



REMEMBER

REPAIR

REUNITE

TEXAS?

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BIO

Helena Meyer-Knapp is a scholar/activist and an immigrant who has lived and worked in the USA for over 50 years. Her work centers on peace making, how groups of people persuade themselves to stop fighting. Her life centers around a marvelous family. She earned a BA in History at Oxford in the UK, the country of her birth, and an MA in Communications and Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Political Studies in the USA.

She was a member of the faculty (International Relations and Political Studies), 1984 - 2017 and was honored with Emerita status on her retirement from the Evergreen State College. Since 2001 her research has taken her regularly to NE Asia, most often to Japan but also to South Korea.

An activist in public affairs as far back as the 1970s, her interests lie in local and national elections and in international affairs. In the early 1980s she led efforts to pass referenda in support of the Campaign for a Nuclear Weapons Freeze. In college classes in Political Studies she stressed the importance of engagement in public life, encouraging students to gather the materials, the skills and the momentum they personally needed to participate in the community on their own behalf.



INTRODUCTION

Life around the world and among people close to me began recently to seem so precarious that I wondered briefly whether to retire the main title for this series — Remember, Repair, ReUnite.

No sooner had the thought occurred than I knew NO! The phrase represents a commitment I have made to life itself. The words course through my professional concerns — peacemaking, mistakes, apologies, mercy, Japan and Korea. I hold these issues particularly close right now because our family is exploring complex and challenging features of our ancestral lineage.

My most recent pamphlet went public in January 2022. At that moment, despite a looming California drought, given that we had put two COVID years and Donald Trump's January 6 behind us, with Biden hopefully trying to make the world a better place, had I asked myself whether existence could feel even more precarious six months hence, I would have responded "I hope not," accompanied by a somewhat tentative laugh. Underneath however, there would have been some confidence: the last two were hard years but the earth, this society, and all sorts of ordinary people have weathered hard times before. Though remembering suffering, I was confident we would find ways to reunite and to repair.

Six months later the world is if anything more fractured and precarious. Regardless it remains true: living beings have and will use insight and our other gifts that sustain efforts to re-stabilize ourselves.

This pamphlet explores five themes, three on suffering and two on repair.
There's a lot of sadness.

Too many men are dying and have died.

Too many children have died and too many women are now at risk of dying.

Too many people, more men than women, engage actively in corrupt, coercive, and harmful practices, seeking also to evade responsibility for the consequences of their actions.

And yet.

Sadness doesn't always block out other realities. These things I have also experienced:

Face to face meetings in the midst of thousands of people, working constructively all over the planet, as their predecessors have for over 100 years. They are guided by truth, good will and fairness for all, so as to make this world a better place. Having drawn energy from one another, they go back out to keep on doing the work.

And

Material work made by artists and artisans that gives the rest of us opportunities to see this fractured world as both beautiful and startling. Some of today's active people make new work and others, just as important, give us a chance to hear, see, taste, even touch gifts hundreds of years old.

And Texas? I happen personally to have encountered both the sad and the wonderful in Texas. So, although the essays here are more diffuse than some, Texas is revealing about several key themes.

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A cousin of mine died of a serious illness this week. He was just over 70 and though now gone, he was one of life's stabilizing forces — a gifted listener connecting cutting edge bands to their audiences.

Also this week, Prime Minister Abe of Japan was murdered. In the USA, because he was a politician, we would probably use the word “assassinated.”

Also this week, in eastern Ukraine an uncounted number of soldiers in the armies on both sides in the Russian invasion of Ukraine died.

These are among the reasons the world feels more fractured than it did six months ago. As 2022 began I, for one, was not anticipating any of these deaths.

Death of course is known to be like that. Most of us live day to day without knowing whether or not tomorrow is going to be our last day, or even today, later this very day.

In the early winter this year, ordinary Americans rather abruptly caught up with the news that Russian troops had been massing in Belarus, their actions officially described as “exercises.”

On Feb 24 these same Russian troops fired shells into Ukraine and the first units of an enormous Russian tank convoy crossed the border from Belarus heading for Kyiv.

That same day the President of Ukraine declared martial law forbidding men between the ages of 18 and 60 from leaving the country. The rule seemed barely needed at first. Ukrainian men were rushing themselves into battle without pressure. Once they had delivered their parents, their wives and their children safely across frontiers into Poland, Hungary and Moldova they were ready to die for Ukraine.

