THIS BRIDGE CALLED MY BACK

WRITINGS BY RADICAL WOMEN OF COLOR

EDITORS:
CHERRÍE MORAGA
GLORIA ANZALDÚA

FOREWORD:
TONI CADE BAMBARA

54,000 Copies Sold

Winner Of The 1986 BEFORE COLUMBUS FOUNDATION AMERICAN BOOK AWARD
THIS BRIDGE CALLED MY BACK

WRITINGS BY RADICAL WOMEN OF COLOR

EDITORS: CHERRÍE MORAGA GLORIA ANZALDÚA

FOREWORD: TONI CADE BAMBARA

KITCHEN TABLE: Women of Color Press
New York
para
Elvira Moraga Lawrence y
Amalia García Anzaldúa
y para todas nuestras madres
por la obediencia y
la insurrección
que ellas nos enseñaron.

for
Elvira Moraga Lawrence and
Amalia García Anzaldúa
and for all our mothers
for the obedience and rebellion
they taught us.
When Persephone Press, Inc., a white women's press of Watertown, Massachusetts, and the original publishers of *Bridge*, ceased operation in the Spring of 1983, this book had already gone out of print. After many months of negotiations, the co-editors were finally able to retrieve control of their book, whereupon *Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press* of New York agreed to republish it.

The following, then, is the second edition of *This Bridge Called My Back*, conceived of and produced entirely by women of color.
The Bridge Poem

Donna Kate Rushin

I've had enough
I'm sick of seeing and touching
Both sides of things
Sick of being the damn bridge for everybody

Nobody
Can talk to anybody
Without me
Right?

I explain my mother to my father
My father to my little sister
My little sister to my brother
My brother to the white feminists
The white feminists to the Black church folks
The Black church folks to the ex-hippies
The ex-hippies to the Black separatists
The Black separatists to the artists
The artists to my friends' parents...

Then
I've got to explain myself
To everybody

I do more translating
Than the Gawdamn U.N.

Forget it
I'm sick of it

I'm sick of filling in your gaps
Sick of being your insurance against
The isolation of your self-imposed limitations
Sick of being the crazy at your holiday dinners
Sick of being the odd one at your Sunday Brunches
Sick of being the sole Black friend to 34 individual white people

Find another connection to the rest of the world
Find something else to make you legitimate
Find some other way to be political and hip
I will not be the bridge to your womanhood
Your manhood
Your human-ness

I'm sick of reminding you not to
Close off too tight for too long

I'm sick of mediating with your worst self
On behalf of your better selves

I am sick
Of having to remind you
To breathe
Before you suffocate
Your own fool self

Forget it
Stretch or drown
Evolve or die

The bridge I must be
Is the bridge to my own power
I must translate
My own fears
Mediate
My own weaknesses

I must be the bridge to nowhere
But my true self
And then
I will be useful