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness;...in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. (Gen 1:26-27)

Painful awareness. Slow opening of my eyes. The light, the brightness, so sharp. What is happening? Where am I? Who is that speaking? Such a comforting voice, so soft, so loving. 'Rise to your feet' the voice urges, 'behold the beautiful creation which I entrust to you.'

I slowly rise to my feet. Next to me, so beautiful, so scared...Adam. Again, the voice, but not from this being next to me but from the air around me, no source. 'Lilith', it speaks to me.

'YHWH', I reply. The awareness of my origin floods me. I know that name, that force, it is the place, the space from which I come.

I turn to look around me. So beautiful. This is the garden, Eden. Adam takes my hand and together we begin to wander.

I look next to me, the bewilderment on the face of Adam mirrors my own. I reach out to touch him. Then I know it is okay.

Life takes shape, the beauty of the world around me, this garden. These days are peaceful and happy. God is there spending much time with Adam. I am free, I roam as I please.

The world outside the garden is exciting and dark. Night is there, with so many new and different creatures each day. When I lay down to sleep, the call of the owls soothes me, yet beckons me.

Things are changing. My body is becoming slow and sluggish. A swelling has begun in my stomach, so soft and strange. Adam is afraid, I can sense it. He is distant and I am afraid. More and more time he is spending alone under the most beautiful tree in the garden, talking with YHWH. I can no longer lay with him, my body is so uncomfortable. More and more of my time is spent outside the garden. As many wonderful things to be explored.

Then the movements began and from my body came a beautiful child, a small woman, like myself. I lift her to show to Adam. He turns and runs. In anger? In fear? I too am fearful, fearful for my child. I take her and fly off to the woods.

Bewildered, confused. I sense the bad feeling he has for me. Alone, I sit under a tree. 'YHWH?...YHWH?' No response. Three beings before me. Without speaking, I know they have been sent to watch over my child. I must return. For a while I must remain.

The next night I return. Silence. 'Adam?' So alone here. Then I see him watching me. He is up in the tree, the tree of Good and Evil. Slowly, he comes down. Approaching me. I shiver, afraid. 'Why?', he questions me. 'How?', he questions me. 'I don't know', I reply. 'I WANT TO KNOW', he demands. 'Reveal to me now. How did you make that happen?' I stand silent. I don't know.

Adam approaches me. He gently pushes me to the ground. Again, the warmth, the desire flood me. I sigh with relief. Have I been forgiven?

The time passes and I yearn for my daughter, for the safety and comfort of the woods. Again I start to swell. Adam withdraws. So much time with YHWH. Soon the release floods from between my legs. This one different, like Adam. Slightly imperfect. I take the child to him. 'See, one like yourself.' He stares at me in silence. I hesitate. No response. He withdraws again.

I leave for the forest, fearful. I take my son to safety. The three, ever vigil, embrace him. I know that my two are safe. YHWH has determined this. Soon comes the summons, I must

return to the garden.

I find Adam there. He grips my arms. 'HOW?', he demands, 'I must know how.' He pleads now. Roughly this time, he pulls me to the ground. I push him off and fly to the woods. Back to my home. Silently I weep. I don't know...

Much time passes and I feel broken, un-whole. I long for the garden where the sun shines. Here, it is always the moon. So lost.

I must return to the garden. I lift each of my children. In turn, I breathe the breath of life into their mouths, as was done to me. 'I, like YHWH, will never abandon you', I whisper. I move along the path to the garden, walking this time. Steps slow and heavy. I hang my head. I don't understand...

Suddenly in my path, a wall. Where did this come from? I stop at the boundary. How do I cross? Do I cross at all? I slowly trace its path, lingering in my indecision. I come to a gate. As I push it open I am aware of someone watching me. After my eyes adjust to the sunlight, I realize there is someone standing very near. I can sense her, smell her. I know it is female, like me. My body begins to rage with anticipation. The beating in my chest moves to inside my head. Suddenly I see the movement off to my side. I turn and see her withdrawing behind a tree, the tree, good and evil. I step forward and reach out to touch her breast. She shivers and moves towards me. We embrace and fall to the ground. Side by side we lay. So peaceful, so beautiful.

Suddenly Adam is there. 'EVE', he yells. My beautiful one is grabbed by the arm and thrown away from me. The ache inside me begins. Eve. Adam turns to me, the anger in his eyes warning me of danger. 'Get out', he yells. 'You and your children that you took from me, that you controlled.' His words are so loud. They sting. 'Woman', he says in a low voice, 'take your dark power and be damned to have a hundred children a day. And many none of you ever see the light of the sun again.' I try to push past him and go to Eve. He reaches for me again. I fly into air to get away. I am in the tree now, looking down at him. Such sadness. I do not understand.

I return to the forest. I begin to make my life. Several times I return to the garden at night. I look in and see Eve, so beautiful, so sad. There are chains around her heart.

Next evening, I am walking towards the garden to look in on her. I see her on the wall, looking down at me. I stop and reach out my hand for her to come. She sadly shakes her head. No. 'But you are a woman just like me', I reply.

Sadly, she shakes her head. No. 'He said you will come and take my children away from me. You are evil. I must not speak to you. He has even made me wear these strange coverings to hide my shame.'

I can do nothing but look at her. Slowly, I say, 'But you are a woman just like me...'

Again, she shakes her head. 'I must go', she says. Slowly, she turns and my world becomes dark again.

What ever happened to Lilith?

Kathleen Flinton

voice