

The University of Maine

DigitalCommons@UMaine

Maine Women's Publications - All

Publications

11-1-1985

Looking Up Times Vol 1, No 2 (1985)

Looking Up Staff

Looking Up

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/maine_women_pubs_all



Part of the [History Commons](#), [Public Administration Commons](#), [Public Affairs Commons](#), and the [Women's Studies Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Staff, Looking Up, "Looking Up Times Vol 1, No 2 (1985)" (1985). *Maine Women's Publications - All*. 67. https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/maine_women_pubs_all/67

This Newsletter is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in Maine Women's Publications - All by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine. For more information, please contact um.library.technical.services@maine.edu.



THE “LOOKING UP” TIMES

By Maine Survivors of Incest

Vol. 1 No. 2

November, 1985

What You Are About To Read

Enclosed in the following pages you will find the most sensitive, painful and important revelations a human being can offer. They are the revelations of survivors of incest. In the form of poetry, essays, letters, comments and artwork, these survivors have unearthed their own private struggles, feelings and discoveries, and fashioned them into expressions to be shared. Their reasons for doing so are as varied as the nature of their expressions. They include the desire to be heard after a lifetime of silence; a need to sort out confusions; the hope that in speaking out the world will believe, understand and act to eliminate incest perpetration from existence; and a deep longing to reach out to the tens of thousands of other incest victims and survivors so that they will know in their hearts that they are not alone.

The “Looking Up” Times is written by incest survivors from all over the State of Maine. There is no part of Maine untouched by incest. Some of the writers lived in Maine as children and are now outside the state. A few pieces are by survivors from other parts of the country.

The contributors for this issue of the *Times* range in age from ten on up. There are survivors whose children are also survivors. There are survivors who had more than one perpetrator; have extreme amnesia or all memories intact; had legal intervention as children or never told anyone until late into adulthood; had mothers as perpetrators, mothers who did nothing, mothers who were their finest source of healing; came from wealth, poverty or somewhere in between; live in the country, the suburbs, the city; were raised in piously religious homes, were abused within religious cults, had no religion; are now married, single, divorced, widowed; in essence, are as different or the same as all of us are. There is no stereotype to describe victims and survivors of incest and their families, and no stereotype to describe the contributors to this publication.

Some of what you will read is graphic in description. All of what you will read is the courageous exposure of human spirit and soul. You are invited to challenge your own courage by reading every word with the same openness and sincere acceptance with which they were written.

To those of you who are also survivors of incest, we wish you well. To those of you who care and want to help, we thank you for listening.

From The Survivors of Incest
of
“Looking Up”

Daddy Daddy

Daddy Daddy, you push me away,
and then you give me presents

Daddy Daddy, you shove me aside,
and then you give me praises

Daddy Daddy, you pierce me in the night,
and then you blow me kisses

Daddy Daddy, in your handsome
black hair, let me walk away —

deep into the snows
of Rockland

Elizabeth Noel
Copyright © 1985

Little Girl

If I tell you about her,
then I remember
About how she was hurt
And how she was sick
And how bad she was.

If I tell you about me,
I can't remember
Except
Watching her
From my ceiling perch.

BB

THE CHILD IN HIDING



Sketch by Brenda Miller

Essay

It was by chance that I read *The "Looking Up" Times*. At first I read a short poem and something, *someone* inside didn't want to read any more...but I did...and the tears flowed, and my pain re-emerged and the hate for them resurfaced for awhile. I had pushed them out of my mind, but the child in me still sat curled up; hurt, scared and crying. I didn't want to remember Grampa sneaking in at night, waking me to look at him, taking my hand to touch him. The nightmare began when I was six and a part of it lingers still.

Every visit to Grampa's was dreaded: Where will he corner me next? Why does Mommy want me to kiss him? Why does he touch and tickle me until it hurts? I can't tell; who could I tell? They'll hate me.

I cried each time he came to babysit and finally I confessed to my cousin. He had tortured her life, too. "We've got to tell," she said, and when we did it was Christmas. He had been after us every time he could catch us alone. The family couldn't believe it. Mom cried, Dad yelled at me for carrying the secret for four years, and I wanted to die.

Eventually they said they understood. "Grampa will never babysit again and Nana will never leave you alone when you visit." But still I had to see him. He glared at me. I felt guilty and scared.

And then the nightmare began again, but now with my young uncle. He was going to babysit instead, my parents explained. "Uncle Neil loves you and would never hurt you." If only they knew. He was cut of the same cloth as his father — my Grampa.

