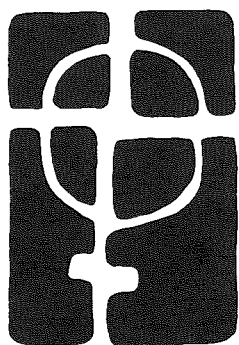


# Women's Theological Center



## Quarterly Newsletter

**MARCH, 1993**  
Volume 11, No. 1

In this issue:

**Whistling Hope,  
Seeking Justice**  
by Elizabeth Bettenhausen

**Body/Image/Power:  
Study/Action Reflections**  
by Beth Wrenne,  
Kathy Brucker,  
Ok-Youn Kim,  
and Amy Wagner

**AND MORE**

Suggested fee for 4 issues:  
Individuals - \$10.00  
Libraries - \$35.00

## Whistling Hope, Seeking Justice

by Elizabeth Bettenhausen, Study/Action Faculty

*Hope is the thing with feathers/  
That perches in the soul,  
And sings the tune without the words,  
And never stops at all,*

*And sweetest in the gale is heard;  
And sore must be the storm  
That could abash the little bird  
That kept so many warm.*

*I've heard it in the chilliest land,  
And on the strangest sea;  
Yet, never, in extremity,  
It asked a crumb of me.*

Emily Dickenson

Bill Clinton said, "I still believe in a place called Hope." The land has grown politically and economically chilly and strange, so hope was what many voters wanted.

While the majority found hope in the status quo or in Ross Perot, the winning minority saw it in Clinton/Gore. Not only is hope free: it is contagious and preferable to despair. So I am not surprised at how many confirmed pessimists have been saying, "Things will change now; he will make a difference." I hope so.

Those who voted for Clinton were hearing hope in quite a gale. African Americans, older people, urban dwellers, lesbians and gay men, poor people--the bone-chilling winds blew among them during Reagan and Bush's terms. How sweet to hear, "Together we can make America great again, and build a community of hope that will inspire the world." European-American suburbanite Democrats, fearing pink slips and foreclosures, whistled along to the tune of hope as well.

Some newly elected to Congress and state houses will change and amplify the tune. In Boston, for the first time ever, an African American woman, Diane Wilkerson, was elected to the state senate. Carol Moseley Braun, Ben Nighthorse Campbell, Jay Kim: late 20th century leaders going east to Washington. And half of the senators



photo by Elizabeth Bettenhausen  
*Elizabeth Bettenhausen*

from the West Coast are women. If the Senate of the United States finally needs a restroom for women, can justice be far behind?

Yet, I am uneasy with this contagious belief in hope, uneasy because "Yet never, in extremity/It asked a crumb of me." Getting something for nothing, or a lottery lot for a little, is very American. Will the record turnout at the polls endure in civic responsibility between elections? Can the enthusiastic tongues funded by Perot be translated to build the common welfare? Will hope endure when pragmatic idealism requires not only crumbs but sacrifice? Will hope endure when even sacrifice does not suffice?

Of course, I will be happy if January 20th brings a slew of executive orders reversing the sexually confused priorities of the Bush administration. And 100 appointments of the likes of Barbara Jordan to federal judgeships and the Supreme Court would warm my heart. Signatures in place of vetoes on legislation for family and medical leave and civil rights would be fine. But hope will be put to the test on tough questions of equitable distribution of burdens and benefits. Justice asks more than crumbs.

- Will focusing on restoring the country's infrastructure as the means to resuscitate the economy provide jobs equitably? The companies and unions that build bridges, construct buildings, pave roads and create subway cars are not filled with people of color and white women. A sign of justice will be a real reduction in the unemployment of African American males, now running at 50 percent.

- Can our stagnating economy be revived without requiring a level of consumption in the US that is dangerous for the economic well-being of poor nations and ecological justice? When durable goods are taken to be those that will last three years, the economy relies on ever-larger trash piles created out of unrecycled goods and finite resources. In Massachusetts a strong recycling bill was voted down. A sign of justice will be no more trains or barges wandering the earth looking for some poor country or state to accept their loads of teeming refuse.

- Is redefining entitlement politically possible, so that Social Security and Medicare are need-tested and the considerable welfare programs for the middle class and wealthy are named? The size of the Baby Boom cohort looms as a cloud of self-interest over that redefinition. A sign of justice will be the linking of tax benefits for middle and upper income persons with a policy providing a guaranteed living income for the rest of the population.

