

## MARILÓ NÚÑEZ

### North Meets South

I was a small seed in my mother's womb.  
Nobody told me the journey would be this  
hard.

I pondered my existence, my ancestry, only to  
come up with this.

I am six years old, and the high school auditorium is filling up. My mother's laughter fills my senses. My little sister slips her hand into mine. We sit and wait. I hear my father discussing the sound and lights with another man. People smile at me. I smile back, not registering the underlying pain that is still there. Why can't I see it? Because, I am only six years old. The lights start to dim. Darkness surrounds me. My little sister tightens her grip. I look over at my mother. So beautiful. She sits anticipating ... something. Something horrible? She looks like she's going to cry. My father joins us finally. He looks over at us and smiles. A smile so simple, it makes me fill up. He touches my mother's hair.

All around me I can sense fear. I can sense pain. And tears. The music starts.

One solitary note fills the room. Two charangos in synchronized beats. A heart beat in the background. A guitar joins in. A single flute starts to sing. The music is so beautiful. I've heard this before. It's whispered to me about a time before I was even born. I can see the people, feel their warmth. My parents are crying. I start to cry as well. Joining them in something much bigger than my six-year old existence. Much bigger than a child's comprehension

I was a small seed in my mother's womb.  
Nobody told me the journey would be this  
hard.

I pondered my existence, my ancestry, and my  
dreams came up with this.

I keep having this dream. I can't shake it. It stays with me, traces of it, even when I'm awake. In it I am ten. I'm in the backyard playing with my dolls. It's quite sunny out.

The warmth is like a blanket on my skin. I can hear other children playing in the distance. I sit there with my dolls in hand, they are superheroes today, and they have super human powers. Margarita is flying to save Finita from the dark forces of evil. She is invincible! Up, up and away! Suddenly, the sun is gone. Someone is blocking the sun. I feel anger. I turn, about to scream at the person who took the sun away. You see, superheroes can't thrive in the darkness. I turn. Someone big is standing behind me. A big black boot touches my leg. Green pants. I look up. Can't quite see his face. He's too big. He's wearing dark, black sunglasses. Medals hang on his chest. I'm only ten years old for chrissake! What did I do to you? What did my parents do to you? My hand reaches to my left. I feel a rock. My fingers curl around this rock. He starts to laugh. I try to stand. His boot gently pushes me down. He's laughing harder. I'm scared now. I'm really scared. My mouth is like sandpaper. All I can do is whimper. He takes out a revolver. He isn't laughing anymore. He prepares. It's almost like a game to him. I start to pant. My mother's face flashes in front of me. My father's smiling face. His eyes so full of love. The adrenaline is pumping through my ten-year old body. I can't contain it anymore. "MILICO HIJO DE PUTA!" Bang! Bang! Bang! The rock is no longer in my hand. I start to shake. I'm only ten years old for chrissake

I was a small seed in my mother's womb.  
Nobody told me the journey would be this  
hard.

I ponder my existence, my ancestry, and my  
writing comes up with this.

There are two paths. I am standing at a cross-road, aching to find the answers. Seventeen years of dictatorship has broken something in here. I look South. A land of exotic dreams and colourful people. A land where magic exists in the trees, the rivers, the mountains and the oceans. I walk over to the country of my parents, my roots, mi patria. I touch her and I feel a powerful pull. A distant voice

whispers to me about the people who fled to save their families and their dreams. When I wear this outfit, I want to cry with the pride that I feel inside. I understand why ... why they left... But sometimes I don't understand who I am....

I look North. It is here that I took my first step, my first word was uttered and my transition into womanhood occurred. My memories are here. I touch her and I feel a sense of understanding. I speak her language and live her culture...but I also feel disoriented, lost. I feel like an outsider because I am torn in two. I am standing at the crossroads and I don't know which way to turn. I have to make the two paths meet. I have to make them dance. North, I would like to introduce you to South.

I was a small seed in my mother's womb. Nobody told me the journey would be this hard. I now accept my existence, my ancestry, and this is what I am.

Una mujer, sin voz, me grito con sus ojos.  
(A woman, silenced, screams to me with her eyes.)  
Me conto de lo que te habian hecho, esa noche, negra, oscura y sola.  
(She tells me about what they did to you that dark solitary night.)  
Siento tus lagrimas. El gusto a sangre me hace reir de nervios.  
(I feel your sorrow. The taste of your blood makes me want to laugh nervously.)  
Te mataron esa noche. Te tiraron el corazon en el rio.  
(They killed you that night, throwing your heart into the river.)  
Lentamente, sin animo, me levanto de esta pesadilla.  
(I slowly wake from this nightmare.)  
Tu cuerpo, frio, tirado en un rincon de la pieza, me asusta.  
(Your corpse, so cold and thrown in the corner of my bedroom scares me.)  
Que hago con esta geografia muerta? Me la pongo como un abrigo de piel, para que todos lo vean?  
(What do I do with this dead geography?  
Wear it like a luxurious fur coat, for all to see?)