"WHY? WHY ME?" I prayed that he would go away. "I can't tell Mom and Dad again. Our world fell apart once. I can't live through it again. So this time I will fight back!" I waited and when he put his penis near my mouth I bit him. He beat me for it, but he never came back. He avoided me at family gatherings and soon I avoided all men.

This experience, though not in the front of my mind, did interfere with my relationships all through my life. I am still learning to deal with it. Though I'm now married, I still have hang-ups about men and sex. I am frightened for the children and the secrets they carry. A prisoner in their own bodies. Too scared of the adult reaction. Too ashamed to admit the gross injustices they have been subjected to. It eats away your soul, robs you of your innocence, and thrusts you out of childhood and into a sick adult game.

I thank God for the people who will and have listened to our stories. And I thank God I am surviving.

What Are Abused Little Girls Made Of?

Her flesh burns when her big brother touches her.
Well, can't brothers touch sisters?
Not this way; it feels too good and too BAD all at the same time.
It was (her Dad said) it was wrong, you're a bad girl now.
When will I be good then, when Davie stops touching me?

She must have done something for this to happen.
She did. She made Dad drink.
She made Mom cry.
She made Davie touch her.
She made Mom get sick.
She made Dad beat her brother Davie.
She made the washing machine break down.
Damn it, little girl, don't you see?
Can't you feel your belly?

Shame. She feels shame.
She wants to hurt others because of her hurt.
Her inside thoughts and fears are shameful.
She must never disclose them to anyone.
IT'S A SECRET.

She remembers everything 'cause she's scared not to.
She's open to all fears and emotions which are unforgiveable
If brought out in the open.
"Don't ask why, just do as I say," her father tells her.

She's afraid of the dark.
That boogie man is in her closet and if she doesn't hide
Under her blankets, he will get her.
He's evil, dark, big and very powerful.
Besides, it is always dark when Davie runs away or
When Dad beats him and Davie cries and swears at Dad.
It hurts her. She hears and then feels each punch and
Slap as if it were she, herself, being beaten.
Ultimately, now, as each darker beating comes, so will
Davie's touching her once again.
SHUSH, LITTLE ONE...As long as Dad doesn't beat
her brother...

As long as no one else is getting hurt...

She learns to be a "good little girl." What she does not know
Is that she never will be...unless she tells, unless she becomes
Vulnerable. She wonders if her sore throats will stop then.

As I learn to listen to her, that little girl inside,
I tell her that yes, her sore throats will stop and that she
Never has to be afraid of Davie touching her again.
"I'll hold you little girl. I will hold you tight and rock you
To sleep and keep you warm."
The little girl weeps silently.
With a sigh of relief, she lets it all go and begins to trust
The one who told on her;
The big girl inside,
The adult,
The woman.

Jaci — 3/85

The Little Girl Silenced By An Adult World



Don't talk, don't feel,
Don't trust.
The little girl was sure this was how to live;
a zombie,
uncaring, unfeeling, unloving, without trust.
She was taught that this was real.
The little girl grew older, more years were added, but
her little mind and body were fragile and afraid.
Now she was a big girl, older, taller, bigger and the
little child within was lost once more.
I'm older now, I cannot play, I'm older now, I have
so much to say.
Once again alone.
All she wants is a chance to speak.
All she wants is to be heard.
When she speaks, people laugh.
When she speaks, people cry.
When she speaks, people yell and say "No, that's
not it at all."
How, she wonders, how do I do it right?
People say there is no right way.
People say try.
Where are all the people when the little girl cries?
She tries to say "I feel," but the people say "No."
She tried to say "I hurt," but the people say "that's
yours to OWN."
Once again she is quiet.
None of it is real.
You are a big girl now, and big girls don't feel.

MEK

Poem

Every time I see your face I hate you even more.

Every time I see your face it makes me remember what happened.

Every time I see your face I wish I could remember everything you did to me.

Every time I see your face I wish I could beat you or hit you.

Every time I see your face I hate you more than I did before.

Every time I see your face I think of my Mom when she said hatred is an awful thing. If only she knew why.

Every time I see your face I wonder if my Mom and Dad wouldn't hate you too if they knew the truth.

Every time I see your face I wonder if you remember what you did to me.

Every time I see your face I hate you even more, because I have to live with this awful feeling the rest of my life.



Teenagers Speaking Out

Essay

The farmer waits patiently, baiting the harvest, pulling the weeds and feeding it lies until trusting, it grows strong and healthy.

