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## Ode to a Crim Teacher

Laura Weinstock

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# *Ode to a Crim Teacher*

*by Laura Weinstock*

We deaden ourselves  
in our armchair dissections  
Our scholarly voices  
silence the bravest of us.  
Your complacent tone betrays your safety.  
How removed you are from the fears and pain,  
the outrage that we feel.

You gather the students like the Pied Piper,  
men gloating, their views mirrored  
by your words.  
Lashing out at our emotions, you call us  
jurors, the scarlet letter of the legal world where  
Passions must be squashed.

Heart pounding as I dare to speak,  
silenced by the stares and hisses,  
confined by the very questions I am asked to answer,  
forced to dismiss what I have lived.  
To be lawyers we deny our truths and pass for white and male.  
Yet, in casebooks, courtrooms, classrooms,  
We--not they--are raped again.

Sweating, my clenched body holds yours tightly  
as you retell  
the horrors you endured that night  
and once again when the DA  
aligned his maleness with the rapist's,  
"for the record, did you come?"  
I realize as I listen that I cannot  
tell my lover's anguish from my own.  
Her body and a million other women's bodies  
merge with mine.  
We cannot fit our lives into your language,  
so we create our own,  
where our stories will be heard.

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The author graduated from Cornell University in 1982. She lived in Central and South America for two years and speaks fluent Spanish, Portuguese, and French. She came to law school to add "clout" to her grassroots background working in rape crisis and battered women's shelters and teaching women self-defense. She plans to continue to work to end all oppressions and "isms". She plays guitar and piano and plans to practice civil rights law.