Some younger men, Russians and more than a few Ukrainians, most with tech jobs that straddle frontiers, rushed equally fast into Romania and other places nearby so as to keep on doing their ordinary work. They were opting for countries with good internet service and no visa requirements. Implicitly they were also refusing the call to be ready to die.

In the early weeks of the war commentators and propagandists on all sides claimed specific casualty counts. No-one is counting any longer though outside observers have begun to suggest that Putin too may be putting some form of covert conscription into effect to make up for losses. Whatever the true numbers, this is a war in which over 100,000 men have already been injured or died, alongside a non-negligible number of women and children. Hospitals are full of traumatized patients, and caring for them are previously inexperienced Ukrainian medics, leaning on urgent training in battlefield trauma management via video links with several of the country's allied nations.

Wars are outrageous killers of men. In Iraq and Afghanistan in the last two decades, thousands died, Americans, Iraqis, Afghans and their allies. Women die too, but more often it is men who leave

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families in mourning, families that the day before were hopeful theirs would survive intact. Then silence falls. Cell phones no longer answer. Life goes on for some; the lost will not be back.

I have been reading and thinking about war professionally for over 40 years — my concern awakened perhaps because I myself was born into bombed out streets in London. I still check out newer houses there wondering if they fill the slot on the street where one night a falling shell snuffed out a life, perhaps even an entire family. Despite or perhaps because of this experience, I remain heart heavy that yet another political leader and soldiers under his command have gone to war again. Russians, more than most, truly know the costs, so Putin isn't calling this a war. But still his men go to fight and die. As did Americans in Iraq and Afghanistan, in Vietnam and Kuwait, even in Beirut.

Those who died were killed by men they had never met and had no reason to know.

Men sign up and train to be ready to die and then they go. Or like the Ukrainians this spring they don't even sign up but they learn overnight that they won't have a choice. Now is war's moment. Then men die, having hoped to the end that if they are the one doing the killing they will protect themselves from dying.

“Then men die, having hoped to the end that if they are the one doing the killing they will protect themselves from dying.” I've just written that sentence and it is accurate but there are also many other reasons, seemingly cogent reasons leading men to their deaths.

Men die because someone wants revenge for an injury or loss.

They die because a specific person feels humiliated.

They die trying to protect someone else, or some place they love.

They die in an instant because some person has an unexpectedly intense reaction.

They die because someone has been preparing for months or even years to do harm.

They die when someone else possesses the means to kill.

They die because it was possible to make or to buy the means to kill.

They die because the killer does not fear criticism for their actions.

They die because honor demands it.

They die because someone is forced into killing them

They die because

And for each of these reasons that someone will die, sometimes readily so, sometimes without any foreknowledge, there is also someone ready to bring about that death. In suicide, killer and killed are the same person, in many places in the world a suicide is 5 to 10 times more likely to be a man.

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Despite “knowing” all of this, I experienced a visceral, physical shock at seeing this photo of Abe just after the shooting. On the ground. Shirt open — Japanese people never do that. Feet sprawled. In his dying, his face mattered less. His feet showed this was a body from which life had gone, or was on its way out.

The whole of my last pamphlet was devoted to bodies, much of it joyful. This one is more despairing.

People often say: “Why do advocates for gun ownership in the USA care so little about danger?” Many gun owners will reply that they care about danger much more than I do, that they are armed to the teeth precisely because they are so dreadfully aware that someone may kill them — one of those random strangers who kill at schools and churches. Gun owners are confident they won’t use their own guns unwisely.



And indeed millions and millions of gun owners won’t be unwise, won’t endanger others, not unless they too fall into despair or outrage. Still, as many as 500 people a day in the USA die, suicides using a gun or shot by someone whom they know. Unlike soldiers in wartime, very, very few private gun owners endanger a stranger. Almost all, even mass killers are connected to their targets. Abe’s killer knew exactly why he was justified: “Abe” had ruined his family.

Anxieties that the world is precarious and fragmenting are causing that world to fragment still further, to become yet more precarious. Emotionally at this particular moment it can seem like an uninterrupted system, something aptly called a vicious circle.

