

# *To the* HERLAND VOICE

September, 1996

## WOMEN IN THE TREES

reviewed by Jo L. Soske

When the latest collection of short stories edited by Susan Koppelman, *Women in the Trees: U.S. Women's Short Stories about Battering & Resistance, 1839-1994*, arrived at my door in an envelope from Beacon Press, I was a little more than curious. I had been anticipating the publication of this book, and I was anxious to see the cover. The students of English at Southeast High School, where I am employed as a counselor, were asked to give input into the selection of the cover during a guest lecture by Susan Koppelman nearly a year ago. In spite of this personal interest, it was my full intention to decline a request that I review the book for the *Herland Voice*. Still, I paused to read the introduction, and despite my firm resolve, I knew immediately that this was a book that I must read, and a book I must review.

For those of us who may attempt to cling to any vestiges of the myths or stereotypes about battering, Koppelman's introduction is a call to question. Who are the battered? Can they possibly include the scholarly, the enlightened, the consciousness raised, the feminist, us? In an unparalleled stroke of the pen Koppelman writes the words "battered woman" and "feminist" on the same page. She courageously tells us of her experience as both. She dares to say that they are not mutually exclusive.

As is typical of Koppelman, her introduction is scholarly, instructional, and challenging. She encourages us to let go of our inability to imagine being in the place of a battered woman and to understand that, "The divisions among and between us, usually based on notions of difference which we haven't chosen and aren't responsible for and which are not salient to our common humanity, keep us isolated from each other."

The introduction is followed by an edited collection of over twenty-five culturally and ethnically rich short stories. The collection includes stories by Zora Neale Hurston, Fannie Hurst, Kate Chopin, Hisaye Yamamoto, Andrea Dworkin, Sandra Cisneros, Barbara Harman, Sonia Sanchez, and many others. (*continued on page 2*)

## LAST CALL FOR MUGS!

Many of you may remember a few years ago when Herland had a fundraising drive similar to public radio's. We offered a beautiful coffee mug with the Herland logo on it to anyone who would make a pledge of \$40 or more. Even monthly pledges that would total at least \$40 in one year qualified for the mug.

Well, that fundraising drive has come and gone but some of the mugs remain. We have a feeling that some of our donors may have inadvertently not received the mugs they were due. So, we are making a last call for mugs!

If you donated to that campaign and did not receive the mug due you, please drop us a line at Herland (Attention: Ginger) and let us know. We will be glad to mail you one with our sincerest appreciation for your contribution. Any mugs remaining unclaimed after November 1, 1996 will be for sale in the bookstore, so come get another if you like. □

## GIRLS NIGHT OUT!

A Benefit for Herland

7 - 10 P.M.

Sunday, September 15

The Bunkhouse

2800 N.W. 39 OKC

Performances by: Circle of Friends, Cutchla, Donna D., FreeFall, Wende Allyn and Surprise Guests!

Come early and check out the Bunkhouse's dinner menu!

*Also in September...*

September 8, Sunday at 8 p.m. Freefall's tape and CD release party at Medina's Coffeehouse on the Paseo. Cover is \$3.

September 21, Saturday at 9P.M. Circle of Friends at Medina's Coffeehouse.



## RORY BLOCK — *TORNADO*

reviewed by Jill Garner

I bought a Rory Block CD a couple of years ago based on a review I read, and while her voice was everything the reviewer said it was, I never quite got into many of the songs. The CD was relegated to a few listenings and a place on my shelf. However, I held out hope that I would find a CD of Block's that I loved and this one is definitely it. With her clear, strong voice, it's hard to go wrong with Rory Block, and on this great collection of songs (she wrote 9 out of the 11), this one won't be stuck on my shelf anytime soon.

Only a couple of the songs on *Tornado* are the traditional Mississippi Delta blues style that Block is known for. But Block's influences from other styles are obvious in much of her music and on this CD she delves into pop, traditional, and blues and she proves her versatile talent with every song. Block is known as one of the best female acoustic blues guitarists and one of Bonnie Raitt's inspirations. She also has gathered many great musicians together for this album, and her vocal talent tops off the package.