Then in one startling moment he turns savage and turns the threshing machine against the corn. He rapes the field, leaving it for others to pick up the pieces of the broken stalks. They are cut and bent and battered.

I know if I were the corn, I'd never trust another farmer. (I don't.)

Sadly I Turn Away

Cold hands,
Hot eyes,
Searing through my being.
Hot hands,
Cold eyes,
Knowing without seeing.
Many times it happened,
Many different people.
All the same.
Nothing different.
A routine it became.
It became a vicious cycle.
I had to break away.
I turned for help,
People laughed,
I sadly turn away.

Poem

The dark is thick.
You could cut it with a knife.
The anger and pain I feel comes out at night.
I try not to think,
I try to sleep.
But, when sleep comes,
Comes with it all the dreams.
Dreams of sadness,
Dreams of grief.
In my dreams I sit and weep.
When I wake up to the sun,
I almost feel as if I'd won.
But I know that
In the dark,
Terror and dreams
Do not depart.

Poem

i cry.
yes, i sit and weep.
no,
not in the open.
inside.
in the dark deep.
deep inside me
there's a place
where i
alone show my face.
so yes,
i cry.
not tears,
the kind
that run down
my face;
tears of feeling.
feelings
i alone must face.
no one
must know these
feelings
i have, because
no one
can get into
that
deep dark place.
that
place is for
me,
and me alone.
a place
where i don't
have to hide
all the dirty
feelings
i have inside.
it is a safe
place
deep within me
where
i alone let my
feelings
roam free.
i don't have to
talk,
and people won't
mock,
for the only
one there,
is me.

Poem

I've been through it and
I can say, there's still
Pain in every new day.
Often times I'd ask myself why.
I'd sit alone and have a good cry.
I realize now it's a painful sickness.
With a lot of pain that I don't miss.
I've been through it all,
But I can smile and say that I stand tall.

Essay

My grandfather made me so dirty and unclean inside of me.
My body and mind are ill of a sickness I have that he gave me, but I
am still standing and alive for all the people who care for me, and I am
a survivor. I thank God and the people who took the time to help me
through my problems that I did not understand and I know now and
do understand.

I am a survivor.

I thank God for that.

Poem

Daddy Dear is still too near.
The explanations just aren't clear.
He touched me and confused me so much.
I seem to quiver at every touch.
At many times I was so confused...
I've been through a lot, and I feel used.
It's been hard and I know I've tried,
So now I can say that I've survived.

Teenagers

*The dark side of love is anguish;
it festers from deep within.
Anger, Guilt, Sorrow, Confusion,
and fear of darkened sin.*

Sitting Alone

Sitting . . . alone.
Waiting . . . amongst many who wait, sitting alone.
I cry . . . alone.
Screaming . . . amongst many who cry, sitting alone,
screaming amongst many.
My soul . . . depressed; tears swallowed up in
useless conviction and effort.
And here I sit . . . still alone.
Waiting . . . wanting to cry amongst many who still
sit; waiting alone.
But there are too many . . . too many to hear me
calling out — alone.

Elizabeth Noel
Copyright © 1974

*In the depths of darkness
evil lurks with icy fingertips
possessing innocence
and spreading through the vast shadows
of my mind.*

S O L I T A R Y C O N F I N E M E N T

Intrusions

The phone
Throbs in my head.
I want to scream;
Tear it from the wall.
CONTROL . . . "Hello."

Touch.
Don't touch me.
My insides recoil;
There is numbness.
CONTROL . . . A hug.

Your needs.
Please need someone else.
The pressure builds
From your slightest demand.
CONTROL . . . A smile.

Alone.
Wrapped in layers of guilt.
Alone.
My only protection.
Alone.
My greatest enemy.

BB



Two Generations . . . Or More

From Mom

I, as the mother, didn't start working on myself until it happened to my daughter two years ago. I know as a child it wasn't right. Something was wrong about the whole thing. So I had told my mother and she got real mad at me. She said that if I hadn't shown off my body it wouldn't have happened to me. Then she gave me the spank of my life. I was scared, because it didn't stop there. My uncle still did it. And some of the other members of the family, too.

I didn't know I had a right to say "no," and the big words from them were, "THIS IS THE LAST TIME." I believed it was going to be the last time. So, I did what they wanted me to do. The next day it would start all over again.

As I got older, I moved away from it all. Started to work on ME. I know it's going to take a long time, but that's okay. In time, I will get better.

