

ODE TO THE OLDER WOMAN (AN AFFIRMATION -- A CELEBRATION)

Noeleen O'Beirne

*I'm alive -- yes, alive
For I have known what it is
To be a woman and survive.
For--*

*I am a warrior-woman, a lioness,
A blazer of trails
A builder of bridges and a mender of them, too,
A champion of the many--not the few.*

*I encompass the earth, I touch the sky
And plummet to earth,
Phoenix-like I rise from the ashes of my dreams
Once more to fly and fly and fly.*

*I am quite literally the stuff
Humanity is made of.
I am a nurturer, giving birth
Not only to my kind, but thru' the
fertility of my mind
To concepts unconfined by societal
expectations.*

*I am a welder of bonds, strong and
enduring
Of motherhood, sisterhood,
nationhood,
A donor of life force, endowed with
experience
Adorned with wisdom and love
I am a place of refuge, a dove
I countenance no killing of another's
daughter
Or a son--my children everyone*

*I am the music of the universe, from
generation to generation
You'll hear my lilting song.
I am the white crane dancing
with extended wings
Dancing to silent music.
The snow leopard, alone, aloof in lofty
solitude,
The dolphin frolicking in turquoise
waves.*

*I am a chameleon -- wife, mother
worker,
Artist, dancer, teacher,
The gentle moon illuminating
The darkness of ignorance and hate.
I am a page well-written
My history finely etched
Upon the parchment of my face
So survive I have-- and gloriously,
not in defeat.
Sing out! sing out! in celebration of
our sisterhood.
We'll meet the challenge life still has
in store
With valour, for
Each of us is WOMAN--ageless and
unique.*

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