Despairing at times myself, and longing to break out of this current circle, I did some remembering, remembering that “it’s a vicious circle” was the way we used to characterize the Cold War. That too was an interactive system a weapons building the arms race plus a series of proxy wars in Korea and Vietnam, in Angola and Afghanistan. There’s a lot I could write about those years. For our purposes what matters is that the Cold War did end. Slowly, awkwardly but for real.¹

In the midst of the Cold War, back in 1978, and a full 10 years before the fall of the Berlin Wall, we were lucky enough to meet and get to know Joanna Macy. She herself was just setting off on a program of world-wide work, in aid of what back then we were thinking about as “Planetary Survival.” The nuclear

¹ It is also true that were I analyzing the ending I would include the fact that America’s arrogant handling of the Cold War’s ending has links to the war now unfolding in Ukraine. Our attitudes in the early 1990s are open to serious critique — assertive military self-congratulation, teams of Harvard economists headed to Moscow to show Russians how to run an economy and a seemingly blind political support for Boris Yeltsin who was much better at Democracy as performance art than at political dialogue — I could go on and on but won’t. The current war in Ukraine is NOT a continuation of the Cold War.

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threat was so huge and so toxic, its dangers truly did feel planetary in scale. Joanna Macy's insight? That despair at such a horrific prospect, if it is pushed under, becomes paralyzing, while despair encountered, owned and explored is capable of transformation into empowerment.

People she worked with, most often in groups, found they were indeed able in her protected spaces to bring themselves face to face with their personal versions of crushing fear and horror. Joanna having designed a carefully considered balance of meditation and talk, reading and resting, eating and crying, it was possible to come out of a day-long workshop with an entirely new appetite for change boosted by reawakened confidence in one's ability to discern appropriate strategies to bring about that change. Despair no longer clouded the capacity to think, to identify right action for those times. These days I rarely need a group to recover the sense of empowerment, but for those who still despair, the tools she developed are available in her books, in new works like Active Hope but also in its original formulation: Despair and Empowerment in the Nuclear Age.

Breaking out of despair is not enough. One also needs to know what to press for. In the Cold War, along with millions of others I learned of and then joined efforts to press for one particular strategic option: The Nuclear Weapons Freeze. We had no delusion that warheads would disappear. We just wanted to stop the military designing any more new warheads or missile systems. Our particular kind of constructive activism even managed to bring some of the fear out of the shadows and into widespread public discussion. In 1982 in the USA we won quite a number of advisory referendum elections around the country, though in 1984 we failed to defeat Reagan's bid for a second term as President. For that, I remain oddly grateful. My later research into the ways wars end is pretty conclusive: wars don't end until leaders are ready to end them. Reagan turned out to be ready to meet with and then to share Gorbachev's journey along the path towards the ending of the Cold War.

In relation to Ukraine and Russia, in relation to political assassins and America's gun violence, I rarely feel fully empowered right now. Despair takes over my heart and mind too often. Just as important, I cannot yet spot the formulation, a phrase or idea, around which millions might coalesce to guide us which direction to turn, that we might become more assertive in treasuring life over death, calm over violence, ease over pressure, sympathy over anger.

"A Freeze" on the violence that makes men die seems an impossible goal.

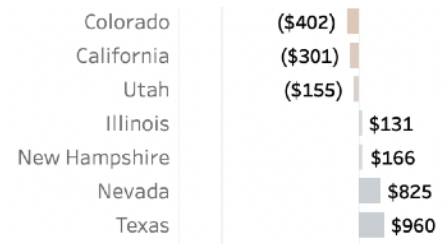
The best I can find right now is to remember and then talk about all the men. Too many men are dying. The problem in front of us is not the men who kill. The problem is that men are dying.

TEXAS? — TOO MANY CHILDREN AND WOMEN

Why Texas?

I have a love/hate relationship with Texas. When I mention Texas most people I am close to seem to have nothing much good to say about the place. Not me. I genuinely enjoy talking about how love for the place came to be part of my personal story, but that's for another time. Here Texas itself is front and center.

Houston is an amazing city, intriguingly global, laden with arts and cultural venues, more gloriously tree-lined, with a newer public transport system right through downtown, than most big cities in the USA. West Texas has mesas and Marfa — a world-renowned center for modern minimalist art. El Paso and Juarez reveal ways Mexico and Texas never really did divorce. I've just been reading about the US attack on and theft of Mexican territory in the 1848 war. It's hard not to be ashamed in California that I live on land stolen twice, first from Indians by Spaniards and then from Mexico by the USA. But in Texas the Mexican is evident and inescapable. Oh Texas was stolen too but the state was incorporated into the USA in its own uneasy way. Whether it is in or out of this country remains an open question. Unlike most other states in the former Confederacy, Texas doesn't shout about State's Rights and then take a ton of Federal subsidy. In the table listing the dollars per capita balance of Federal taxes and subsidies we can see that, like California, Texas largely pays its own way.