There are some great songs on this collection. The *Last Leviathan* has a traditional Irish sound and consists of Block on lead and harmony vocals accompanied by only a synthesizer. This song always grabs my attention because it's such a captivating song, sad but beautiful. It's one of the two she didn't write but it's easy to see why she chose it. *Indian Ernie*, about a free-traveling man that possibly Block herself once loved, is my absolute favorite song. The music is gorgeous, the words beautiful, the saxophone gives me wonderful chills, and I have a feeling it will be one of my favorite's for some time to come. *Rosaline* is a moving song about a woman who has lost her baby and been left. "Why did you leave me, when we lost the baby? Just when I needed you, Just when I was broken." And there are more.

I don't like every song on this collection, the title song included, but it's rare that I ever do. Some of the songs don't flow smoothly enough for my taste or they just don't grab me. But there are enough great songs here to make the purchase worth it. From the traditional Delta blues of *Mississippi Bottom Blues*, to the slightly new age sound of *Bright Spirit*, Block travels through a colorful tapestry of stories from the usual

love and heartache to the death of the whales, friendship, and violence against women (*Gone Woman Blues* is dedicated to Nicole Brown). Block's strong, soulful, deep voice, acoustic guitar, and her array of talented musicians carry me right along with her. Highly recommended!

This CD is available to listen to at Herland. It's worth the trip!

### Other Happenings

The second part of the Pulitzer prize-winning play *Angels in America, Perestroika*, will be performed at The Dallas Theater Center from October 17 to November 17. I traveled to Dallas for the first part and plan to make the trip again for the second. It was definitely worth it.

Alison Krauss will be in downtown Tulsa September 7 for the Tulsa Bluegrass and Chili Festival, and best of all, it's free! □

### IN MEMORY

With sorrow, we note the passing of Zyra Shelley. Zyra was the sign language interpreter at several Herland sponsored concerts. She had been very ill most of this year and died on Friday, August 9th in her home state of Alabama after contracting pneumonia.

### WOMEN IN THE TREES

(continued from Page 1)

These stories are absolute testimony to the fact that women have been speaking out against men's violence for over one hundred fifty years. The authors tell us over and over again the "... we can not look to the victims to understand the choices of the abuser."

I found this to be one of the most disturbing books I have ever read. After reading several of the stories, I realized that though the settings, the characters, and the endings were different; I was reading the same story over and over again. As a counselor, a teacher, a daughter, a friend, and a woman, I knew it to be a story that is absolutely true. Writing this (these) stories was an act of courage as was collecting them, editing them, and publishing them. I believe reading them is an act of courage that every woman owes herself. □



# HERLAND FALL RETREAT

FEATURING

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NOVEMBER 1-3

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	Single Annual	Person's Income	Pre-registration per person	Household Income	Annual
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	\$6,500 -	\$13,250	\$ 25	\$13,300 -	\$18,000
	\$13,250 -	\$19,500	\$ 35	\$18,000 -	\$26,000
	\$19,500 -	\$30,000	\$ 45	\$26,000 -	\$50,000
	over	\$30,000	\$ 60	over	\$50,000

Please choose the registration amount most appropriate for you. On-site registration will be \$65. Deadline for pre-registration is October 29 and registration is non-refundable after October 29.

Registration fee enclosed (payable to Herland):  \$15  \$25  \$35  \$45  \$60

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

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

- I need a scholarship to attend.  
 I'm enclosing an additional \$\_\_\_\_\_ to help provide scholarships.  
 I'm bringing \_\_\_\_\_ children (girls of all ages and boys under 10 are welcome)  
 I'm bringing \_\_\_\_\_ pets (LEASHED and well-behaved)

Return registration to: Herland Sister Resources, 2312 N.W. 39, Oklahoma City, OK 73112

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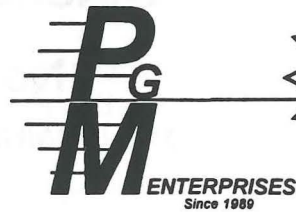


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