

Between Love and Intimacy

by Luz Maria Martinez



I Asked for Intimacy: Stories of Blessing, Betrayals and Birthings

Renita J. Weems, author

California: LuaraMedia

7060 Miramar Rd., Suite 104, San Diego, California 92121

"The only thing worse than loving a man who doesn't love you is loving a man who loves someone else. Perhaps the second thing worse than loving a man who doesn't love you is loving a man who loves your sister. And the only thing worse than all of the above is having sex with a man who hates you. Of course, he doesn't hate you enough to leave you—after all, what man can resist a compliant woman. Rather, he hates you enough to make sure you remain dependent upon him. And, unfortunately, you don't love yourself or hate the situation enough to leave him."

Throughout her book, Renita J. Weems strikes resonant chords with her personal stories and exploration of the relationships that mold women's lives. In this collection, she shares herself intimately with readers as she brings compassion, wit, and balance to issues that confront women daily.

"One night I wrote until my knuckles were swollen. When I finished, I said to myself, 'Surely now I am healed' . . . more than eight years have passed . . . and the demons have not vanished. We are just more cordial to one another. I asked for intimacy. But in the relationship between mother and daughter, I found a frightened little girl instead."

She confronts such painful memories honestly, poignantly, without judgment or bitterness. Her candid tales blend with those of other women of biblical times and this century. These charming stories make this a "finish all in one sitting" book.

The collection gives me a new framework for recalling and telling my own personal stories and those of my friends and other women I know. It makes me think of women who have touched my life but whom

I have not seen or spoken to in years. I wish I could share with them these stories, which can give insights into their own needs. In Ms. Weems, I have found a new friend, who I wish could share with me more of her stories.

In the end, the author finds the intimacy she is searching for. She searched for this intimacy in her parents, female and male friends, lovers, religion, ministry, and self-development, and in an ironic twist finds it in a relationship she had most feared and avoided.

Weems is an Assistant Professor in Old Testament Studies at Vanderbilt University Divinity School and an ordained elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. A former economist, public accountant, and stockbroker, she is both scholar and writer. In addition to her scholarly works in Old Testament Studies, she has also published numerous articles in *Essence*, *Ms.* and *SAGE*. Her teaching and writing continue to expand as she travels across the country, speaking, preaching, and leading seminars. She lives with her husband, Martin Espinosa, and her daughter, Savannah, in Nashville, Tennessee.