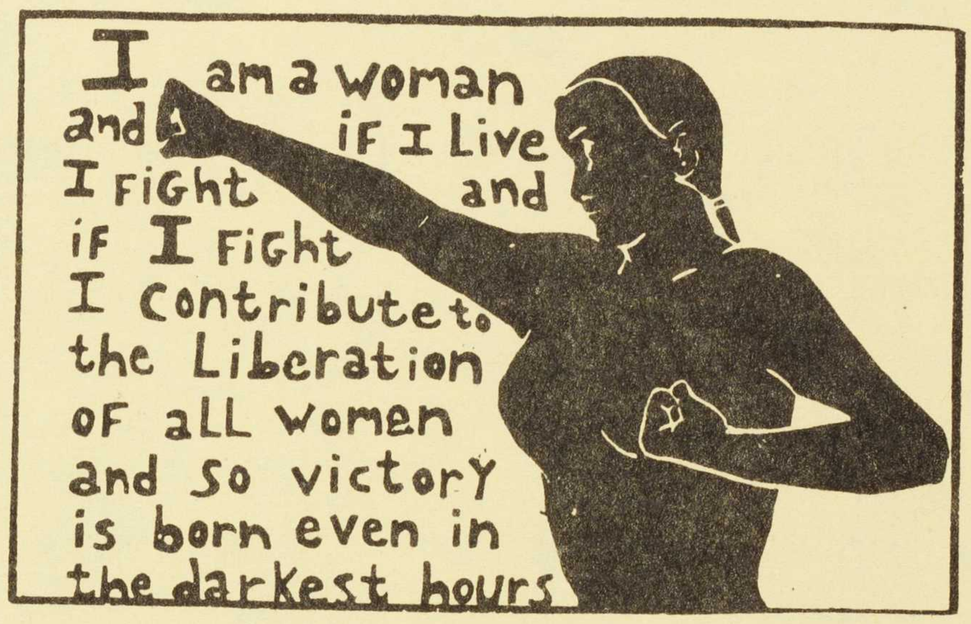
BRIDGE TELLS IT

I awoke with several strange faces glaring down at me. One of them, a woman, in a firm loud clear voice asked me--"Do you know who you are? Do you know where you are? Can you remember what happened to you?" I looked up at several anxious faces bewilderedly. I tried to speak but it seemed as though my jaw was firmly closed. These people walked away mumbling something.

As things became clearer to me--I noticed those people had white or blue on, which I thought was odd. The room had a sickening odor as if several bottles of disinfectant or turpentine had accidentally been spilled or deliberately thrown all over the place, or as if someone with cans of that stuff "got happy" and sprayed until there wasn't anything left in them.

A few minutes later the same woman came over to me and began questioning me again. I didn't answer her. I began studying this black face and wondered where she came from because of her accent which sounded quite familiar to me. Oh, now I know, she had to be originally from the West Indies. I turned my face away from her. Then I noticed I was lying down on white sheets and that I was unable to move my body except my head which I could only move from side to side. I was held back in restraints.

My mind started flowing--"Oh my God did I kill somebody and I'm in prison!? Was I being held captive!? What are these people doing to me!?" I began screeching...The doctor rushed over and jabbed me quickly with an injection. Within seconds I was feeling totally woozy. My mind was without thoughts as if it stopped functioning. I felt like I didn't have a body. I felt and thought nothing. I lay there like a corpse...



My friends from Bethlehem came to visit me. I didn't say much to them. I noticed that my friend had something in her hands. She and her old man told me that they still had my letter which I had written them. They wanted my permission to allow them to give it to my doctor, so he could read it and could know better how to treat me. I quickly snatched the letter from her. I tore up the letter into bits of little paper. I wanted to be sure the letter could not be taped back together...

I kept my door closed all the time. I felt too weak or relaxed to get around much outside my room. The nurses would always come and open the door. But I just went on closing it. Finally they gave up. But every so often a nurse would come in--pretending they thought they had left their pen in the room, or a file, etc. But I knew they kept coming in to check up on me. I could tell, by their guilty faces and strange behavior.

One day my doctor came in. He mentioned the letter that I had written to my friends. He told me that before I tore it up he had already read it. I felt angry--I swung my arms around and grabbed for the vase and threw it violently on the floor as I cried hysterically. (I later learned he never read the letter, but my friends mentioned some of the contents of it. So my doctor tricked me and wanted to see how I would react if I thought he had read the letter.) My doctor walked out of the room. A nurse came in and gave me an injection...

When I woke up, I thought to myself--no one is to be trusted and I must get out of here fast. I'll go along with their game, and then they'll let me go home.

The next day my doctor came to see me. I tried to hold a warm rational conversation. Pretending to be happy, I was smiling, and acted like he was a dear friend of mine. I then asked if I could be released. He said, first I had to see a psychiatrist. I became angry, I shouted at him--"No I ain't going to see a shrink, and I'm not crazy, you're the one who's loony! I'll get outa this place anyway!" He just walked out of the room. I noticed the nurses were giving me more injections than ever. They were checking up on me more--which drove me up the wall...

The next day, my doctor came in to see me again. He said he'll release me in a few days under one condition. I had to continue to see the psychiatrist who spoke with me last night. He went on to say that my parents wanted me to be seen by him. And that the psychiatrist was a really good doctor, that he can help me, and that we would have a good doctor-patient relationship, if I would give him a chance and cooperate with him. I quickly made a promise that I would see the shrink regularly once I was released. My doctor smiled and said "Good girl". He then left the room. I thought to myself, once I get outa this place, I'll find a way not to see that shrink. I smiled--even grinned to myself--"Promises are made to be broken!"