

30 Years of Sinister Wisdom

In Review by Ruth Mountaingrove

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This 30th Anniversary Celebration is a look back into our lesbian feminist past. In some ways it is a sad trip, so many of our vital lesbian feminists are no longer with us. They died too young of breast cancer, colon cancer, liver cancer, heart attack.

Tee Corinne's solarized photograph of two women making love is on the cover of this issue. While actually modeled by two heterosexual women, the photograph has become an icon for lesbians.

Some of us have lived through all those 30 years with *Sinister Wisdom*. I met the originators of *Sinister Wisdom* at the Women in Print Conference in Omaha, Nebraska in 1976, where I took their photograph now in the June Arnold Collection and in the Archive at the University of Oregon.

Tee Corinne once asked the famous photographer Ruth Bernhard what Tee should photograph and was told to take portraits of well known women. We have ten of these famous portraits in the current issue.

There are tributes to Gloria Anzaldua, Vickie Sears, Jeannette Foster, Margaret Sloan-Hunter, Sarah Aldrich, Barbara Macdonald, Karen Anna, Terri Jewell, Pat Parker, May Sarton, Monique Wittig, Valerie Taylor, Martha Courtot, Kay Gardner, Audre Lorde, and Barbara Cameron.

Renate Stendahl writes about the Women's Memorial Labyrinth in Germany, 1000 women remembered. There is a tribute to Tina Grieg, an English woman by her friend Kirsten Hearn.

Cathy Cade writes about Elizabeth Freeman, as does Marge Nelson. Cade also photographed her. Catherine remembers Sharon Silvas, a publisher who encouraged new writers.

Marilyn Murphy remembers Barbara Deming. Collene Regan is remembered by Kathe Kirkbride and Alexandra Grilikhes by Janet Mason who also remembers Almitra

David.

Are there any of us honored while still living? Yes, Catherine Nicholson and Harriet Desmoines, founders of *Sinister Wisdom*. Pat Meller and Chris Roerden write about the founders and the magazine as does Merrill Mushroom.

Janet Mason writes about Anita Cornwell and has a portrait of her. I met Anita in Philadelphia at a party when I was part of the Women's Center. Alison Laurie writes extensively about the Lesbian Nation in New Zealand.

Jacqueline Elizabeth Letalian tells us that starting in 1971 she discovered the Women's Movement and her lesbian self. She learned who she really was and has been defending that self ever since. "Being a lesbian is a complex will of the spirit, the simple logic of the heart: I am a woman, I love myself, I love women. I am a lesbian because I am content to be a lesbian," she writes.

Bea Loud remembers a woman she named Out Loud who was a mentor to her, who she lost to depression and suicide, while Denise Hise writes of a professor never named who had a profound effect on her as her mentor.

Lauren Levey thought she might be a lesbian so looked for a liberal college and chose Bennington. An activist, she helped raise money for a student who needed an abortion. She also was part of a

group of women who got the curfew applying to women dropped. She wonders why Sisterhood was so powerful and attributes it to the culture she was then living in, she and other women, largely lesbian. She wonders how it might be re-constituted.

I also have a small piece "Two Strong Lesbians: Jean Mountaingrove," who is very much alive, who changed my life, and Tee who encouraged my photography. There is much more. It is amazing how much lesbian history can be compressed into 152 pages, a tribute to Fran Day's editing.

Sinister Wisdom: A Multicultural Journal by & for Lesbians can be found on the web at www.sinisterwisdom.org.

