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my manifesto: a public declaration of patriarchal domination and resistance

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my manifesto:  
a public declaration of patriarchal domination and resistance

By Carmina Eliason

Dear friends,

I would like to share with you a piece of my identity.

During Spring of 2005 I wrote the following piece as a part of political stand against patriarchy in a class entitled "Domination & Resistance." It was written to record certain events in my life which in part caused me to be the person I am today. It was also written in order to document my personal statement against the domination of patriarchy. It was meant to be read and heard by others so that more people would understand the penetration of patriarchal violence that still exists in our society. By publishing this piece in an academic journal I hope to validate my experience among the scholarly and to force examination of the phenomenon of patriarchal domination as an aspect of culture and society to be studied by social and behavioral scientists.

December 17, 2005 I will be celebrating my 2nd anniversary of freedom from a person who violently dominated my life for six and a half years. The piece is a part of a healing and learning process I have been a part of since that time. In Fall 2004 I published a piece of artwork in “Culture, Society and Praxis” entitled, "Good Man Bad Man," which was created during Spring 2004. This piece documented my feelings toward men, bringing together my angst against my past and my hopes for the future. I now present to you a piece that textually represents what has happened to me in the past and what I am finally doing now in the present.

This piece is not meant as a "man-bashing" opportunity; It is meant for you to view one person's experience of patriarchal domination. My piece might be difficult to read as it might conjure up uncomfortable feelings and thoughts due to my use of language that is graphic and explicit.

I can't say "I hope you enjoy my piece." You may not enjoy it. Rather, I hope that you learn from it and become more aware of our culture's patriarchal domination.
domination
my ex-boyfriend didn’t let me cut my hair
he didn’t let me wear shorts or tank tops
no tight, fitted, or see-through clothing
no wearing makeup or doing up my hair
no talking to males or lesbians
no spending time with my family or the few friends I had left
no talking up in class, dressing up, joining clubs, or expressing myself publicly in any way

how did he manage to keep me controlled in a such a dark place?
through violent threats and actions

my ex-boyfriend raped me
everyday—he forced me to have sex even though I didn’t want to
he forced me to do things in bed I didn’t like
he forced me to engage in activities that hurt
if I had said no, he would have hit me

the jack ass hit me anyway
it started when he slapped me across the face
when that wasn’t enough—he punched my back
he punched my legs
he left bruises on the places that were covered up by the clothes he approved of—no other place
if I cried or tried to get away, it would get worse

the bastard made me feel like a beaten animal
he did things to me that the SPCA wouldn’t allow done to animals
he pulled the hair he wouldn’t let me cut, then dragged me across the floor
he put his hands around my neck and squeezed, stopping my air flow
I blacked out
when I cried out or tried to get away, he viciously grabbed at my face to get me to stop
he left scratches on my face and neck that I had to hide with makeup and turtlenecks

he called me names
bitch
whore
slut
made me feel like I was nothing

resistance
December 17, 2003—I ended it with him
I told him not to contact me again
to stay away from my family

but that wasn’t all…

I took a stand against patriarchy
I did all the things he told me not to do:

I wear clothes that show me off
I talk to boys
I put on make up
I dress up
I express myself
I joined a club and danced
I speak up in class
and I went away to a university

I make friends with guys and girls no matter their sexual orientation
I am loud when I want to be
and I laugh out loud

I admit that I am depressed
I take my medication
I see a counselor
I ask for help

I spend time with my family
I spend time with my friends
I spend time with myself

… I am learning to be myself
what I like
what I don’t like
and how I should be treated

I am finally growing into a woman
not an abused and meek little girl
I have boobs and I have a vagina
I have an opinion
I will no longer keep quiet

I don’t know how you’ll react to this—my first public declaration of self
but talk to me… tell me how you feel
engage me in your experiences, your feelings, your anger, your frustrations
or your joy, your triumphs, your accomplished goals

I will no longer keep quiet
and neither should you

ps… I cut my hair