

# Feminist Books are Giving Me Ideas

*Marlene Pearson*

"For each of us as women, there is a dark place within, where hidden and growing our true spirit rises."

Audre Lorde

She began from behind my eyes  
peering at the book while I was reading.  
*I am not only a casualty,*  
*I am also a warrior.*  
She chanted the lines  
*I am who I am,*  
*doing what I came to do. . .*  
marching out the words inside my brain.  
She was giving me a headache.

I tried to sit her down  
told her to keep still  
not stretch out her limbs so.  
I warned her other people out there  
would cut them off.  
She paused a moment, and listened.

Then she shook her head  
reached for my hand  
lifted it before my face  
and pointed at similarities  
in my own fingerprints.  
She stroked my hand  
reminded me that this may take a while.  
I did not resist.  
We both understood.

She leaned her arm on my eye socket.  
Her hands pushed my lids open wider  
and she has been reading ever since.  
She will not stop.

I spend nights climbing in and out of words.  
She repeats chapters like a teacher in my sleep.  
She turns pages like an exercise.  
This morning my cover hung from the curtain rod.  
When I reached for my watch, it was gone.  
We live on her time now.

We stay up till dawn  
deciphering possibilities  
deciding her next step.

I offer money for books.  
She reaches into my pocket  
and takes all she needs.

She sits at the table when I eat  
planning meals bigger than I am used to.  
She says we need the energy.

She repeats titles like a cadence  
while I walk the dog.

She cleaned out my closet.  
I cheered as she threw my last pair of heels  
out the window. We dress for comfort now she says.

She tells me when it's time to get on the road.  
I drive the freeway — observing signs, speed limits.  
She grabs the wheel, coaxing me to be still.  
She would race the air till she flew off the world  
except the scent of familiar books has caught her attention  
again.

She turns off and we find ourself a place  
with pages full of new air, drinking it in like vitamins.  
I smile. We breathe deep, stretch wide  
and flex new muscle.