

# Friday Magazine



**Women: Taking Back Their Rights**





change. Legislation, litigation, and education are all valuable tools in fighting established interests. People who engage in these other methods, though, often view direct action protests as a threat to the movement. They fear that by using techniques which draw publicity to the cause, the direct actionists harm the credibility of the movement as a whole.

Sargent disagrees with this notion. "There has never been a movement that has succeeded without both," she claimed. "The radicals on the outside (who use direct action) make the moderates inside look sane." In this way, social changes that once looked extreme take on a more moderate appearance and stand a better chance of being accepted both by legislators and by society in general. It is because of the "radical fringe" that reforms are accepted, not in spite of it.

*"Direct action demonstrates your self-worth."*

MARY HOPPIN/NEXUS

## Direct Action

By the time we reach the age of 20, according to Mary Lee Sargent, instructor in women's studies and history at Parkland College in Champaign, Illinois, everyone should have at least 20 progressive causes that they are involved with. For five of these causes, they should be committed to engaging in direct action, and two of the causes they should "live and breathe." This is Sargent's formula for "de-yupification" and for breaking out of the "Reagan-Deukmejian syndrome." It is a formula she has followed in her own life.

Sargent first became involved in social change in the Dallas Civil Rights movement, where she sat in the back of segregated buses to show her contempt for racism. Since then she had made civil rights a lifelong issue and nonviolent direct action a way of life.

Many people see direct action protest as an expression of hatred, but for Sargent it is an open, honest communication done in the spirit of hope that things can change. "Resistance against abuse is very positive," she told her audience May 14 in a lecture entitled "Women Rising in Resistance" sponsored by the Women's Center and the A.S. Status of Women. "It demonstrates your self-worth." Disruption of business, sit-ins, office occupations, boycotts, and vigils are some of the direct acts Sargent advised students to take to protest oppression and exploitation.

While Sargent urges people to use direct action as a means of protests, she acknowledges that other forms of action are also needed to accomplish social

There are other reasons why Sargent endorses direct action protest. Direct action is "bonding and energizing." It brings excitement and inspiration back to a movement that has become frustrated and burned out. When ERA came up for vote in Illinois, the ballot was doomed to go down in defeat. Only three states short of becoming part of the Constitution, the Equal Rights Amendment was about to die.

Spirits could not have been lower among feminist supporters but they refused to surrender their dream without a fight. Nineteen women, including Sargent, chained themselves to the state capitol in protest and remained there for four days. When the amendment was rejected they wrote the names of legislators who had voted against it on the floor of the capitol in blood. They couldn't save ERA, but through their action these women saved the spirit they were fighting for.

Saving the spirit is what direct action is all about. It is empowering and its results can be more dramatic in the lives of those who participated in the action sometimes than in those who witnessed it. Direct action draws attention to important issues and starts dialogues that ordinarily wouldn't get started. Direct action upsets people, which is why many moderate activists are so opposed to it and why, as women trained not to upset people, women sometimes are reluctant to use direct action techniques in feminist causes. We shouldn't back away from direct action because it upsets people though. "Upset is a way to learn," says Sargent. If you upset someone, they begin to think and once they begin to think, then half the battle is won.

— Linda Chandler

# PRIVILEGE

"a poem for men who don't understand when we say they have it"

privilege is simple:  
going for a pleasant stroll after dark,  
not checking the back of your car as you get in, sleeping soundly,  
speaking without interruption, and not remembering  
dreams of rape that follow you all day, that wake you up crying, and  
privilege  
is not seeing your stripped, humiliated body  
plastered in celebration across every magazine rack, privilege  
is going to the movies and not seeing yourself  
terrorized, defamed, battered, butchered  
seeing something else

privilege is  
riding your bicycle through town without being screamed at or  
run off the road, not needing an abortion, taking off your shirt  
on a hot day in a crowd, not wishing you could type better  
just in case — not shaving your legs, having a good job and  
expecting to keep it, not feeling the boss's hand up your crotch,  
dozing off on late-night buses, privilege  
is being the hero in the T.V. show, not the dumb broad,  
knowing your doctor won't rape you

it's simple really, privilege  
means someone else's pain, your wealth  
is my terror, your uniform  
is a woman raped to death here or in Cambodia or wherever  
wherever your obscene privilege  
writes your name in my blood, it's that simple,  
you've always had it, that's why it doesn't  
seem to make you sick at the stomach,  
you have it, we pay for it, now



## Holly Near: The

Captivating, entertaining, and thought-provoking, Holly Near's performance in Campbell Hall last Friday night provided an inspirational beginning to a week-long celebration of womanhood and fight against violence and oppression of women. More than a beautiful voice and a good beat, Holly Near's music and lyrics come from the heart and reach out to progressive audiences of the '80s — a testimony to the vibrancy of liberal politics today.