- What rationing of health care will be accepted? Constraining the costs of health care entails reducing some benefits that the affluent have come to expect. What is the minimum, universally available health care that is acceptable? Constraining the costs of health care entails reducing the profits that insurance and pharmaceutical companies have

come to expect. Will the caps on profits permit full care for persons with AIDS and funding for new research into contraception? A sign of justice will be dramatically lower infant mortality rates and a better quality of life for the aged poor.

- Will "the forgotten hard-working middle-class families of America" be willing to address epidemic violence in their own homes, as well as those of others? The increase of domestic violence, including wife battering and child abuse, cannot be addressed simply by improving economic conditions. Federal legislation making domestic safety a matter of civil rights is also essential. A sign of justice will be the willingness of religious denominations to fund major programs to train clergy and others to recognize and respond justly to domestic violence and sexual abuse and work for prevention.

- Will the polling booth coalition that elected Clinton/Gore cohere as a political coalition to oppose the racism that has intensified in the past two decades? Derrick Bell in *Faces at the Bottom of the Well* contends that "racism is an integral, permanent, and indestructible component of this society". The racist violence across the country only confirms his sober estimate. A sign of justice will be whites acting in ways that begin to make racism incidental, temporary, and destructible.

If hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul, justice is the thing with calluses that binds the souls together. The next four years will test whether we believe in a place called Justice. #

*This article originally appeared in the December 14, 1992 issue of Christianity & Crisis. It is reprinted here with permission.*

## Going Away Party

for Nancy Richardson  
coming up in June.  
Look for details soon.

## FINANCIAL UPDATE

The WTC was recently awarded a grant from the Boston Foundation for \$15,000 and one from the Hyams Foundation for \$10,000. This money will support the WTC's multi-focussed approach to combatting racism through a variety of programs. These include *ChangeWorks* anti-racism and anti-internalized racism courses and the training of anti-racism trainers, as well as programs such as *Loves Herself*. Regardless, which offers workshops, retreats, courses and other opportunities for Black women to engage in mutual sharing and support, leadership development, and facilitation of community advocacy and activism.

The 1992 Annual Fund campaign is winding down and we have taken in \$40,500 of the \$48,000 we had set as our goal this year. Thank you to all who contributed. It is still possible to get your contribution for 1992 in before the 1993 Annual Fund appeal comes this spring.

Our \$5 from 5,000 fundraising campaign has brought in \$5,293 from 263 people. We knew the \$25,000 was terribly ambitious and are greatly encouraged by the amount we received. Thanks to all who gave up a movie, a brunch and/or a bottle of wine on behalf of justice.

The Fall 1992 yard sale, took in \$1,475. It always astonishes us that nickels, dimes and quarters can add up to such a large amount such a short time. Thanks to everyone who donated things to be sold, who helped run the event, and/or who made another person's junk their treasure. And thanks especially to Jane Spickett and Lisa Lipson who coordinated everyone's efforts and energy. #

## BODY/IMAGE/POWER: Study/Action Reflections

*Liberation Spirituality class in the Study/Action program has three interconnected purposes: to grapple with the spiritual issues that come up personally and politically in our struggle for liberation; to explore the spiritual root of liberation movements as a way to define spirituality for ourselves; and to develop spiritual resources to stay and be fully present in our struggle for liberation for the long-haul. In this class, as in all Study/Action classes, there is an ongoing dialogue between our work within ourselves, within our Study/Action group, within our field site, and within our world.*

*The following reflection papers were written during our explorations of body, image, and power. As would be expected, the subject tapped different things for each participant. Here, those doing their work through City Mission Society at MCI Framingham--the Massachusetts prison for women--share their process of learning from current impressions and from reclaimed and re-examined memories. This is a process of coming to see themselves in the women at Framingham and to be fully present as peers who acknowledge their privilege and learn to use what power they have for liberation.*

*If you are interested in doing this type of work for yourself, you might consider the Study/Action program. If you are interested in working on the many issues facing incarcerated women in Massachusetts, you might call Laura Biddle of City Mission Society (617-742-6830), Kathy Brucker of Act-Up (617-522-9351), or Social Justice for Women (617-482-0747).*

In our Friday afternoon discussion group a woman told us how the prison staff refused her health care. This seems to be an illustration of day-to-day experience with prison officials. Joann (not her real name) told us she had been away from the Awaiting Trial Unit (ATU) all day at court. The unit distributes afternoon medication at 3 pm daily, however, that day she returned to the unit much later and requested her medication late. (She is HIV+ and receives AZT as well as two other prescribed medicines.) The nurse told her that her name was already checked off which meant to the nurse she had already been given her medication. Joann argued that she was still at court at 3 pm and couldn't have received her medication. The nurse still refused her. Joann was extremely frustrated about this incident--she was also concerned about the other woman who had mistakenly been given her meds. She didn't know what would happen to someone who took AZT or other meds if they didn't need them. What would happen if the woman was pregnant?