Texas has plenty of darker sides, two of which are big in the news right now.

19 children and two of their teachers died in a school shooting at the Robb elementary school in Uvalde. It is clear that though the crisis was precipitated by a cruel and dangerous gunman, nearly 400 law enforcement officers converged on the site, every one of them armed with at least one gun. Despite their enormous arsenal and vast numbers, they proved unable to defend a single life.

Also Texas has an “anti-abortion” law much, much, much worse than Mississippi’s law prohibiting abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy. The Mississippi law is the one to which the Supreme Court, in *Dobbs v. Jackson*, has just given the green light. Texas is likely next up.

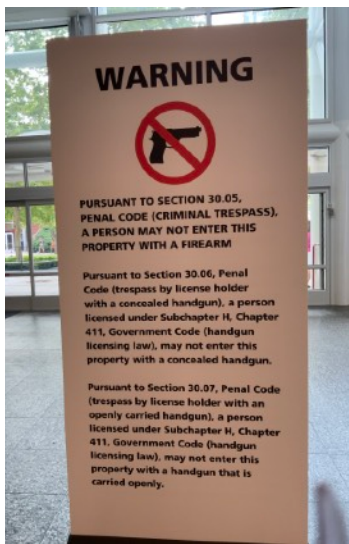
Of course the Supreme Court has done much harm than merely to give Mississippi’s law a green light. The Court has stripped US women of our Constitutionally grounded right to determine for ourselves whether to carry a problem pregnancy to term. Men don’t have to become fathers. Women have to become mothers. Equality denied, equality destroyed, equality abandoned.

My heart has responded both to the Robb school shooting and to the US Supreme Court in *Dobbs* with remarkably little despair. Anguish for school kids flooded in 10 years ago. It was Sandy Hook that did it. Anguish about the ongoing, “ever since *Roe*,” attacks on women’s rights crested this winter. I

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wrote about that in the January 2022 pamphlet, the visceral misery that came over me watching the movie [Ask For Jane](#). Texas and its new abortion law was the impetus to watch, so indirectly it was Texas that had set me literally shuddering and weeping just watching at a mere movie.

I was still a working college professor during Sandy Hook when I learned that the Texas legislature had given students the right to carry guns onto State-funded campuses, It was all too easy to imagine students outraged over grades turning violent. My imagination was out of touch with what in fact happened. There has been no rash of college student shootings in Texas, though there was a significant one in Oregon, a State with strong gun control legislation. The one significant shooting at UT was back in 1966, well over over 50 years before the “guns on campus law.” Regardless, in Texas, these days, the right to buy and carry a gun has few limits.



And yet, although the State allows open carry almost anywhere, if a building is being used by a private entity, and it refuses to allow guns on site, then no guns are allowed. The only reason the University of Texas cannot say “no” is because it belongs to the State. Just one week after the NRA was in Houston, I was in meetings in the very same vast conference center they had been using. This sign, banning the guns inside the center, was at every outside door.

The fulcrum for guns, I am pretty sure, has already actually shifted, hard though that maybe to believe given the large number of recent news-dominating events. The NRA obviously had thousands of guns inside at their conference, along with 61,000 people. And yet a huge meeting by other standards was, for them, the smallest since 2006. All kinds of prominent Texans canceled plans to speak, the NRA having arrived in Houston just days after Uvalde. Even Texans can be shamed into staying away from guns.

Our dark time for guns in the US at the Federal level, in both gun control and gun research was darkest early in the 2000s. Legislating any meaningful Federal gun limitation then was inconceivable. By 2022 Federal research into gun violence was well underway once more. Back then Federal funding of research was completely banned. This spring people all over the country, despite a wide range of emotional reactions to Uvalde, coalesced around several new proposals for tighter control. A sizable agenda, missing only a ban on AR15-style weapons, became Federal law within weeks. The NRA these days can lose important political battles, if the people dying are children.

While there is a little good news out of Texas, there’s also very bad news. The risk to women’s lives has gone way up.