While many associate her with the anti-war movement of the '70s, her music and politics have grown to include a wide array of issues from the war in Nicaragua to racism, nuclear power, and feminism. Near has recorded thirteen albums, all with Redwood Records, a Northern California based record company specializing in progressive artists, founded by Near in 1973.

While lending a powerful voice to the pressing political issue of today, she also focuses on the passions and problems of love relationships, advocating personal dignity and mutual respect. Her latest album, *Don't Hold Back* is composed entirely of love songs. "People spend a huge amount of time dealing with being in love and out of love," Near said in an interview on Saturday. "You as a listener will have to decide whether it's a shallow love song album, or a deep love song album." "I tried very hard not to put any songs on it that were 'I can't live without you, baby, baby' songs. I feel that each one of the songs has humor or some kind of sophisticated approach to love or an obviously unsophisticated one."

During the concert on Friday, she told the audience of about 500 (mostly women) that she has always wanted to do an "all love song album," of which *Don't Hold Back* is her first after 12 albums before this. "It's about heartbreak, despair ... misery and frustration ... I hope it includes some emotion you've had in your life," she said with a captivating smile. "I do believe in commitment, but to me that's different than promises we can't keep," she said on a more serious note before singing a song entitled "The Promise," from her new album.

Throughout the evening, she displayed her ability to capture the audience with her warm smile and

uncanny wit and also to stir them with her views of love and politics. The Iran-contra scandal served to confirm her sanity, she told the audience. "At least now I know I wasn't having paranoid fantasies" of corruption and law-breaking in the government.

She also addressed the issue of sexual assault, announcing the "Take Back the Night" march and singing a song she wrote for a similar march in L.A.

By day I live in terror/By night I live in fright/For as long as I can remember/A lady don't go out alone at night/... We've got to fight back/-in large numbers/Together we can make a safe home.

"We are too sophisticated a society to let this happen," she said following the song.

The lyrics of another song deal with slavery of Afro-Americans and the underground railroad they used to escape from the South. She said Afro-Americans do not get the recognition they deserve for their contribution to modern music. "Spirituals are the foundation upon which all North American music was built."

"The underground continued in Europe with the Jews running away from Hitler, and continues now in Central America with people running away from U.S. bombs to the U.S." she said. "They must think we won't drop bombs on our own people." She added that they (Central Americans) must not know about Philadelphia, a reference to the bombing incident several years ago which left several Americans dead by our own police.

An interest in the evolution of politics is important to Near, who looks at the course of human history as a "growth process that human beings have the potential to go through to become greater, more humane, more powerful people if we choose to be."

"We walk in a long path of people who tried to push human limitations to the very edge. Some people pushed them in a negative way, like Hitler did. Some people push them in a scientific way like people who feel like the most important stretch human kind can make is to go to the moon."

"Other people think pushing human limitations has to do with how expansive we can develop our

editor:  
Laurie L. McCullough

assisted by:  
Mary Hoppin

with special thanks to:  
A.S. Status of Women

Photos by Mary Hoppin







KEITH MADIGAN/Nexus

*"We are too sophisticated a society to let (rape) happen."*

— Holly Near

## The Powerful Voice

hearts; our ability to coexist with each other, to live with each other's cultural differences, to live with each other's choices, and to challenge ourselves internally to say, for example 'I'm white, but I can break the chain; I don't have to be a racist. I can unlearn those lessons and move on and be white in a different way than perhaps my ancestors were.' And for me men to be able to say that, 'I can be a man different than men have been in the past.'" Near said she views evolution as a "challenge to be an improved species over time."

