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## Our Pain

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## OUR PAIN

When they called me a nigger I cringed.  
When they found ways to keep us out I protested.  
When I watched "Mississippi Burning" I screamed at them.  
When the remarks were racially insensitive I corrected them.  
And finally when they wanted to learn I taught them.

Because I know how to be an African American.  
I know my story and the struggles of my people.  
I know I deserve what I've worked hard for.

But when he smiled and called me "honey" I smiled back.  
When he made advances I was flattered.  
When he was easier on me I was relieved.  
When he made me feel uncomfortable I left.  
And finally when he pushed me I gave in.

Because I know how to walk the walk.  
I know how to talk the talk.  
I know how to stand there and look pretty.

But when I saw Hill and Thomas I ached.  
When my brother called her a liar I was offended.  
When my mother said it happens all the time I was amazed.  
When he was given the post I mourned.  
And finally when it was all over I realized.

Because I don't know how to be a woman.  
I don't know how I can deal with sexism from them.  
I don't know if I can deal with it from us.

So I hear not only the cry of my people but also of my sisters.  
And it's so loud that at times it's deafening.  
It hurts to realize I must fight my own and that they will watch.

I've spent so much time being African American and fighting  
racism and white people that I haven't been a woman and  
fought sexism and men.

Our situation seems so hopeless sometimes.  
I can fight the white man because he's my enemy.  
But how do I fight the black man when he's supposed to  
be my brother.

*Bentina Chisolm\**

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