

# 3 Unforgotten Remembrances

*by* Martha Rand

-  
**I watch my body**

No  
broken knees,  
please.

I watch my body  
(praying),  
from the ceiling view.

This was before  
I learned yoga's  
child pose of relaxation.

Frozen. Surviving.  
Surveillance was  
an early skill my body learned.

A useful skill.  
Tonic  
immobility. Better than

the other possibility  
of being  
smothered for the crime

of inconvenient  
whooping cough.

Infidel body!

Or the uncontrollable option  
of my throat  
being slit. Aye!

I don't, can't want,  
yet, remember feeling  
the cold.

Steel, sharp, slender blade  
slid silently.  
Music pulsed, quietly, in the room.

Neither do I  
remember  
feeling her embrace.

I know it happened.  
Although,  
my body at that moment

Seemed to dissolve,  
forgetting  
what I didn't want to fit.

Like I keep forgetting  
to return  
those jackets that don't fit

to Bloomingdales.  
I love the privacy  
of fitting rooms.

No longer do

I frequent  
the large open spaces

of cheap department stores.  
Rooms  
where other's slyly eye me.

Some things I no longer  
need  
to endure.

I never learned to ski  
because  
my body's integrity

gave me important reason  
to dance, to climb,  
to stand and clearly see.

### **Visiting in Paris**

My husband has a cousin  
who lives in France.  
He's once removed,  
a generation older.  
Or twice removed  
if you count his deportation  
to the children's camp.  
called Buchenwald.  
Jacques Zylbermine might have been forgotten  
along with many others.

I cannot forget.  
Passover at the age of twelve,  
the first year I was a woman.  
After dinner, in the kitchen I  
joined the other women  
washing, drying dishes at my Aunt's.  
In an apartment on the Grand Concourse,  
many women spoke  
with many European  
accents. One blonde woman  
rolled her sleeve up to reach  
into the sink's full soapsudsy  
dish bath.

My eyes were shocked,  
my pupils unblinkingly stilled  
by the black tattoo-ed numbers  
I never suspected,  
I never knew.

### **My Years of Magical Thinking**

Dear Joan,

I understand  
what it is  
to tell  
and retell  
and tell again.

To tell the same story,

that is not a story,  
that is the truth,  
to tell  
and retell  
and tell again.

Attempting  
to believe,  
trying to believe  
the truth I tell  
and retell  
and tell again.

To believe the story happened,  
to ask others to join in my belief,  
to listen and tell me back.  
Retell to me,  
and tell again  
the truth you've told  
that I've told you  
like you believe it, too.