Even when singing about injustice and the horrible conditions in certain parts of the world, there is always a sense in her lyrics that all problems are surmountable. In a song entitled, "Unity," from her 1982 album, *Speed of Light* she sings:

*Doesn't always mean agreement/  
It doesn't ever mean the same/Sure  
doesn't mean burning books and  
brains/and Jews in Jesus' name/  
You don't need to rob me/ of the  
pride that I just found./There's  
enough love and dignity/to go all the  
way around.*

Near expressed her belief in the power of individuals to fight even the tragic spread of AIDS in the world. "We have to learn how to face this ... I do believe we can love safely." After talking to the audience about AIDS, she sang "Somewhere Over the Rainbow," changing some of the lyrics to say, "the dreams we dare to dream, they really do come true."

Her recognition of the problems and weaknesses of human beings makes her faith in our survival a powerful and inspirational challenge to her listeners. "I don't believe in Nirvana. I think if Nirvana were handed to us on a silver platter today, this would be the first day in the struggle to keep it."

"We're not perfect people; we do hit each other and we do kill each other ... We do hurt the ones we love as well as the ones we don't love. I'm not a Pollyanna about that; I'm a realist. But in the context of that realism we can all do the best we can with what we've got.... It makes for a pretty good life when you choose to live that way."

Near believes in the potential for individuals to work together to make a better world, but she does not know whether we are moving in the right

direction or the wrong direction. "Only the historians will be able to analyze that."

"I feel that U.S. foreign policy is heading in a terrible direction, and has been for years. But some of the human beings who live in the United States are trying to challenge some of those directions ... and have had some incredible success."

"What the students have done to bring South Africa to the attention of this country is phenomenal. And I don't think students get the praise they deserve for the effect they have had on that particular issue... Students have the capacity if they choose to make a major impact on the world."

The importance of choices and personal strength applies not only to Near's political views, but also runs through her love songs. In her song "All I Can Give is Goodbye," from her new album, she sings:

*Now that it's over, I really am  
quite happy/And it's not that I don't  
miss you/but I'm glad there was an  
end/Can't seem to find the reason  
but my heart isn't there/I would  
send you love if I had love to share*

Near's concert was a special treat not only for those interested in her lyrics, but for those who love her music too. The musicians in the band had never played together before and provided a surprisingly tight performance. The band will travel with her to San Diego for the next performance, but she is not sure yet whether she will continue her tour with a band or not because of the expense.

Near said she hopes to attract students to her music with her latest album. "I'm sort of a different generation. When I go on a play on campuses, there's a limited number of people who know my work. Unless their parents listen to my music, they haven't heard of it."

"I really have a lot of admiration for students. I'd like to give them something, because I feel like they give me something back."

During the concert Near joked about the tee shirts which were for sale at the door with the cover shot of her latest album on the front. "I feel like Bonnie Raitt or something ... Maybe I'll be rock and roll star some day. You laugh! — I'll show you."

— Susan Cannon

# Pornography or Erotica? Using Freedom of Speech to Determine the Difference

Free speech is regarded as one of this country's most cherished foundations. Without it, people tell us, democracy and the American Way would perish. But those who argue that the principle of free speech allows pornographers to peddle degrading and violent depictions of women are arguing not for a preservation of democracy, but of capitalism.

Protest pornography, and not only will you be labeled as prudish, conservative and an anti-sex fanatic, but you will be told that you threaten the right to free speech.

In two forums this week, members of the campus community debated the impact of pornography on our society. At neither event did the people present come to a collective conclusion about free speech, or even about the definition of pornography. Discussion centered on the impact of the mass media in our lives, the nature of our sexuality, and how the marriage of pornographers and advertisers (or capitalists) influences our collective psyche.

Traditional liberals view pornography as a part of "free speech" protected by First Amendment rights. Thus pornography, no matter how violent, degrading or rape-promotional, should be defended on the basis that everyone has the right to sell whatever they like.

Conservatives on the other hand, argue that the First Amendment does not protect explicit depictions of sex in the media. Thus, they promote censorship of material that they consider "obscene."

Neither argument, however, recognizes that a distinction can be made between material that depicts nudity and sexuality and material that displays women as sex objects. Feminists protest pornography not because we feel sex is obscene, but because pornography combines sex with violence while graphically depicting the subjugation and domination of women.

The cloud of ambiguity that surrounded the discussions of pornography this week mandates that we attempt to define the difference between erotica (material that celebrates sexuality and intimacy) and pornography (material that relegates women to second-class sex objects).

Erotica conveys a sense of mutuality, dignity and respect for sexuality; pornography perpetuates the rape-mentality by defining women as vulnerable and victimized objects of male sexual conquest.

