

March 2004

## Choosing to Empathize (1991)

Mary C. Dunlap

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.law.berkeley.edu/bglj>

---

### Recommended Citation

Mary C. Dunlap, *Choosing to Empathize (1991)*, 19 BERKELEY WOMEN'S L.J. 17 (2004).

### Link to publisher version (DOI)

<http://dx.doi.org/https://doi.org/10.15779/Z38V40JZ3D>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Law Journals and Related Materials at Berkeley Law Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Berkeley Journal of Gender, Law & Justice by an authorized administrator of Berkeley Law Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact [jcera@law.berkeley.edu](mailto:jcera@law.berkeley.edu).

## Choosing to Empathize (1991)†

Mary C. Dunlap

*Moving men.  
What a job!  
But when  
Assemblyman George Michaels  
stood racked with tears  
stood up in the New York legislature  
on April 9<sup>th</sup> of 1970  
and changed his vote from “No” to “Yes”  
to repeal the criminal abortion laws  
That had killed and maimed as many women  
as a small undeclared war  
When Mr. Michaels recalled his wife’s reply  
in the argument they’d had earlier that day  
before he voted, remembered  
“In the meantime  
thousands of women  
will be butchered  
in underworld abortion”  
let in his son’s emphatic words  
of the suffering from  
no abortion = violent abortion  
in the summer Cincinnati ghetto  
his son had learned and lived in  
when he George Michaels moved  
reversed his course to vote  
determinedly for repeal  
and kissed his political ass good-bye  
knowingly and bravely*

---

Copyright © 2004, The Regents of the University of California.

- †. A version of this poem has been previously published in the *Washburn Law Journal*. The copyright has been released by Maureen C. Mason as well as the *Washburn Law Journal*. Mary C. Dunlap, *Mediating the Abortion Controversy: A Call for Moderation, or for One-Sided Etiquette While the Bombs Keep Flying?*, 30 WASHBURN L.J. 41, 43 n.12 (1990-1991) (reviewing LAURENCE H. TRIBE, *ABORTION: THE CLASH OF ABSOLUTES* (1990)).

*with more pain before he stood up to change,  
says he today,  
than in three years of mortar fire at him  
Marine Pacific World War II  
When this happens  
When someone not possibly directly  
in the line of fire, on the hook  
of the coat hanger  
of the abortion-by-drunk-auto-mechanic  
of the abortion-by-jumping-off-the-garage-roof-age-18-and  
dying  
When someone gets it who isn't s'posed to  
Then, say:  
Hallelujah!  
Let's hear it  
For moving men,  
and, yes, for moving women.*