S.G.

From Daughter At Ten Years Of Age

When I was eight, I was abused. I was mixed up, confused, and scared. I didn't know what to do. I knew it was wrong. I didn't know if I should tell or keep it as a secret. I prayed. I knew he was sick. He used me. He told me if I would let him touch me, he would buy me a toy. But he broke his promise to me. Then, I knew I had to tell someone. It was hard to tell my Mom. I didn't know when, or how to tell her. I was confused. I just didn't know what to do. I asked God for help and with his strength and will, I said to my Mom, "I'm scared of him. He's touching me in the wrong places." My mother did something about it, and said, "It's not your fault. It's his fault. He is sick." Then I felt free. I also felt she really understood my feelings. She helps me through the hard times.

Mom, I love you.

BJ

As the mother working on my own problems, it wasn't easy to work on both myself and my daughter. However, with God's help and my good friends, I really believe I'm going to get better. We both are going for help. Sometimes we help each other, too.

P.S. It really is three generations. I talked to my mother last year. She said she was sexually abused as a child . . . and didn't want to talk about it.

"Mama, I Need You . . ."

Where Were You?

Where were you when those hands reached for me
and opened me up to terrors of the darkness?

Where were you when the tears streamed down my
cheeks and formed telltale pools of pain on my pillow?

Did I keep my secret so well that you, my mother,
couldn't tell

That I was being sexually abused?

And where were you when I couldn't stand it any more
and telling on him was one step before suicide?

You were standing next to him.

My tormentor — your husband.

Yet I could forgive you; because it's my nature to forgive.

Because if I declared war, for once in my life I stood
the chance of ultimately losing what I'd fought so hard
to gain:

Your love, Mom.

And where are you now?

You say you don't love him, but you're still there.

You do so well what we victims are best at:

Enduring, no matter what.

Where are you?

I look for you in every woman's eyes, in every
woman's arms.

Can you face it after all these years?

Can you be my mother?

Lori — 8/12/85

My Mother's Kind

In the twilight of my love
I feel a desolation soul deep;
A constriction of the nerves
Caused by the yearfolding facade
Of love presented to me in the
Twisting contortion of a lie —
A lie thrust thorn-deep into my
Tender innocence.

My depression wells up
In my throat like a
Pool of blood as if
From an opened wound,
And I cry . . . I cry, so silently,
(So silently), like a
Snowflake hushed in cold.
I cry for the mis-spent years,
The mis-spent love.
I grieve for the love
I have half hidden in my heart
With no one to give it to —
No warm mother-place to
Nurture and let it grow.

I feel the heaviness of my
Separate love, like the
Weight of a cement Cathedral
On my breast, and I ask . . . too softly,
"Why? Why can you not be
What I had always imagined,
My sometimes singer of songs,
My sometimes gentle reader
Of bedtime tales,
My not-often Mother?"

I grieve for the loss
Of a family that never was.
I grieve for the loss of a
Child's desperate fantasy,
Forever blown apart in the
Rageous revolution of my
Conscious awareness.

Elizabeth Noel
Copyright © 1983

COPING, HOPING, HEALING



You rent me out
While trying to trap me in.
Before I had my period
I was a prostitute.
Before a "girl's" first prom
I was a druggie.
When youth dreams of life
I wished for death.

But now, now I'm fine.
I'm alive.
And most of the time I "feel."
I've built a life
Of health and dreams.

What was,
Lives in shadows
And nightmares
And sadness...

BB

Letter To My Child

August, 1985

Dear Child Within,

I just wanted to tell you what a beautiful, innocent child you are. I know what's happened to you, and it's a crying shame. Is there any way I can help? I love you and I care about you and I don't want you to hurt yourself, just because someone has brutally abused you. It doesn't mean you are bad, that your father and mother don't love you. They're sick; they don't know how to love.

But I love you. You don't have to let anyone abuse you ever again. You can be safe, now. And I will take care of you. I care very, very, deeply for you. I care about your feelings. It's okay for you to have feelings. It's okay for you to hurt. God knows you have reason to hurt. I will never abandon you, or reject you. I will bring you up right. I will never let anyone hurt you. I will assert myself if I have to take care of you. I will be strong for you. I won't let you have any "friends" who try to tell you what to do or how to feel.

But it hurts me to see you hate yourself. It makes me angry and frustrated. That's how much I care. I hope you hear me now, and rest. For everything is going to get better.