How does one distinguish between a piece of erotica and a piece of pornography? The task is at best difficult, at worst entirely subjective. Pornography can be distinguished by elements of dehumanization. Disembodied close-ups of legs, breasts, buttocks, vaginas and body parts promote a tits and ass attitude that discourages a wholistic view of women. Scenes of rape, mutilation or sexual control of women are the favorite themes of pornographers. "Hard-core" pornography in which women (and it is usually women) are brutalized is easy to identify as pornography.

Under the feminist definition of pornography most people would consider "soft-core" magazines such as *Playboy* to be erotica. I would argue that while some of the pictures in *Playboy* do indeed depict nude full-bodied women in a non-victimized way, the magazine as a whole presents women as "bunnies" or objects. Thus *Playboy* sells society the idea that women are not the adult equals of men, but non-threatening boy's toys. Whether sugar-coated or not, *Playboy* is still pornography because its text, cartoons and air-brushed images of female perfection still promote the age-old message that women are fuck-dolls.

American society is sorely in need of sex-positive erotic alternatives to pornography. Unfortunately the old themes of power and sex-as-a-weapon acted about between macho men and makeup, high-heeled glamour girls saturate American culture. These themes replayed again and again on our television screens, movie theaters, billboards and magazines function as propaganda for male-supremist attitudes. We are consciously and unconsciously purchasing the idea that men are the power brokers and women their sexual prey.

While some feminists would argue that censorship is needed to stop pornography's propaganda against women, I would argue that we cannot trust our government to decide what we can and cannot see. A conservative administration would ban sex — not sexism, not violence.

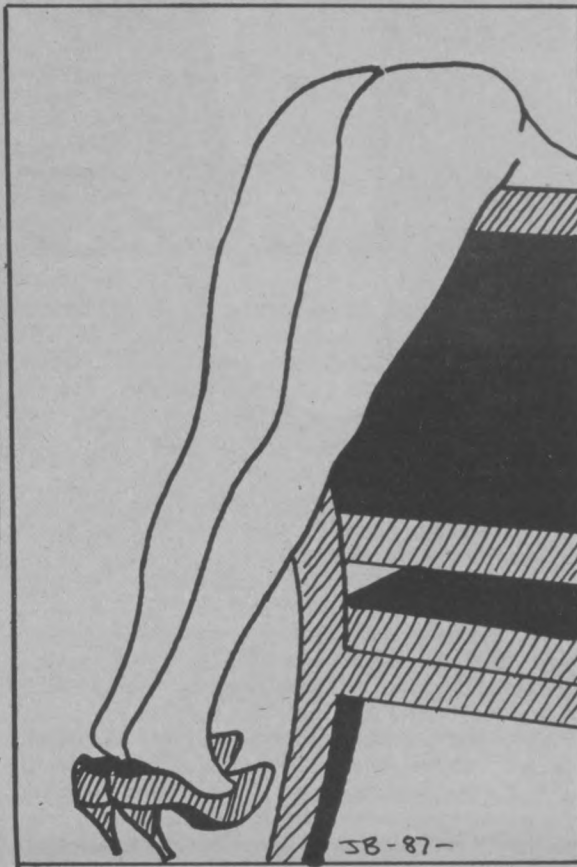
Women must take the collective power to exercise our right to free speech and protest pornography. We

must protest sexist depictions of women and tell the world that these images of women are unacceptable.

We must tell capitalist advertisers and pornographers to get their business off our bodies.

Ending violence against women will begin by changing attitudes toward women. We cannot censor attitudes, but we can re-educate society to reject the use of women's bodies as commodities to be bought, sold, and violated. Women who protest pornography do not threaten free speech, on the contrary, we threaten male supremacy and our country's sacred tradition of exploitation.

— Rebecca Lester



Pornography often depicts women as faceless objects.



Erotica treats its subjects as people rather than as body parts.





## The Emotions of Date Rape



While hundreds of women and men flooded the streets of Isla Vista last night to "Take Back the Night" for women who have lost their privilege to roam the city safely at late hours due to fear of rape, it is important to remember that most rapes occur behind closed doors, and most rapists are known by their victims.

The incidence of date rape has continued to grow at an alarming rate. A UCSB study conducted last

year found that approximately three to five rapes occur each week at UCSB, and this number is typical of most college campuses. Results of a questionnaire mailed out to 1,115 UCSB women showed that 15 percent of UCSB's female population had been forced into some kind of unwanted physical or sexual activity.