Lo guardo en el dormitorio al final del pasillo, sin alas, sin calor?

(Do I hide it in the bedroom at the end of the dark hallway, without wings, without heat?)

No. Yo tendre que resucitar a mi pais.

(No, I shall bring life back into my country.)

Mis manos tiritan con el frio que baila con tu cuerpo.

(My hands tremble with the cold feel of your body.)

La luna no da calor!

(The moon does not give us heat!)

Mis labios cuentan de los rios, las montanas, las flores y tu cobre.

(My lips form the story of your rivers, your mountains, your flowers and your copper.)

Cada accion te da de mi sangre.

(Each word gives you my blood.)

Cada accion te da mi cuerpo.

(Every action gives you a part of my body.)

El color esta empezando a amanecer en tus mejillas.

(The colour is starting to show on your pale cheeks.)

Tu pelo, una vez liso y sin brillo, se transforma en el mar.

(Your hair, once brittle and lifeless, transforms into the sea.)

I will give you my voice, my body and my soul.

Your blood runs through these veins.

I am singing the sounds of my people.

I have nothing if I do not have this.

Two countries reside on the planes of my horizon.

I am all the people who died. I am all the people who left.

I am...

I was a small seed. Now I am two hearts, two shorelines, two maps.

I am complete.

Demarcation and boundaries led me to this.

A border within myself has been erased.

Replaced by so much sound, beauty and life.

Gracias a la vida...

*Mariló Núñez is an actor and writer living in Toronto.*

**BLACK  
ROSE  
BOOKS**

## **RACE, CLASS, WOMEN AND THE STATE**

*The Case of Domestic Labour*

Tanya Schecter

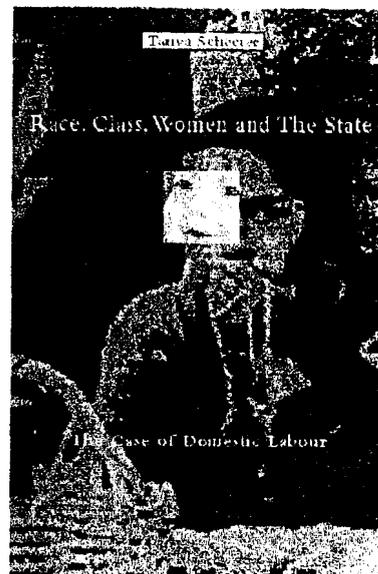
Traces the role of the State in setting the policies of immigration that have allowed Canadian women the freedom to increase their participation in the public sphere, while at the same time keeping the public-private divide much the same as they were at the turn of the century: that is, domestic labour and child care remain women's responsibility and are valued less than work performed in the public sphere.

It shows how women are overwhelmingly forced to work a double day: for many immigrant women their double day increasingly takes place in the home as they are forced to work in other women's homes performing domestic duties for low wages.

*It is a rare book that collectively implicates immigration policy and the women's movement. This is a thorough, "workwomanlike" book, and offers valuable analysis and insight.*

Montreal Gazette

204 pages (1998) : Paperback ISBN: 1-55164-108-9 \$24.99



## **RACE, GENDER AND WORK**

*A Multi-Cultural Economic History of Women in the United States*

Teresa Amott, Julie Matthaei

*Race, Gender, and Work is exciting because of its frank acknowledgement of difference among women.*

Julianne Malveaux, Berkeley

*...a detailed, richly textured history of working women.*

Barbara Ehrenreich, *The Worst Years of Our Lives*

433 pages (1991) : 0-921689-90-X \$19.99

## **WOMEN AND RELIGION**

Fatmagül Berktaç

This book focuses mainly on the *functions* of religion, the way it relates to women; its contribution to gender differences; the status of women within it; and the meanings attributed to the female body.

Undertaken as well, is an exposition of contemporary Fundamentalism in both its Protestant and Islamic variants (in America and Iran).

240 pages (1998) : 1-55164-102-X \$24.99

## **ECOLOGY OF EVERYDAY LIFE**

*Rethinking the Desire for Nature*

Chaia Heller

Examines the ecological impulse as a 'desire for nature.'

*An exciting, provocative, and truly insightful work.*

Murray Bookchin

*Brings back the joy and spontaneity to activism.*

Greta Gaard, *Ecological Politics*

*Anyone searching for ways to rethink and remake the world should read this book.*

Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature*

204 pages (1999) : 1-55164-132-1 \$24.99

## **FINDING OUR WAY**

*Rethinking Eco-Feminist Politics*

Janet Biehl

An introduction to eco-feminist thought.

*...provides a sorely needed perspective on the relationship between feminism and ecology.*

165 pages (1991) : 0-921689-78-0 \$19.99

Available in better bookstores, or, by calling toll free 1-800-565-9523.

To view our complete catalogue visit our web site.

<http://www.web.net/blackrosebooks>