This story started a dialogue and more stories. Stories that illustrated how women in Framingham are denied the right to care for themselves and their needs. Some women told how they had been denied AZT for 21, 30 days since they first arrived. There were other stories about officials mistaking the dosage and a woman seeming "high"

as a result--and the guards sending her to the cage or max. Stories of doctors not matching the correct file with the right woman. They discussed the guards' refusals to hear or to take seriously the women's cries or requests for medical help. They discussed the deaths within the prison which have occurred over the past year and their fear of death made even more real from these experiences. The air was very heavy, very depressed and finally, silent. It was hard to think of anything optimistic or hopeful to say.

Finally, an older woman broke the silence. She said she had been in Framingham many times. She said what it all means is that the women have to stick together and make the guards listen--demand that they listen. She said she would risk being locked down or sent to max to make the guards listen. If a guard says to keep the focus on ourselves and our own problems we have to keep telling them it is our problem--it is our business if another woman needs help and is sick. We have to keep bothering them until they do something.

I guess this was the only thing that could be said to respond seriously. However, it didn't lighten the mood. The group was still silent. I don't know if they agreed with her or not--but there felt to be a slow bolt for the door.

Several women thanked us for coming. "For what?" I wondered. I

felt so powerless. I have listened to horror stories before: incest, rape, battering. But seldom are the stories taking place in the present tense. I left feeling very depressed. Wondering what the point of going was. How do they survive? I can see they are

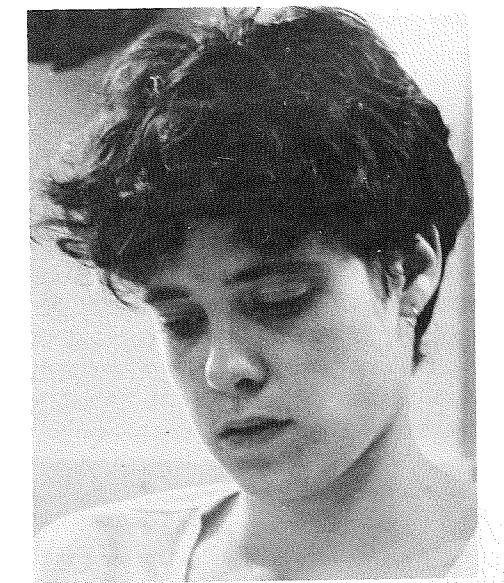


photo by Elizabeth Bettenhausen  
Beth Wrenne

powerful survivors. Maybe we should ask them, "How do you maintain your self-respect in here? How do you keep telling yourself you are wise, intelligent and adult when the guards are determined to treat you like a child? How do you keep believing in your personal rights? How does someone resist this institutionalized battering of spirit and outright abuse? How do you keep believing that even

THANK YOU to all who've mailed in our WTC questionnaire.

Yes, we know it was super-long, but your responses provide insights and perspectives that help us stay faithful to our mission.

We'd love to hear from more of you--so please mail back the completed questionnaire. It's not too late.



if you break the law you are worthy, which means your needs and health matter?" The women on the ATU are being treated as if they are guilty even before it is proven. (One woman spoke about the pressure to just plead guilty and get sentenced quicker to get off the ATU.)

I feel as if I am still just an observer.

I guess this reflection raises more questions than I can answer with just observations. Why do some women have their own clothing and some have only prison clothing? What does it mean to them to have so little control over their environment? How does that effect them in terms of their bodies? What was their relationship to their bodies before prison? How did they see themselves? Do they feel like they own their bodies? What does it mean to have survived by selling their bodies? Did they sell them? What is their relationship to men who might be asking them to make money (through prostitution) for them? How much is appearance necessary for their survival? And what does all this mean in terms of losing control over their appearance in prison? What does drug use mean in terms of their bodies and the risks involved?

