

2000

## Margaret and Belle

Esperanza Malavé Cintrón

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## **I am a Sullied Woman**

I am a sullied woman

A woman who beds black men, any men  
Without virtue, libidinous

I am a marginal woman

A woman who cleans toilets  
other races' babies

I am a loud woman

A laugh too open, a voice too strong  
A woman whose breath shrieks

I am an abused woman

Beaten, forced but refuses to suffer  
A woman whose pain knows no limit

I am an abstract woman

Split into plains, deconstructed,  
crafted with threads too thin to behold

I am a goddess

A deity raped by her brother, her son  
A woman whose dangerous vision frightens

I am a mother

Universal womb, nurturer  
A woman who drowns her babies

I am a sister

The lover of another, the other  
A threat, a lesbian

I am a sullied woman, a marginal woman, a loud woman,  
an abused and abstracted woman. I am the goddesses,  
the mothers. the sisters.

*Cecilia Rodríguez Milanes*