



# After Silence: Rape & My Journey Back

*Nancy Venable Raine*

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## **After Silence: Rape & My Journey Back** Nancy Venable Raine

"Silence has the rusty taste of shame. The words *shut up* are the most terrible words I know. . . . The man who raped me spat these words out over and over during the hours of my attack--when I screamed, when I tried to talk him out of what he was doing, when I protested. It seemed to me that for seven years--until at last I spoke--these words had sunk into my soul and become prophecy. And it seems to me now that these words, the brutish message of tyrants, preserve the darkness that still covers this pervasive crime. The real shame, as I have learned, is to consent to them."

**After Silence** is Nancy Venable Raine's eloquent, profoundly moving response to her rapist's command to "shut up," a command that is so often echoed by society and internalized by rape victims. Beginning with her assault by a stranger in her home in 1985, Raine's riveting narrative of the ten-year aftermath of her rape brings to light the truth that survivors of traumatic experiences know--a trauma does not end when you find yourself alive.

Just as devastating as the rape itself was the silence that shrouded it, a silence born of her own feelings of shame as well as the incomprehension of others. Raine gives shape, form, and voice to the "unspeakable" and exposes the misconceptions and cruelties that surround this prevalent though hidden crime. With formidable power and in intimate detail, she probes the long-term psychological and physiological aftereffects of rape, its tangled sexual confusions, the treatment of rape by the media and the legal and medical professions, and contemporary cultural views of victimhood.

For anyone, female or male, who has suffered from or witnessed the shattering effects of rape, **After Silence** inspires and points the way to healing. This landmark book is a stunning literary achievement that is a testimony to the power of language to transform the worst sort of violation and suffering into meaning and into art.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

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