Does the prison plan to take women's self-respect from them?#

Beth Wrenne

#### Memorial/Recognition Fund Contribution

from Carolyn Becker in honor of Kathleen Joanna O'Conner and Delmarie Gibney;

from Patricia Farris in honor of Joan Martin;

from June Goudey in memory of Jane Cary Peck;

and from Polly Atwood and Wendy Sanford in celebration of Elizabeth King and Wendy Vanderhart's commitment as partners.

And thank you to Brinton Lykes for donating a fridge to WTC.

*From Toledo, Ohio, United States of America to Masaguisi, Bongabong, Philippines*

*I have a friend named Anita. We live in Masaguisi, Philippines.*

*I'll live here two years. I'm a Peace Corps Volunteer from the USA. I'm a Health Educator.*

*Anita has three boys. She lives with her Mom, Dad, and brothers after fleeing a drunken, abusive man she married and lived in the mountains with.*

*Anita's teaching me Tagalog. She doesn't speak English. We talk all the time about many things. We laugh together. We're going to be Good Friends.*

*I like it when the moon's full. We sit on the beach or in front of someone's house with JoJo, Jay, Ben, Lily and anyone else who wanders by. We take turns playing guitar, singing, telling jokes and stories.*

*Anita's teaching me a lot: to wash clothes in the river, cook Filipina style, barter at the market, and swear in Tagalog. We gossip, ride to town together, and flirt with men. She protects me from men's unwanted advances.*

*I know one thing. She's my Best Friend here...*

*I have a chance to organize groups of people to apply for small grants from the States to start small businesses.*

*Anita and her sisters built and started a sari-sari (variety) store with their money. Anita runs it. She lives in the back with her sons.*

*We go together to buy food. We prepare it. We sell it. We eat together. We sleep together. We talk, sing, laugh, and cry together.*

*I bring her and the boys gifts when I come back from trips. Now is my time to leave. I haven't seen much of Anita but I know we'll see each other in Manila. I'm staying there a week before I go and she's staying with her cousin there. I'm excited to go home. I'm a little sad to leave.*

*In Manila we spend time together. We stay at her cousin's house. We're*

*both quiet together. We're sad but know that life won't change. We'll probably never see one another again.*

*My last morning in Malate Pension. In the Philippines. Packing last minute gifts for my family and friends in Ohio. Anita walks in the dorm room.*

*I was glad to see her because I had pictures and money to send back to people in Masaguisi. The money was to finish the high school which had been built while I was there. The person who was supposed to take the money never showed up at our meeting place.*

*After I explained the situation and she took the money and pictures, she laid on the bed. "We need to talk." I was packing, but I picked my head up to show her I was listening. I heard, "I'm in trouble Kathy. I need help." Shit, I didn't have time to hear this. My plane was leaving in two and a half hours and it took 45 minutes to get to the airport.*

*It took her a long time to continue. "Kathy, I'm pregnant." I stopped. "Anita? You? What happened?" She had no boyfriend and I never saw her ex-husband.*

*"Remember fiesta? That night after the dancing, drinking, after everyone went home JoJo came to the store. He said to open up cuz he wanted cigarettes to continue the party. I always sell stuff after I'm closed so I opened the door a crack. He forced it open. He came in. He raped me. He said it was because he wanted you but he couldn't have you. You're leaving, you're a visitor, you're an Americana, I watch over you. You need to pay. You're responsible. I need an abortion."*

*"Abortion?" "What else can I do? Unmarried, 3 kids, no husband. JoJo doesn't work or have money. You do. You're responsible for all this anyways."*

*"Why didn't you scream? Stop him?"*

*"I couldn't scream. Kids next to us. He was already in. People would say I invited him in. Would you believe me? I'm big and fat. I'm supposed to defend myself, but, Kathy, I don't know how. I was afraid. I'm a woman--I*

*can't say no. That's why my husband could beat me up. But you know me--you know I'm not like that."*

*In my mind I was picturing Anita and Jay fucking. Jay, a local jeepney driver, married with kids, lives in another town. They flirted and spent a lot of time together. Maybe she fucked him, got pregnant, and was blaming me?*

*"Anita, where can you get an abortion? How much?"*

*"2,000 pesos. In the neighborhood."*

*Then I had a vision of Anita bleeding to death in an alley and I wouldn't even know because I'd be in Ohio. That would be my fault.*

*"Please, Kathy, this is my last chance. I've tried everything. I drank herbs, poisons, had women kick me in the stomach, taken scalding hot baths, thrown up, nothing worked. Please."*

*"I can't Anita, I can't." I told her the second vision feeling justified and in a hurry. Jay was visible between us--unspoken but tangible. She pleaded again, I said no, then she gave up. Then I ran to catch a cab--back home to "Real Life".*

*Flying over Hong Kong, I had the sudden realization that the money would never see the high school principal's hands. I pictured Anita, my best friend, lying bleeding to death in some Manila alley.*

What can I say about this? It is definitely an event in my life that I'm not proud of. And I haven't even let myself think about it much. It feels so complicated, with so many layers.

