

FROM THE EDITORS

Beginning on page 1 of this issue, our beloved, retired-but-ever-active Nancy Worcester writes about women's health movements and the classic women's health guide known as *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (OBOS), now in its ninth edition and better than ever. This new edition, writes Nancy, is "not your mother's OBOS." If you are a feminist under fifty years of age, perhaps *your* mother's OBOS is the one shown on our cover: produced in 1970 with a hand-lettered cover and bound with staples, it was actually titled *Women and Their Bodies: A Course*, and it sold for seventy-five cents.

I was thirteen in 1970, but neither my mother nor I knew of this book, and I would not come across it or its successors for some years yet. My mother — Ruth Joan Brechbill Lehman, shown below at ages 17 and 87 — never would. Born in 1920 into a conservative religious sect, and married for seventy years to my father, who found one of his callings in a fundamentalist Baptist pulpit, my mother never embraced feminism as such, or reproductive rights, or any sort of sexual revolution, and she mostly avoided controversial topics, or at least avoided discussing them with me.

She was a strong and, in her own ways, independent woman, though, and whether she realized it or not in the early years, she was raising a feminist daughter. This was the woman, mind you, who had in 1941 objected to the word "obey" in the marriage vows, and convinced her minister-uncle to leave that out of hers — and who told me that story a number of times, always with a self-conscious, what-was-I-thinking giggle that failed to hide her satisfaction at that youthful act of rebellion. This was also a woman who stood up to more than one demanding and overbearing boss, who distrusted the medical establishment in the 1970s, and who made a tiny fuss about age discrimination when she was laid off from her bookkeeping job in her early 80s. My mother and father were both very upset when I came out as a lesbian in the 1990s, but they respectfully attended my wedding and welcomed my partner with love. In the last five years of her life, my mother's memory declined as dementia progressed, and she didn't always know how old I was or where I lived (or even, sometimes, whether I was myself or her younger sister), but she always seemed to remember and affirm my relationship with Martha; she also seemed to have forgotten some old labels and biases,

and there was a deeper-than-ever connection between us.

My mother died earlier this year, at the age of ninety-one. I miss her achingly, and I have no doubt I will be sorting out her complex emotional and spiritual legacy to me for the rest of my life. Her mind was still sharp when I began working for *Feminist Collections* twelve years ago, but we never talked about it much — I guess we both still avoided opportunities for controversy. I believe, though, that in some unarticulated place in her heart, she was proud of her daughter's feminism, and that she'd be pleased, even if secretly, to find *Our Bodies, Ourselves* on my bookshelf.

In this issue of *FC*, we also introduce Matthew Harrick ("LGBTIQ at the Library") and Kelly Wooten ("Zines at the Bingham Center") as feature essayists, point out lots of online resources and women/gender-focused special issues of periodicals, and offer brief reviews of eleven recently published reference works. And we'll be back in a couple of months, with resources about feminism and disability, women who farm, and the worlds of online gaming. We hope you'll keep reading.

○ J.L.