Love,
Your Adult Today

November, 1985

Brenda Miller

A Quest Towards Wholeness

Pregnant with emptiness, like a shadow without an owner, I move without myself throughout the day. I want fullness. I want to feel real; to be whole, to know life in every cell of my being, to step out with powerful steps filled with largeness.

No more shadow of a... of a... shadow of a what? I don't know. I want to be all of me; complete: through and through.

Enter the darkness, the horror. So much of me is still hidden in the horror: in the sleepless nights, blankets held with terror, in a body torn with pain, in an empty body, spirit driven away to hide, blood and terror and silent screams. The kind where you open your mouth and your guts are wrenching away from your ribs, but no sound comes out. Lost in the horror of tortures too bizarre to believe of adults frantically swirling in their own madness taking me, by force, with them.

Lost in faces turning, screaming, sadistic smiles; hands reaching, grabbing, pulling, slowly, seductively moving over my body then quickly darting out — causing pain — the terror of never knowing what the pain will be or when. The blurring of reality. Nursery rhymes and blood, bowls of hot oatmeal after a long cold day, rest with a blanket — comfort — for a moment. Then slashed, slit up again, semen smeared on arms and legs. Screams, lost again, lost.

Knives and belts and sticks and rats and horror, horror, more and more horror, being lost in the dark, dark craziness. I must go back now; back and save the child, the baby. Rescue her from madness. I'm afraid. Afraid of this quest back, back to the horror. No candle without a shadow, but, I'm afraid of this shadow, afraid of never coming out.

Sanity and insanity are very close cousins. Wholeness may be the union of light and dark, but some people's darkness is darker than dark holes — big black holes of terror.

'Til now the darkness has been forbidden, choosing instead to half live. But the time has come. The task to know, to feel, to own all, to take back my power, to free the child, to light all the long dark, twisted corridors inside 'til it is all light, and there is no more unknown. The time has come to be whole.

Lynelle

5/19/85

Someway, Somehow

Someway, somehow we will make it;
We will rise like the sun and shine one day.
Someway, somehow we will grow wiser and stronger;
'Cause who needs this heartache anyway?

Someway, somehow we have fought the battle,
And we can sing about the victories won;
'Cause no one knows better than you and I,
Just how far and how long we've come.

Someway, somehow life went on before us,
And it will be here long after we're gone,
But for all the heartache, I'm finding it's worth it
To be both a woman, and strong.

Lori

4/14/85

Looking Up

Looking up,
I shed a tear.
I wonder why?

I'm filled with fear
running deep
through my veins.

I listen hard.
silence remains.

Memories scattered;
here, then gone.
my heart plays a sad, sick, song.

Now alone,
in isolation, I rest
the closet child
who is never undressed.

But I'm looking up.
now on my knees it is I
that I must please.

No longer a love slave,
not Daddy's bride,
no longer from myself must I hide.

I take the power and control,
and in time,
I shall be whole.

“LOOKING UP”, RFD #1, BOX 2620, MT. VERNON, MAINE 04352

TELEPHONE 207-293-2750

“Looking Up” provides a variety of services to survivors of incest and those who care. We are a non-profit organization depending largely on donations from the public to continue our work. Please donate what you can.

We invite survivors of incest to send contributions for possible publication in the *Times*: essays, letters, poetry, artwork, anything of a literary nature. PLEASE SPECIFY HOW YOU WANT YOUR NAME SIGNED. IF YOU DO NOT LET US KNOW OTHERWISE, YOUR WORK WILL BE PUBLISHED ANONYMOUSLY. Unused material will be returned to you only if accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

The next issue of *The “Looking Up” Times* is scheduled for May, 1986.

DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS: MARCH 15, 1986

This publication was paid for in part by a grant from the Maine Community Foundation.

The “Looking Up” Times, © 1985 “Looking Up”

“Looking Up” Information - Donation Form

___ Please add me to your confidential mailing list.

___ I am interested as a survivor of incest. ___ I am interested as a service provider/concerned person (circle one)

___ My age ___ Sex

___ Please accept the enclosed donation in the amount of \$_____ to help support “Looking Up” efforts, and to receive the next issue of *The “Looking Up” Times*.

MY NAME: _____

MY ADDRESS: _____

MY TELEPHONE: _____

Donations of all sizes are needed and welcome. Please make checks payable to “Looking Up.”

Our acting executive director, a survivor of incest, is Gayle M. Woodsum.

“LU”
RFD #1, Box 2620
Mt. Vernon, ME 04352