Sure enough about a month or two later I got a letter from Anita saying that someone stole the money from her on the boat back to Mindoro. The high school principal also stated that she never received it in answer to my written inquiries.

I wrote to Anita a couple of times after that but she never answered my letters. I heard later that she left Masaguisi for a job in another town. There were too many rumors about her, the money, being pregnant, Jay, JoJo, etc.

The dangers of being 23 years

old, ethnocentric, member of a dominant culture, out to help people--ah, the combination is deadly....literally.

How does it fit? Where does it fit? It means I have to find my culture, feel good with it--not try to "take" other people's cultures, be a part of something I'm not and pretend, or even worse, think I understand something I don't.

As a woman I need to believe and trust women's stories. I was never brought up to. Even my mother's story and suicide was her fault--no society, not lack of extended family support, and not my Dad. My own failures have been my fault--maybe I need to start by believing my own stories first.

What always kills me is that I felt justified in saying no. Me, who didn't have to go back there to live and fit in. Me who had a lot of future possibilities. Me who had the resources to get an abortion if I needed to and had been lucky enough not to have had to. Me--who *didn't* get raped there. Me, Miss white everything, paid for doing *nothing* except perpetuate stereotypes. Me, I could afford to say no to a woman in that situation?

And it's taken me five years to be able to tell this story? What a mind fuck I've been living.

And who cares how she got pregnant? The inequalities are so much deeper. Who am I to judge never having lived in someone else's shoes?

If I had had the resources (which I did) I should have never questioned any of it. But at the same time, I was vividly afraid of her dying from the procedure and I felt that would be my fault. Now I think she did die, a part of her did, to be able to stay in that village and put up with the shit. No one would have known about the money if I hadn't written the principal.

But why are abortions illegal everywhere? Whose religion is this? Why can't women control their bodies? All through history we were able to and did just fine and now we

can't? But this is just one more level to figure out after feeling guilty for the bottom line which was that I didn't help a woman in need. Shit, what did I learn there? Nothing at the time it seems. I was so immature.

So why does our government let us, encourage us to go to "third" world countries? For the opening of minds, the experience, the sharing of cultures? Wrong! For the adventure? How can you have adventure anyplace where people are starving and suffering because of what we do? No, for the continued exploitation, control and dominant mind fucks to continue around the world, passed from generation to generation.#

Kathy Brucker

In my field site, there are various people: old, young, whites, Latinas, Blacks, alcoholics, drug users, lesbians, etc.

When I first went there, I was daunted by their circumstances. And

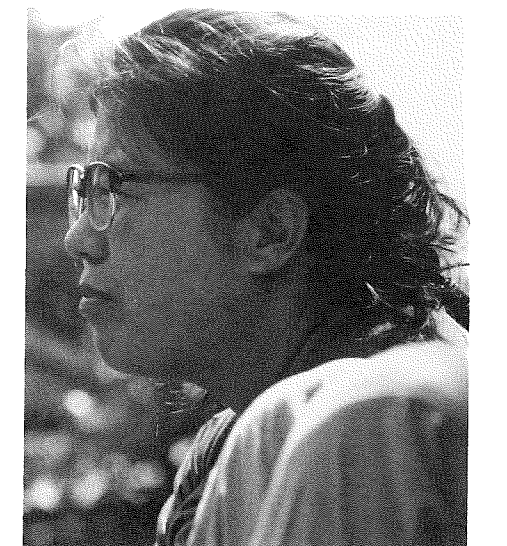


photo by Elizabeth Bettenhausen  
Ok-Youn Kim

I couldn't think about anything. Everything was so clean and quiet. Compared with Korean prisons, US prisons are better. When I first went to the prison, I asked myself: 1) Is there a person who has no relation to crime? 2) Can one person always judge another person by the law? 3) Should the laws be carried out

equally with justice for everybody?