Few of these incidents were ever reported, as is the case in most incidents of date rape. However, the mental, physical and emotional consequences of date rape can be just as severe, and sometimes even more severe, than rape by a stranger, since the rapist is usually a "friend," someone the victim thought she could trust.

Aside from obvious reasons, why am I concerned about this? Because I was a victim of date rape. I never reported the incident. I didn't think it would do any good, since it would be my word against his, and I had spent the entire day with him at my own choice. My "date" picked me up early that Saturday morning last August, and we went out for breakfast before a day of water skiing on the river. We had a great day in the sun, with several other friends joining us on the boat. I even learned how to use a knee board that day.

After we'd had enough water, we went to a salmon feed, listened to some music, then picked up some videos to watch before he took me home. I lived about 30 miles away. Up to this point, it was one of the best days of my summer — nothing to make me suspect what lay ahead. Things didn't get bad until the sun went down. I'd had a wine cooler, and he'd had a couple beers, but neither of us was that affected by the alcohol. Then he started pushing me. Not physically pushing me into sex, at least not at

first, but mentally and emotionally. I said no. I kept saying no. But he didn't listen. And soon it was too late.

I told him to take me home when it was all through. A million thoughts were rushing through my mind, but I was so shaken up I just didn't know what to do. He didn't seem to think he'd done anything wrong. He told me not to worry, that there was nothing wrong with having sex — not when it felt so good. In fact, he said he'd call me so we could go out again. Not that I wanted to! But he never did call, so I guess it really didn't matter.

At home in my bed, I cried. I cried because I hadn't tried harder to fight him off and because I felt he had violated my body, my mind, and my spirit. I cried because of the power he had exerted, and the feeling of helplessness he left me with. I cried because I was alone with my feelings and too afraid to tell anyone what had happened, thinking they might blame me for getting myself into that situation. Was it my fault? Even I wasn't sure.

But I said no: that much I was sure of. And so I started reading any articles I came across about date rape, since I'd never really known much about it before, and those articles helped to convince me that it wasn't my fault. When I finally did tell a friend what had happened, she gave me the comfort and support I needed to let go of the experience even more.

That comfort and support was desperately needed when I found out I was pregnant. The words came as a blow, and still do every time I think of them. Faced with the decision of raising a child that I could never love or giving up the baby for adoption and going through with the pregnancy,

jeopardizing my college career, my relationship with my parents, and my life in general, I opted for a third choice. I had an abortion. God, forgive me for that day.

For anyone who has ever opposed abortion, I hope you will understand my decision. For those who have had the awful experience of waking up (after being put to sleep for the few-minute operation) in a room filled with 10 other women, several crying, all there for the same reason, you will understand the pain I went through. Abortion is an ugly thing. The idea that I prevented a life from developing, a life that could have contributed something significant to this world, will always haunt me. But it's a choice I made, and I don't regret it.

For a long time after that awful experience, I couldn't let myself get close to any men. I could deal with going on a date, but the barriers went up around me whenever things started getting more serious. Thank God for several male friends here at UCSB who reminded me that all men aren't the same. Because of their care and concern for me, I began to trust and open up once again to my male counterparts.

I'm getting better now. I can spend time with male friends and let them get close to me without fighting back. I'm beginning to forgive the "date" that caused me so much pain, and hope that he and others like him will someday understand that women are not pleasure toys. But the experience is one I'll never forget. It will always be with me. Anytime I hear the word rape mentioned, that night flies back to me in full force. The baby he left me with would have been born this month. I wonder if he cares? — anonymous



## Surviving the Violence that Surrounds Us

It is a Thursday night in spring of 1986. Dusk is falling and people are milling around Storke Plaza. This, I think, is how the Plaza should be used. All of the time.

I am here because I want to be. Because my friends are. We are marching against sexual assault.

A folksinger is here teaching us songs — "My body's nobody's body but mine..." and "Do not tax our bodies any more sirs, they are not yours sirs, never more say the women." Everyone is laughing, smiling, happy. Taken with the moment.

Many of the women who are here have been sexually assaulted. But many of the women that I know who are survivors are not here. "It is too heavy. I can't handle it," one of them told me.

