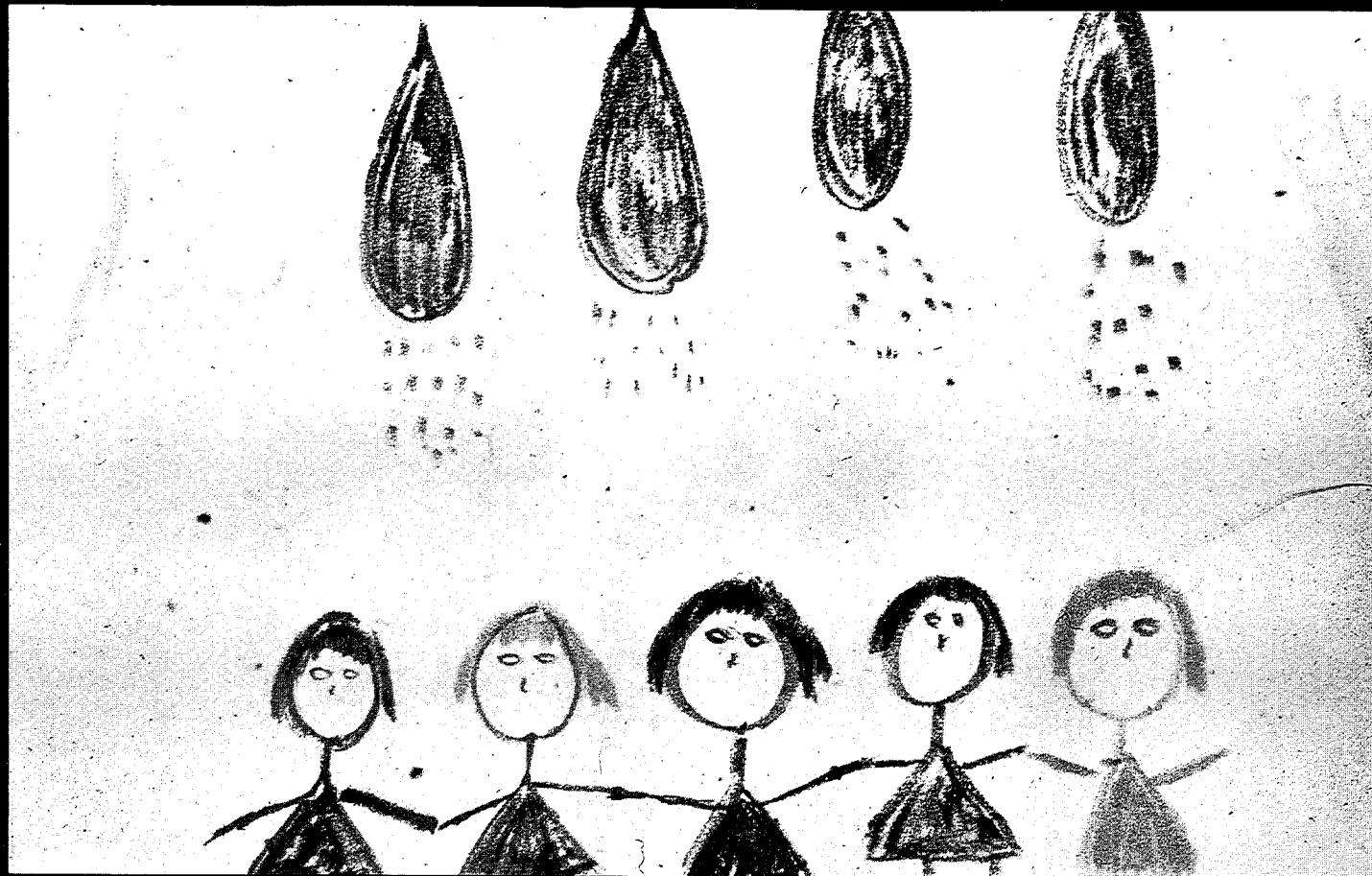


ANIMA

THE JOURNAL OF
HUMAN EXPERIENCE



We come together to erase the terrifying
moments and to write new words in our hearts.

From "The Clothesline Project," pages 121-126

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Erratum: The pictograph featured in the article, *Integrity: Two Models from India* (ANIMA: The Journal of Human Experience, Vol. 20, No. 1, Fall 1993, pg. 36) was designed by Dr. Victor Mair, Department of Asian Studies, University of Pennsylvania.