About fifteen women usually come to our meeting. At first, I took an unsteady attitude and I used to keep glancing at the women quickly and then look away. But gradually I began talking with them. Now, I feel that there must be some complicated circumstances behind the lives of the women. The participants are changed very often and they look nervous.

I was always distressed. At the end of the hour, they appeared anxious because it was time to go but they hadn't finished. When they go back, they are checked one by one by guards. A female jailer touches each prisoner's whole body all over. In this way, they are made objects.

I wonder what they think about. When I see their treatment, I burst into a rage of tears. I realized at last that I was in a prison. The prisoners never carry a deadly weapon, but prison rules require a body search every time the prisoners move.

I want to learn many issues in my fieldsite: 1) What do my dualistic reactions mean in fieldsite settings in comparison with my attitudes in everyday life? 2) The consequence of being in the prison is the loss of humanity. 3) Most of the prisoners labor under illnesses. How can they survive these? 4) The prison is like a society for contagious disease. They especially easily yield to a morbid fear. "A sound mind in a sound body." Really, can we apply this to prisoners?

Just now, I recall one woman who has a daughter. Whenever she called her daughter, she used to tell a lie. "My daughter, I am in the hospital. If I get better, I could go back home soon."

Seriously, I can sympathize with her. #

Ok-Youn Kim

In this reflection paper, I would like to tell you what I experienced last Friday at the prison, in the spirituality discussion group. The topic of the discussion was how to respect ourselves. Altogether there were six

women in our group.

At this time I am not able to tell you why I go to the prison, but I do know a lot happens inside me every time I go there. I will be asking myself this question throughout the year.

One woman in our group had just gotten out of max. I've never visited this part of the prison, however I have heard a lot of stories



photo by Elizabeth Bettenhausen  
Amy Wagner

about the effects of being there. This woman said she spent her time there sleeping and reading her books, reading her Bible. She thought she would become crazy. I think she tried to hurt herself because I saw a bandage on her wrist. She also told us some of her story. A short time before her graduation from high school, when she was seventeen, she and her friends decided to leave school. She was into drugs then, and so she found a job, and spent her time working and partying. After a while, she wanted to spend all of her time partying, so she quit her job. She is now twenty and had turned herself in for breaking and entering. Her boyfriend was also involved but she hasn't told this to the authorities. She is torn between remaining silent and having to go to prison, or naming her boyfriend and getting him into trouble. She also told us that during her time in max, she kept telling herself she was in max because there was a lesson God wanted her to

learn. She said this helped her to get through.

You know, I do believe I learn lessons from life, but as I sat there across from her, listening to her story, I suddenly felt so angry. I thought to myself, I am tired of this God. No, my God isn't nice and pretty. And no, I am not criticizing her beliefs. But now in my life, I believe in a God that would throw a "holy fit" upon hearing her story.

Another woman named Louise (not her real name) said we can get into trouble because of the people we choose to associate with. I met Louise our first day at the prison. She said we sometimes do things because we want to be accepted. She said she started using drugs when she was sixteen, after meeting a man who was twenty-one and an addict. She has been in and out of the prison over the years and was now facing a long prison sentence because she had done something for her future mother-in-law. She had not heard from her since she was arrested and from what I understood, nobody knows where her mother-in-law is and Louise doesn't know what to do. She is worried about the effects her time in prison will have on her fiancé, their relationship, and her children.

Louise has given us a lot of help and support in the discussion group. I have been feeling raw for a while now in my life and so I am usually afraid whenever I speak with someone. I feel shy when facilitating the discussion group and although Louise does not know about my raw state, she does give us advice about being in groups in the prison. I really like Louise. When I listen to the women in the spirituality group speak, I feel that their words are touching my skin. And then I go home to my room at EDS.

There was also another woman who said she was an addict and was sick of drugs. She gave the other women lots of advice and told us she was really speaking to herself. After a while she said, "I really sound like I know it all. I wish I could learn it myself." She had spent six or seven

She had spent 6 or 7 years in prison, a while ago, because she had not turned in the other person who was involved, who was also a member of her family. She was now in this same position again.

The last woman to tell her story was Gloria (not her real name). She was having a tough time because she had been there before and now had returned because of her drug addiction. She had been in rehab, left, and now was back and feeling like a failure because she had returned to drugs. Another woman told her the addictive voice had called her and she'd answered and when the drugs were gone she felt a hole inside her, she felt ugly, didn't like who she was and didn't like to be with herself.