I smile at the woman next to me, but tears are in my eyes. If we didn't have to be here, the world would be different.... I determine that I will yell louder, that I will sing stronger. That I will try to make the world safer for those who don't have the strength to try. Can a march do that?

It is November, and I am sitting in the Plaza again. Ann Simonton, a women's rights activist from Santa Cruz, is sitting next to me. She has just talked about her own experience with sexual assault, and the work that she does to try and stop it from happening to others.

As we sit, another woman, whom neither of us knows, approaches us from behind. In the span of two minutes, she tells Ann that she was raped by an ex-boyfriend two years earlier. No one would have believed her, she says, because she used to go out with him. Why would they have believed that someone she had a relationship with could actually rape her? "You know, it's like everyone would have said it wasn't really rape," she says, as if asking forgiveness for not reporting the crime. She thanks Ann for the work that she does, and asks her to keep on going. "It helps," she says. "It meant so much to me to hear you speak."

Ann seems quite calm, but I am overcome with emotion. I

wonder about the people who she thought would not have believed her. I know many who would have. I know many who wouldn't. I wonder how many times Ann hears these horror stories. And how she handles hearing two minute encapsulations of the things so close to women's hearts.

When you work against sexual assault, do you have to learn to cut off your feelings?

It is another spring morning, and I am on my way out the door to work. The phone rings. One of my closest friends is on the line, calling from Chicago. In a tumble, she tells me that she was assaulted the night before. Arms full with groceries, she had entered her apartment and gone to put the bags down before returning to close the door. In that small bit of time, a man entered her apartment, locking the door behind him. "He tied my ankles and wrists," she whispers, "he pulled the phone out of the wall. I thought he was going to kill me."

Stuck on the other end of a phone line in Santa Barbara, I feel helpless. I cannot reach out and put my arms around her. I can not take back what has happened. Make it go away. Why her? She is beautiful, and kind, intelligent. Probably the best friend I have ever had. Couldn't it have happened to someone else? But who, I wonder, would I wish this on? Is there anyone who deserves this?

I read what I have written so far to my roommate. And I tell her about some of the other women I know who have been sexually assaulted. I ask whether she thinks I should write about them all. Give a grim list, like the names of the men killed on the warship this week. She sighs, "The only thing is," she says "that people might not believe it. It all seems so unreal. So much."

The truth, in this case, is pain. And when people know it, they want to turn away. Or believe that it is fabrication, or exaggeration. All of us, every one of us, know women who have been assaulted — some by strangers, most by friends.

But there are many among us who do not think they know women "like this." The statistics we have heard so many times "one out of three American women will be raped in her lifetime" seem unreal. While we have all come to believe it, we have not yet integrated the statistics, and the reasons behind them into our own lives.

"I could write what you are writing when I am stoned, and with my eyes closed," says one person. "I have heard it all so many times."

Yet he continues to perpetuate insensitivity. To make demeaning comments about women. To joke about rape. And to question the circumstances surrounding it. Was it, for instance, her fault, if she was walking down Del Playa on Halloween night, drinking a lot?

Perhaps, I think, in despair, a grim list would have been better. A description of the person: a sorority woman taking a shower with her fraternity boyfriend who stepped out and let his brothers step in; a freshman in the dorms without the courage to make waves by throwing a hallmate out of her room; the 21st birthday ruined by a trusted friend; an 18-year-old kissing in a car after a date, who avoided rape by smashing his head into the window, and then walking the three miles home in the dark.

At the Take Back the Night March, we each take a small candle in a paper cup. We light them, and begin to file out of the plaza. Our collective spirit reminds me of a song: "we are peaceful, angry people, and we are singing, singing for our lives." We are here — marching, singing, loving through the night — to take back danger, to turn the darkness into the beautiful velvet blanket that it could be. Together, we march to tell people that sexual assault perverts the relationships between us all. It fosters hostility, and mistrust; it puts up blocks between us.

Ann Simonton is here with a megaphone. "Stop rape, organize, we will not be terrorized!" She buoys the crowd.

We are here in joy, because we have strength in numbers. We are here in sadness, because the numbers have made it necessary. We are here in love, because we care enough to be. We are here to combat the hatred, the alienation and the pain that makes all the fighting necessary.

I look around at the smiles, and the joy on the faces of the women and men here. We are here to celebrate each other, to celebrate safety, and happiness.

For an evening, we catch a glimpse of what life could be. And this ... is ... exciting.

— Robin Stevens