The Texas abortion ban, now very near the end of its journey to the Supreme Court, makes the standard in Mississippi — no terminating a pregnancy after 15 weeks — look generous. In Texas the

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cut off is 6 weeks. And the Texas law establishes a protocol much more catastrophic than the deadline. ANYONE can sue and seek \$10,000 in damages if they suspect an abortion has been performed in Texas after six weeks. They can sue ANYONE who might have helped a woman to get the abortion though not the woman herself. In enlisting a vigilante citizenry to enforce the law, Texas has made individual choice into a battle cry for a modern, privatized civil war. In September last year, the same Supreme Court which has just repudiated an existing constitutional right, refused to put an emergency stop on the Texas private suits, despite acknowledging that the provision raises exceptionally serious procedural issues.

The depth of the depravity in this provision remains to me beyond belief. Six weeks is dreadful, but purposefully to turn a citizenry against itself is, or ought to be deemed a Federal crime. Instead in Texas it is the law. Having spent time recently reacquainting myself with the Dred Scott Case and Chief Justice Roger Taney's decision to declare slavery immutable I can't help seeing, in the Texas law and Clarence Thomas's likely support of vigilante enforcement, a 21st century equivalent.

As we worked to bring an end to the Cold War, we peace activists had two critical groups of allies: Religious and Medical. The clergy support ranged from whole denominations to individual leaders, while the most consistent medical support came from PSR — Physicians for Social Responsibility. Their doctors fanned out across the country giving talks about the radiation effects of nuclear weapons dropped on local landmarks nearby. Religious communities had no trouble affirming repeatedly the fundamentally anti-sacred nature of nuclear warfare. Peace found support as well among labor unions and students, in human rights and racial justice groups, and there was support from overseas as well, but I feel able to say that the intervention of the clerics and the doctors became the strongest part of the fulcrum around which this nation's attitudes shifted.

Clergy and doctors face little pushback today if they are talking about saving children from gun violence. Women's equality and abortion? Our prospects are much darker. Some denominations remain steadfast in their support of women's equality but many religious groups are ardent on the other side. Doctors are already telling us they are scared in whole new ways to be seen as abortion supporters. It is hard to imagine a problem pregnancy version of PSR coming into existence any time soon.

Many, many women living in Texas will die needlessly, thanks to a law whose meaning and likely consequences couldn't be clearer. This framing courtesy of Jamelle Bouie, NY Times July 15, 2022.

And make no mistake: When a state claims the right to limit your travel on account of your body — when it claims one of the most fundamental aspects of your personal liberty in order to take control of your reproductive health — then that state has rendered you little more than another form of property.

DEEPER THAN ELECTIONS — COERCION AND EVASION

For weeks I have been pondering the degree to which our precarious and fractious situation owes its troubles to the combination of coerciveness and evasiveness nowadays so evident among world leaders. Coercive? Think Putin and Xi over Ukraine and COVID. Evasive? think Trump and Johnson refusing to handle either climate issues or COVID with care. Evasive also includes Putin and Xi, if one tracks the national wealth covertly being exported from Russia and China by oligarchs and powerful families. The most serious form of coerciveness? Among leaders of the 5 nations that are permanent members of the UN Security Council, only in France does the 1945 tradition of a peaceful transfer of power still pertain. Xi and Putin have effectively made themselves leaders for life. Johnson and Trump both trampled on the electoral and moral benchmarks adhered to in the UK and USA, as each worked tirelessly to stay in power, well after tradition demanded they prepare to step down. The consequences for the rest of the world are truly risky, while for the most part these same leaders who created our current conditions will not have to deal personally with the consequences.

With just one small paragraph to serve as an explicit acknowledgement that the world is much much bigger than US abortion law, it is time to turn back to Dobbs, to unpack a bit further the connections between Jamelle Bouie's comments about bodies and travel.

The five Justices who voted to overturn Roe v.Wade, that ended Constitutional guarantees of equality for women's rights, are also unlikely to have to deal personally with the consequences of their actions. Samuel Alito acknowledged implicitly that one consequence will be that the adoption industry gains an urgently needed new supply of babies. He did not discuss at all the dangers and the suffering involuntary laboring and birthing women will undergo as they supply the industry and infertile parents with additional "product." In making rulings Justices were required only to proper arguments that supported severing the connection between a women's bodily autonomy and the US Constitution. In fact Alito did more. He explicitly enumerated a sizable litany of additional possible Constitutional justifications for constricting women's bodily autonomy. These included, if you can believe it, that laws banning the termination of problem pregnancies might be justified because such terminations can discriminate against men.