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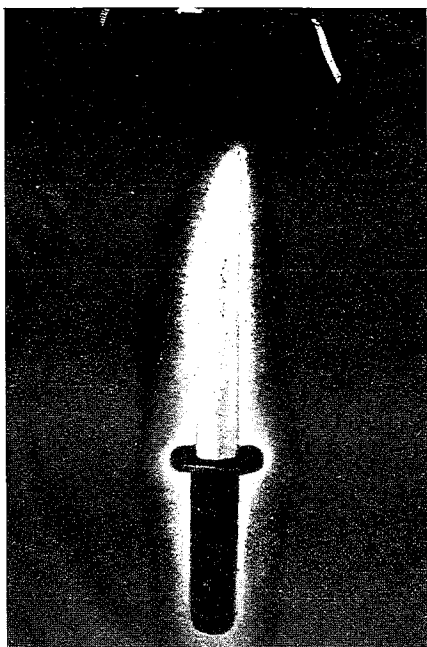


People try to make you feel better by saying, "You're not alone." This is the only place, where I'd love to stand alone and be the only person. Because nobody needs to go through this. I didn't deserve this and nobody else does.

The Clothesline Project

The central Pennsylvania "Clothesline" was assembled as part of Dickinson College's 1993 Public Affairs Symposium on Violence in American Society, and in conjunction with the national project based in Massachusetts. Over 90 women contributed T-shirts that expressed the violence they suffered and the healing and

recovery they were experiencing. A number of these shirts later became part of the United Nation's exhibit in Vienna, Austria that raised concerns about violence against women as a human rights issue. The following are excerpts from interviews with women who contributed shirts.



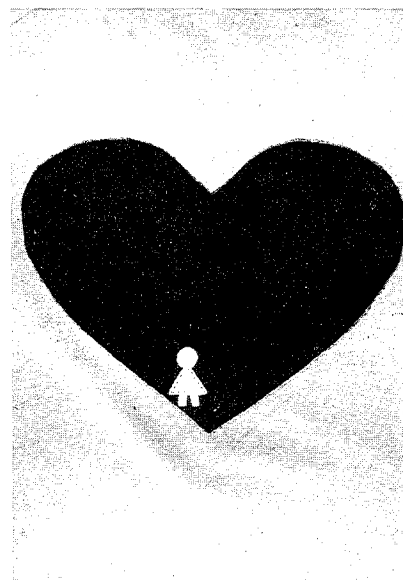
Red Knife Shirt

When I made the shirt I kept feeling that it wasn't busy enough. The shirt looks so naked...it seems too stark. And then I realized that's how I was feeling. I was feeling very vulnerable and exposed in making the image, and bringing it out into the public's eye. But I think that's the tight rope that needs to be walked. It's a very fragile situation but it's very empowering to go ahead and act, even in the midst of that kind of vulnerability.

(The man who raped Kim received a three-year prison sentence. At the end of his testimony, he talked about his own family history). "He had seen this behavior going on in his own family; he had seen his father abusing his mother and threatening her with a knife. I don't think that that's an excuse but I'm aware of how oppression generates oppression."

Black heart with little purple girl:

I knew I wanted to have a black heart on it. Maybe it was because I just felt that way about hearts, and about love. That it was all very black. That's me—the little purple girl. I cut out little felt arms. And then...I left them off.





Burlap Heart of Shame

I've always felt that my heart was damaged in some way. And that's why I wanted to start with the heart. I picked burlap because I feel that I'm very rough. I don't feel that I can be caring or compassionate to other people. And I just feel like I have a very rough heart. This is the wound, the incest. And the little hammers are what I've used to beat myself into not allowing me to be me, all my life. And these are the things—nature and love and passion and music and things like that—that I consider me. And that's what bleeds. The part that's me that isn't allowed to be. The shame which I feel; I carry my father's shame. I am shame. In the middle, the little heart, is God. Because I feel that God is the only one that's brought me through.

I know there's hope. I know it's out there and I know some day I'm going to get there. It's just, I keep trying to trip myself up on the way. I really have the confidence that you can recover. It will always be there, and it will be a part of me. But it isn't going to define me anymore.