After listening to them, I felt a huge sob rise inside me. I needed to cry really hard. Each time I go to this group I feel it. I first feel something happening in my belly and then I feel the huge sob coming, sometimes it seems to rise from my toes.

And I also felt so angry. Why does Gloria feel the emptiness? And from what I've experienced in my culture I ask, "Why must we carry the shame for our emptiness? Why must we be ashamed of our pain? Why must the addict be the problem?" I'm not trying to glorify those of us who are addicts, I just have had a lot of questions come to me.

I myself am a recovering addict who smokes like a chimney. Although I choose food over drugs, I know the hole Gloria speaks of. My journey into the hole, into the emptiness, and my discoveries from it, really did lead me to be with you here today.

Finally, on Saturday, while I was taking a shower, I had a thought that I'd like to tell you about. I saw myself, and I was having a "holy fit" and I was sobbing and screaming and hitting the walls of the prison with my fists, my rage was so powerful that it gave me the strength to tear down the fences with my hands. I held a sledge hammer and was swinging away at the bricks with all the energy I have inside me. I really believe prisons need to be destroyed.

*When Little Sister had started drinking wine and riding in cars with white men and Mexicans, the people could not define their feeling about her. The Catholic priest shook his finger at the drunkenness and lust, but the people felt something deeper: they were losing her, they were losing part of themselves. The older sister had to act; she had to act for the people, to get this young girl back.* (from Ceremony by Leslie Marmon Silko) #

Amy Wagner

## Audre Lorde Memorial Celebration

On a wind-whipped night in early December, approximately 300 women converged on the auditorium at English High School to celebrate together the life, love, and legacy of Audre Lorde.

The event was coordinated through the WTC offices and drew on the help of sisters from around the city. Together we felt the power of Audre's words, the wonder of her life, and we drew energy from the strength of communal celebration.

Kate Rushin delivered a beautiful and incredible eulogy. Kate began by saying, "The last time I saw Audre, she said to me, 'Last week I was dying, but now I'm not.' I was dying, but now I'm not. I have never met anyone who was more self-possessed and self-determined than Audre Lorde. She looked fiercely within herself, she looked fiercely at people and the world around her and she called it like she saw it. How wonderful that Audre, who was once a little girl who did not talk much and could not see well, born in Harlem during the Depression, determined herself to become one of the most visionary, outspoken and eloquent writers of our time."

Kate ended with a challenge to



## WOMEN'S THEOLOGICAL CENTER

P.O. Box 1200, Boston, MA 02117-1200

(617) 536-8782

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Please send me information on:

\_\_\_ Study/Action 1993-94: \_\_\_ general information; \_\_\_ detailed information; \_\_\_ application form

\_\_\_ Resource Center Program Information;

\_\_\_ general information about WTC

\_\_\_ Please send me \_\_\_ copies of the *Healing Ritual*. I do / do not want the copies matted.

I'm enclosing \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for this. (See back page for prices.)

\_\_\_ Please add the above and/or attached name(s) to your mailing list

\_\_\_ to receive updates on events and programs

\_\_\_ to receive newsletter (\$10 for individuals - more if you can, less if you can't.)

\_\_\_ My contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed. This represents

\_\_\_ a general donation; \_\_\_ fee for receiving the newsletter; \_\_\_ Annual Fund '92 contribution

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the audience: "...Audre asked the question that she asked herself and had asked all of us: Are you willing to use the power that you have in the service of what you say you believe? It's a brilliant question; a crucial question because it includes everyone, lets no one off the hook. She asks us to consider and to choose. The question is empowering because it assumes that each one of us has some kind of power, regardless.

"Audre, in her complete generosity of spirit, cleared a space

for us to be. She made a space for women and men of all races, all classes, all colors, sexualities. She brought us together. She cleared a space for Black Lesbians that has never existed in the world before...

"Now, we are called upon to think more deeply, speak louder, work harder, be more of ourselves to keep our claim on the space that Audre cleared. We have been blessed to have Audre in our lives. And best of all, because of her, we have each other.

"Precious Audre. We miss her.

But, there is something we must always remember: We, here, are as precious as Audre. Anything we would hesitate to say to Audre, we best rethink before we say it to each other. Anything we regret not saying to her, we best say to each other. Anything we wish we had done for her, we best do for each other.

"Precious Audre. She was dying, now she's not.

"Precious Audre. You were dying, now you're not."#

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