I am no romantic about the Constitution. In its 3/5ths Clause, in its Fugitive Slave Clause, in the powers it grants to states to supervise elections and in the inherent inequality that gives small States the same number of Senators as larger ones, one can see plenty of proof that the Founders also were not at all romantic about equality. They understood that to make 13 colonies into one nation they were required to embed inequality into the very structure of US social and political systems: Human inequality in a nation where humans might be enslaved or free, regional inequality with slave states allocated disproportionately large numbers of seats and finally the unwritten but definite gender inequality that excluded all women from individual consideration.

As far as the Founders were concerned there was no particular reason to imagine that such inequalities would one day be repudiated, although there were enough doubts about slavery to plan for an end to the international shipping and selling of Africans. Gender issues back then would not

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even have been on the table. Abigail Adams nowadays has a certain mythic status for having written private letters in support of women's rights. The musical Hamilton gives plenty of space to other women, their brilliance and their durable contributions to making this a better country. But a Supreme Court in 2022, whose Justices assert that they are following "Originalist" intentions, need have no reason to consider women's rights, even now.

The personal consequences that result from ignoring women's equality pressed on me the moment I was living in the USA. It was pre Roe and I was sexually active for most of a decade before I was ready to consider having children. Like many American women my age, fear was just part being alive and fertile since any sexual encounter, even in monogamy, might force one into the back alleys. Possibly new information for the next generation — back then even contraception was controversial. Clearly, Clarence Thomas in 2022 has that issue under consideration as well. Life under the NHS in the UK had been so different. My mother helped me arrange contraception in plenty of time and the abortion ban was lifted in 1967. Once lifted it never faced another challenge.

Still, the early 1970s in the USA seemed to be hopeful times for women. The Congress sent an Equal Rights Amendment to the States for ratification in 1972 and just one year later Roe made ending a problem pregnancy legal everywhere in the USA. And then . . . the other shoe began to drop. States in large enough numbers to ratify proved hard to find, and the extended history of the ERA, which still stumbles along, is far too tangled to offer any hope that it will one day pass. Meanwhile legal challenges to a Constitutional protection for women's control over our reproductive systems kept on piling up. Some years there was only one case before the Supremes, sometimes 2-3 years passed before another case actually made it into the media and all the way to Washington DC. And still everyday pressure on ordinary women was relentless. Congregations and Bishops, murderous activists, routine clinic protests, law suits, and the simple anxiety of a delayed period meant that a few short years after Roe it was already clear that women's equality was resting on unsafe ground.

That ground has now vanished entirely. And still the lawsuits continue, with the added pressure from Texas that any one of us may end up in court for helping some other woman who happens to live in Texas to deal with a problem pregnancy.

It has been interesting to watch an attempt at "push back." 26 states plan sharply to restrict women's rights, so it does little good for a corporation to cancel a planned business venture or for a non-profit to shift their annual conference to a different state. Some corporations are offering to cover the cost of transport to another state as a voluntary, additional health benefit as it were. Makers of apps that women were using to track their periods worry that the use will sharply taper off lest the apps are also used to monitor pregnancies and their outcomes. Doctors treating miscarriages in states that ban abortions now fear for their legal risk. These are all laudable responses but by medicalizing the issue they are focusing far too narrowly.

What the Supreme Court has done is to strip women of the equality we conventionally assumed was implied in the Declaration that All Men Are Created Equal. In truth this really does only apply to men.

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The Supreme Court threatens, when the Texas law finally reaches it, to force women into to a status which echos that accorded to the slaves who tried to escape the legal constraints on their lives. No slave was free to chose how or where to live. Women needing to end a pregnancy likewise risk physical constraint, at least until the baby is born. A slave once caught would have to endure return to bondage. Anyone in Texas will be free to torment a woman who was once pregnant and who is no more. That tormentor can also turn on anyone who gives aid to the woman. In this age of internet harassment, it is hard to imagine any limits on women's suffering still to come.

Those who doubt that this torment will fall disproportionately on poor women need only watch the documentary The Janes. Its portrayal of the abortion activists in Chicago nears its end after the State of New York legalized abortion. The rich college students at the University of Chicago, once ready to subsidize termination costs for those who couldn't pay, simply got on planes to New York. That will already be happening in the USA today. The rich in Mississippi and Texas will be on planes, the poor already under economic pressure face a yet more deeply daunting future. I accept this is not a country that supports equality. It doesn't even offer freedom except to the economically secure.

