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Dreaming the Tree of Life

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one of its members. Cummings never makes this seem easy: however, she offers a description of a rich experience for all involved.

The chapter titles give the reader a glimpse of the journey: Introduction, Discovery: Horror, Gentleness, Grief, Rage 1, Rage 2, Memories Returning, Honesty, Trust, Forgiveness, Hope, Facing Fears, Change, Conclusion. Browsing through the titles is like scanning a road map on which the only clear thing about the route is the starting place and the destination. This is a graphic description of a survivor's journey.

The illustrations are abstract and subtle. They are almost subliminal on first reading! As the content progresses, however, one can recognize the impact and continuity they offer to the text.

This book is a truly remarkable work. In it the author describes her journey in a way that avoids so many of the pitfalls of cathartic self disclosure. It is rich in imagination as the author tells metaphorical stories to her inner child. It is simple, clear and honest—something remarkable among many other works published about this subject. *Eyes Wide Open* will become a companion to anyone who supports a woman who has been abused. It shows survivors and their care givers how to help survivors integrate their history with their faith experience.

Susan Ludwig
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Dreaming the Tree of Life

Shirley Jane Endicott

Dundas, ON: Artemis Enterprises, 1992

158 pp.

Dreaming the Tree of Life is a collection of stories, poems and songs celebrating the experience of women from a feminist point of view. Shirley Jane Endicott takes her inspiration from biblical themes and from present day life. I can applaud Endicott for examining forthrightly such difficult issues as spousal abuse and rape. "A High Rock" is a sensitive yet frank exploration of one woman's feelings about her attraction to other women and about a specific sexual encounter with a lesbian. Endicott hopes that her book "will encourage other women to create writings which value their experiences of spirituality, find their own truths and expand the process of women-centred myth making" (p. 14).

My reaction to this book is one of respect for the author's creativity. But, personally, I did not find this book particularly nourishing or inspiring. Most of it was at the edge of my comfort level. Discomfort isn't necessarily a bad thing. For it can push me to look at issues that I might not otherwise

examine. But too much discomfort makes it almost impossible to relate to someone else's point of view.

One area of discomfort has to do with Endicott's approach to feminism and theology. I do believe that the traditional patriarchal expression of Christian faith needs to be transformed. Some feminists would argue that this is impossible. They would say that patriarchy is so deeply ingrained that Christianity is beyond redemption. They would opt to create a new expression of faith. Endicott is much closer to this point of view than I. She is willing to reject the traditional Hebrew Scriptures' denunciation of the pagan goddesses and pray "Asherah, restore your blessing" (p. 95). That, in my opinion, takes her outside the limits of the Christian tradition, a place where I am unwilling to go.

The other difficulty I have with the book is the author's style. This I admit has much to do with personal taste. But I do believe that the impact of Endicott's creativity is lost in several ways. I think that her story lines are often too long and complicated. Her best story in my opinion is "How love came into the world". I found it a very moving and tender story. It has that impact because it is focused and concise. I also think that some of Endicott's stories read more like personal reflections than stories. Perhaps what she has to say could be said better as a series of meditations or reflections. If they are to be left as stories they need to be tightened up.

It is my opinion that *Dreaming the Tree of Life* would have limited appeal to the majority within church circles. However, for anyone interested in openly exploring feminist spirituality, this book will offer some thought-provoking images and ideas.

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Matthew. Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching

Douglas R.A. Hare

Louisville: John Knox Press, 1993

320 pp. + bibliography \$22.00 U.S.

Hare's work, part of the *Interpretation* series, is an important resource for all those who work with the book of Matthew in a preaching or teaching situation. It is equally valuable for those who only desire to study the Gospel in more detail. Basing his commentary on the Revised Standard Version, Hare seeks to supplement the work of exegetical scholars, "by emphasizing what each passage means to Matthew and, by extension, to the modern church" (p. vii). He examines the book in three parts: One—Who