

# MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS

"I sometimes think these photographs deal with a small subject—a relationship between two closely related people, mother and daughter," says Niki Berg. "But it is no small matter—it's our beginning. For if mothers and daughters together cannot figure it out—relating and loving—then how can we expect understanding in other relationships?"

When she first thought about this issue, Berg began to meet with her mother regularly, to take self-portraits together. "It was very special for us, a mother and her adult daughter, to be so physically and emotionally close," she explains.

At the same time Berg began to photograph other mothers and daughters. And as so often happens in photography, suddenly the moment would seem perfect. For instance, the baby on the blanket, by a simple gesture, symbolizes the open and fearless nature of this relationship. In another photograph the adolescent in the foreground keeps her distance as the struggle for independence begins to surface.

"This work was vital to me," says Berg. "It helped me understand that mothers and daughters can be separate and quite different people and still relate to, love, and need each other."



ELEANOR AND DAUGHTER MEREDITH, 1982

PHOTOGRAPHS BY NIKI BERG



EVARISTA AND DAUGHTER LUCY, 1983



CIA AND DAUGHTER RACHEL, 1981

## MOTHERROOT

*Creation often  
needs two hearts  
one to root  
and one to flower  
One to sustain  
in time of drouth  
and hold fast  
against winds of pain  
the fragile bloom  
that in the glory  
of its hour  
affirms a heart  
unsung, unseen.*

—Marilou Awiakta  
ABIDING APPALACHIA



BRENDA AND DAUGHTER CHANDRA, 1981



SUSAN AND DAUGHTER EMILY, 1983

JEAN AND DAUGHTER WENDY, 1981