I also recognize, as I said in my last pamphlet, that in US struggles over abortion my position has now lost. That doesn't mean I am silent. I wear "message" shirts every day. Rob is getting one with the slogan Roe, Roe, Roe your Vote. Please watch the documentary and the movie about The Janes to remind yourself what a world without abortion rights is like. Then watch Anita Hill's story to remind yourself that Ginny Thomas, Clarence's wife has always been a menace, and also to see what it is like to work your ass off in the quest for equal rights. Every woman and every girl child in the US facing this future plays and works on a very uneven playing field. We need to flatten it once more and keep it flat. Equality is the goal and it reaches wider even than reproductive rights.

Many of us, most of us, both women and men did not want to go back but as a nation bound by laws we are being coerced into doing so. A protection once granted via the Constitution is no more. For now. Such a move is a sadly not rare in America's much vaunted but imperfect history. Our past is riddled with promises betrayed. Ask Indians about Treaties. Ask the descendants of slaves about Plessy v. Ferguson. Dobbs is no more than another deep betrayal. We need someone now who will write for us another 275 word Gettysburg address, another clarion cry — that the Constitution really does grant equality to all and that it does so in every State.



NONE OF US IS ALONE — HOUSTON JUNE 2022

I came back from my most recent trip to Texas, to Houston, genuinely light hearted. I had spent a whole evening listening to a live performance of Carole King's songs; there was real time with two good old friends; I ate marvelous TexMex food and stared with serious qualms at the conspicuous displays of wealth represented in the houses of River Oaks. James Turrell's light sculpture on the Rice campus was stunning. Our son Alex's old apartment complex in Rice village was even more ratty than it had been. Houston I had been to before were still there and it was fun to see them.

My main agenda in Texas was the bi-annual Rotary International Conference. Light heartedness significantly intensified there, despite five 8 hour days in a vast building, cut off from fresh air and daylight, in the midst of 11,000 well behaved people. I don't love loud pop music first thing, as many of them clearly did but, apart from that, the experience was a delight. Speakers kept their audiences rapt with stories about vital health, ecological and peace projects. A genuine spirit of outreach and connection was embodied in the rafts of volunteers scattered everywhere to help us find our way around a rabbit warren of breakout rooms. In the hotel swimming pool I discovered that Seattle Rotary is as deeply committed to taming malaria around the world as my Berkeley colleagues are to tackling polio. The vendor gallery featured dozens of sub-set Rotary groups soliciting partners to support their current projects. There were even a few cash oriented vendors selling water filters and electric scooters for the elderly. I once taught my students at Evergreen about Houston's Art Cars and there they were as well, including one we could write messages on.

Rotary International, a fervently "non-political" organization has among its seven overarching priorities both maternal and child health and protecting the environment. Furthermore, since 1979 it has spent literally billion on vaccinations against polio on a global scale. In the USA. any of three goals is so easily defined and dismissed as "political." Under Rotary's skillfully managed mantle, substantive action grows and matures, even in Rotary USA. New on the horizon is a prospect that Rotary will put itself forward as a place for healthy debate on difficult issues, a direct challenge to leaders with the urge to use any disagreement to harden existing patterns of toxic polarization.

Regardless of how much success there is in easing polarization, which of course is one of my peace-oriented goals, the life-enhancing experience in Houston will stay with me. Whenever I turn outwards to face this precarious and fractured world, I know I have colleagues and co-conspirators among the 1.4 million other women and me whose representatives I met face to face in Houston. So I can turn outwards confident that people all over the world are turning outwards in similar directions at the same time (all in their own time zones). The rock music symbolizes their concurrent belief, that work on behalf of the world better be heartwarming and enjoyable for us workers as well.

Five days in Houston were all I needed to quiet, for a while, voices clattering in my mind, repeated reminders that ours is a precarious and fractured world. The voices are back again as you can tell just by reading this, but after a week in Texas they are nothing like as noisy as they had been.

WOMENS' WORK. — JESSYE, HANNAH, JENNY, TOMOKO, ROBIN AND AIMEE

People will only work to sustain a world they think is worth sustaining.

The words of a prize-winning academic whom I deeply admire.

Houston helped to quiet the troubled voices in my head. Material and artistic beauty, accessible all the time, proving that our world is more than its fractures and its fragility. Six particular people are foundations in which my world stabilized itself in the last few weeks. On this booklet's back page are internet links that connect you to them all.