NO! Shirt

What I would say to the public is that I very strongly believe that you are the problem. The perpetrators are given permission. And it's the people like my mother who had to turn their back—and I say that to myself, too, because that's how I survived (by) turning my back on people. And turning my back on—like being at work where people would make real abusive comments or make fun of people on a sexual basis, and I would turn my back because I just couldn't deal with it. And it's only going to change if we have the guts to turn and look at ourselves and say, "Why? Why are we so afraid to face it?"



Tar Baby Shirt

I think, for people who were abused at very young ages, sometimes the words don't come as well as other ways of expression. And so doing these shirts was a very powerful process to me. What I put on the back was this part of me that I call "Tar Baby." And she lives on my back. Tar Baby is the shame and fear, the

confusion and the guilt, and just the weight of all this that I've been carrying around with me, mostly without having any idea what it was, for almost all of my life—40 years. Sometimes she gets smaller when I'm feeling better and sometimes she gets bigger when I'm feeling worse....



"...each woman represented here is a heroine and each has contributed, in her own individual way, to the end of such violence."



Excerpts from the Response Journal

"It doesn't seem fair that the only way to be free of the nightmares is to relive the nightmare—to detoxify bad memories...these shirts give me hope."

"Though I myself have not made a shirt, it helps to see others...to know I am not the only one."

"Evil wins when good persons say nothing."

"The sick jokes are no longer funny. They now want to make me puke."

"I came and I saw myself."

"How would these women be different had they been spared these devastations? My heart breaks for those women who never were."

"Where do I go now? I've seen my shirt, I've done the 'group thing,' I've learned to accept myself again. But will I ever forget?"

"Perhaps someday I'll be able to...but I can't, so I don't."—Silent all these years.

"Part of me wishes I could remember; part of me is glad I can't."

"We come together to erase the terrifying moments and to write new words in our hearts."



Poem on White Quilted Shirt with Broken Heart
In Memory of Sandra K. Heilman Herman
September 1, 1946 – October 7, 1967
Daughter – Sister – Mother

We were young together.
I remember you from the playground, dances the city used to have in the summer.
I remember the music and the warm summer nights.
And I remember what a striking couple you were.
Everyone knew you and he were in love.
Everyone knew you and he would marry.
When we were young, it was a fairy tale story, to believe in love and marriage.
But I remember he was very jealous.
And I remember you were very spirited.
When you argued, you would walk away from him, tossing your long blond hair.
We both married.
We both had baby boys.
Five years later, when my daughter was born, I saw him working in the hospital.
He was out of prison by that time.
I am middle-aged now, as you would be.
I have seen him again, and again, over the years—with different women, with different families.
And then, a few weeks ago, I saw him in court.
Another woman tried to walk away from him, threats, fear, intimidation, and control.
I watch my two young grand-daughters racing through my yard, their long hair flying out behind them.
I think of you, of all the countless moments you were never able to experience.
And how I wish that one last time you could have tossed your long hair, defiantly,
and walked away from death.

Susan M. Killinger

We want to thank all the women who contributed T-Shirts to the Clothesline Project, Ethel Jensen and the Women's Center for organizing the exhibit, and Jean Weaver for camera work. For more information contact the National Clothesline Project, P. O. Box 727, East Dennis, MA 02641.

Lonna M. Malsmeimer is professor and chair of American Studies at Dickinson College. She collaborated on the film "In The Image of the White Man," a PBS documentary on U.S. government Indian Schools. She is co-producer with Susan D. Rose of "Clothesline," a video documentary that focuses on women's experiences with violence, healing, and recovery. Susan Rose is associate professor and chair of Sociology at Dickinson College and author of *Keeping them Out of the Hands of Satan: Evangelical Schooling in America*.

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In this issue...

A SPECIAL SECTION ON "DEEP ECOLOGY"

Connie Barlow introduces us to the "songs that science gives us" and the deep questions biologists are asking about the meaning of life.

Bernice Marie-Daily discusses the vision of ecofeminism and the reality of the human-earth relationship.

Thomas Berry and **Brain Swimme** remind us that the well-being of the planet is a condition for the well-being of human beings.

Carol P. Christ discovers the All-Holy Myrtle Tree and the remarkable wisdom of the Goddess Aphrodite.

Susan Rose and **Lonna M. Malsmeimer** present the central Pennsylvania Clothesline—a witness to the violence suffered by women as well as their courageous efforts toward healing and recovery.

Anantanand Rambachan examines Swami Vivekananda's interpretation of Christianity and its impact on Hindu attitudes toward the Christian tradition.

John Blair challenges us to consider a radically different understanding of truth.

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