Kalamu: Do you think that fiction is the most effective way to do this? Toni: No. The most effective way to do it, is to do it!!

Note

1. "In Search of the Mother Tongue: An Interview with Toni Cade Bambara." First World Journal (Fall 1980).

The Bridge Poem

Kate Rushin

I've had enough
I'm sick of seeing and touching
Both sides of things
Sick of being the damn bridge for everybody

Nobody
Can talk to anybody
Without me
Right?

I explain my mother to my father my father to my little sister
My little sister to my brother to the white feminists
The white feminists to the Black church folks the Black church folks
To the ex-hippies the ex-hippies to the Black separatists the
Black separatists to the artists the artists to my friends' parents . . .

Then
I've got to explain myself
To everybody

I do more translating
Than the Gawdamn UN

Forget it
I'm sick of it

I'm sick of filling in your gaps
Sick of being your insurance against
The isolation of your self-imposed limitations
Sick of being the crazy at your holiday dinners
Sick of being the odd one at your Sunday Brunches
Sick of being the sole Black friend to 34 individual white people

Find another connection to the rest of the world
Find something else to make you legitimate
Find some other way to be political and hip
I will not be the bridge to your womanhood
Your manhood
Your human-ness

I'm sick of reminding you not to
Close off too tight for too long

I'm sick of mediating with your worst self
Oh behalf of your better selves

I am sick
Of having to remind you
To breathe
Before you suffocate
Your own fool self

Forget it
Stretch or drown
Evolve or die

The bridge I must be
Is the bridge to my own power
I must translate
My own fears
Mediate
My own weaknesses

I must be the bridge to nowhere
But my true self
And then
I will be useful

La Jornada
Preface, 1981

Cherríe Moraga

Change does not occur in a vacuum. In this preface I have tried to
recreate for you my own journey of struggle, growing consciousness,
and subsequent politicization and vision as a woman of color. I want
to reflect in actual terms how this anthology and the women in it and
around it have personally transformed my life, sometimes rather painfully
but always with richness and meaning.

I Transfer and Go Underground
(Boston, Massachusetts—July 20, 1980)

It is probably crucial to describe here the way this book is coming
together, the journey it is taking me on. The book is still not completed,
and I have traveled East to find it a publisher. Such an anthology is in
high demand these days. A book by radical women of color. The Left
needs it, with its shaky and shabby record of commitment to women,
period. Oh, yes, it can claim its attention to “color” issues, embodied
in the male. Sexism is acceptable to the white Left publishing house,
particularly if spouted through the mouth of a Black man.

The feminist movement needs the book, too. But for different
reasons. Do I dare speak of the boredom setting in among the white
sector of the feminist movement? What was once a cutting edge, grow-
ing dull in the too easy solution to our problems of hunger of soul and
stomach. The lesbian separatist utopia? No thank you, sisters. I can't
prepare myself a revolutionary packet that makes no sense when I leave

xxxv