Jessye Norman, an American soprano who lived in Paris. I love opera, love the human voice, solo and in choruses. If Jessye Norman is singing I hear in new ways, hear something well known as though for the first time.

Hannah Gadsby, comedian from Tasmania. We spent the evening after the Dobbs decision with her, two among 2800 of her fans. She has a script for a show. It's carefully constructed and rehearsed, covering travels through her life with our lives intermingled. That night, virtually all of her audience deeply discouraged, she set it to one side for a bit and clasped us in an embrace. She cares, she knows we will all go on. Then back to the script, making life viable by telling the stories of our lives.

Jenny Nutbeem, my cousin, a textile artist in the UK. She thrived in COVID times. Leaves and flowers as dyes and patterns, biking everywhere, Jen used quiet and solitude to make the best work of her life. That's how I see it. She and her visionary sense of the natural world are on the front cover here.

Tomoko Otaka, cooking teacher and friend in Tokyo. She has taste, makes tastes, teaches beginners like me how to replicate her tastes and then we sit down together to eat the food we have prepared. Even during COVID. Our Zoom classes spanned time zones and traditions, and we found we could also include friends and family. Joy in stirring and chopping together, every few weeks.

Robin Valk was also my cousin, the one who died. He wasn't a woman and of course a lot of making and interpretive work is done by men. Robin's particular gift? From a perch in Birmingham in England he listened for new bands and musicians. He scouted their shows, mentored them as performers and brought whole new worlds of music to his particular public.

Aimee Lee, a Korean/American paper artist. Having studied with Korea's "national treasures" she knows "the right way" to cut branches, to construct the vats in which softened paper fibers are sieved and settled, becoming fine sheets of paper. And then what happens to the paper itself? Why it gets spun and woven into bowls and teapots, into dipping mushrooms and dancing birds, made into clothes and shoes, and books too, of course.

Like people everywhere, these six bring into into existence words and songs, cups and hangings, connections and ideas, reminders for our hearts in hard times —
the world we live in truly is worth sustaining.

WOMENS' WORK. — JESSYE, HANNAH, JENNY, TOMOKO, ROBIN AND AIMEE

This pamphlet is coming to most of you on paper which means the links to these wonderful websites are laborious to follow. The typing is madly difficult. However, as I usually do, I plan to upload the file itself to my own peacemakerpress.com website. Much easier to type. I am often behind hand with the online versions but given how much these opportunities matter, it is well worth your while to see whether the links are already up by the time this arrives in the mail.

JESSYE

There's Jessye Norman for herself and also as an important part of a big wide world of classical music.

For Jessye herself —An New York Times sampling of 10 pieces <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/01/arts/music/jessye-norman-greatest-performances.html>

For classical music — A New York Times series of sound bites. “Five minutes that will make you love”. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/arts/music/five-minutes-love-music.html?searchResultPosition=10#card13>

HANNAH

She is touring the show Body of Work right now. If you are in Europe in the autumn consider going. But book soon. She always sells out. <https://hannahgadsby.com.au/#shows>. If you are neither in Australia right now nor in Europe there's always Netflix for two earlier shows.

JENNY

Her work is always visible and touchable at the Suffolk Craft Society in Southwold. <https://www.suffolkcraftsociety.org/scs-makers-their-work/textiles/jenny-nutbeem/and> until the end of August in the Galloper Sands gallery also in Suffolk. <https://www.galloper-sands.co.uk/>

TOMOKO

By Japanese government decree we are all cut off from face to face contact between Japan and the outside world. There's no functioning website for her cooking classes **so stay away from the alleged link at Trip Advisor** but if you want see her offerings and read her fan mail including mine look at Trip Advisor itself. https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g14129743-d8682240-Reviews-Japanese_Home_style_Cooking_Cookery_A_Five-Akasaka_Minato_Tokyo_Tokyo_Prefectur.html

ROBIN

Robin is gone but his blog about music and live shows is still online. I don't know for how much longer but do check it out. <https://radiotogo.blogspot.com>

AIMEE

When I first met Aimee in 2009 Korea it was obvious that she was media proficient as well as a Hanji paper genius. Her Fulbright presentation was beautifully written and spoken and accompanied by just about the most proficient slide/video show I have ever seen. Needless to say her website today is fabulous. <https://aimeelee.net/>