

dyke!" My dad was basically just proud that he had a daughter who wrote a book, and so he was gonna sell it.

People in Indiana are really blunt, and they tell the truth. They're like, "Well, I didn't like all of it, but I read it. I'm glad you wrote it. I didn't understand that part about God, but you know girl, you from the neighborhood, I'm so happy you wrote it." I'm like, you know, you all are crazy, and I love you."

OITM: So what will you be doing at the Outwrite conference this year?

LN: I'm on a panel

with Minnie Bruce Pratt. We're talking about politics and poetry. I haven't formed all the stuff I'm going to say, but one thing I know that I will say — the fact that I write means that I'm alive, means that it's political, means that it's dissident. The things that the poets that I like say, are things that in any other country, people have died for...Love poems are political. Being able to write is political. To talk about political prisoners, and to talk about hunger, and power, and all those issues, is absolutely necessary. The people that I like do their work regardless of what

the consequences are going to possibly be. A lot of times, we don't get as much money as everybody else gets, we are starving poets...

OITM: What do you see yourself doing in the future?

LN: What I want to do in my life, is to continue doing this, and to have an urban organic farm. I teach a lot of little kids, and they don't know where the heck milk comes from. They don't know where paper comes from. And that is the ultimate danger for us to be that separated from ourselves, and our own bodies. ▼



I found out my dad had sold my book; everybody was saying, "I read your book," and I thought, "Oh my god, they know I'm a dyke!"

Telling It Like It Is

a review by Lenna Cumberbatch

**Juba, Letta Neely
Wildheart Press**

My first experience with Letta Neely's poetry was at a Middlebury College reading. I was impressed to see this black woman up on stage, but when she started to read, I was mesmerized.

I expected no less from the book, which I ordered on the spot. It did not disappoint.

Juba is Letta Neely's third production piece, a collection of pieces from her previous these chap books and some additional pieces.

Neely is not afraid to tell readers off. She speaks with a firm, powerful voice on a variety of topics: being black, being a lesbian, the environment, the president, and even latchkey children.

Juba begins with a state-of-the-world address and a statement about societal priorities: "...we strip trees, dye them the color of leaves, and put white men's faces on them, to pay for places to sleep..." This realism draws the reader in.

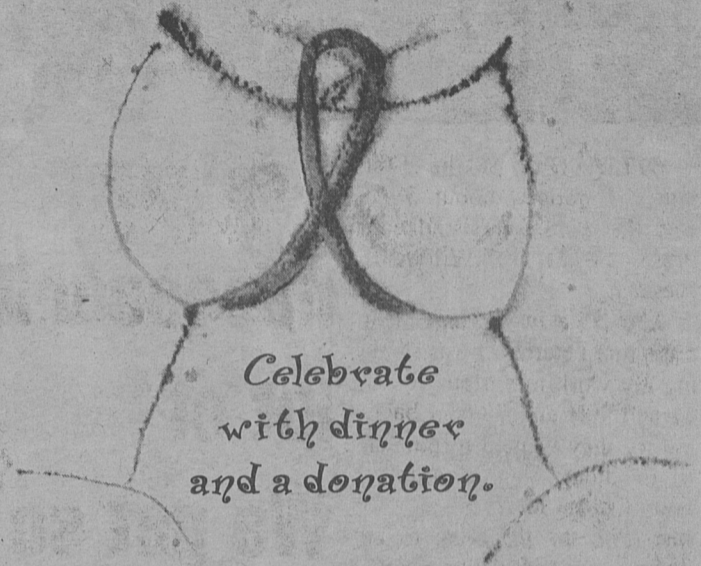
The book rises in intensity as she gets more personal, delving into her own experiences and taking the audience along with her. This poetry is very personal and emotional; it comes out raw, and gets under the skin. And while listening to her poetry adds one aspect of the intensity, it hides the visual layout of her pieces. On the printed page, the formatting of the words is part of the experience of the poem. Emphasizing particular words, ideas and feelings, her layout style adds to the overall feeling of non-conformity in her work.

Her eloquence is seen in simple yet powerful word choice. In "Mostly we Merge" she lays out honestly the perils of loving the person you want to love: "...Afraid that if we touch here — hand to hand over cement — we will be killed / this is a hazard of our love." These poignant words make this poetry reach the reader in an honest, empowering way. Emotions, expressions, and images are laid out in words and language that are unmistakable.

The beginning of the end comes with an observation, a "Harlem Haiku." Neely merely takes a look around and states it as it is. Before an orgasmic conclusion, she attacks politics and the media and the almighty president appears even here, but then we are put back to rest by the title piece, a love story that is the final work. There is no better way to end such a passionate book than with passion. ▼



This Valentine's Day don't eat your heart out...



Celebrate with dinner and a donation.

On Saturday, February 13 participating restaurants will donate a portion of your dinner bill to the Brattleboro Area AIDS Project.

For details call 254-8263 or check local newspapers.

To our patrons:



I would like to take this opportunity to extend thanks to everyone who helped make the holidays' events so enjoyable. Together we collected eight shopping bags of food and gifts for the Sara Holbrook Center.

I'm also happy to say that Womyn's Dance will now have a "brother" - Men's Dance - starting Saturday, February 6. What's the attraction? Eye candy! Come on down for a drink, some food, and the chance to show the hunks what you like. The festivities begin at 6pm.

Keep your Valentine's Day calendar open for the Winter of Love Weekend. Friday night is Glitter's presentation of "Whatever Happened to Baby Jane" at 8pm; Saturday night is the Winter is a Drag Ball at Higher Ground (8pm - 1am); Sunday there will be two fundraisers for Y T PRIDE '99, Brunch from 1pm-3pm and a Tea Dance 3pm-7pm, both at 135 Pearl. Enjoy Safely!

Donald G. Imgram (General Manager)

Saturday February 6th

135 PEARL

Buffet Upstairs ★ \$5 Cover

PRESENTS...

★ Dancing Downstairs ★

★ Eye Candy @ 8pm! ★

Featuring the Northeast Calendar Men



MEN'S DANCE

