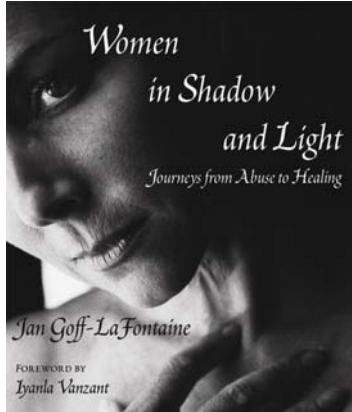


Controversial Book Winner Book of the Year



Creative Minds Press is pleased to announce that Jan Goff-LaFontaine's controversial book *Women in Shadow and Light: Journeys from Abuse to Healing* won the Independent Publisher's (IPPY) Book of the Year Award (Women's Issues). This accolade follows closely on the heels of HELP of Door County's (Wisconsin) awarding author/photographer Goff-LaFontaine with the 2006 "Friend of Victims" award for her work in healing abused women.

The Book

Forty women—ages nineteen to ninety-five—bared all to express their triumph over trauma. In this daring approach, black and white photographs combine with moving interviews to portray the essence of each woman's journey from the violence of abuse to transformation and healing. This is the most hope-filled book you will ever read about abuse and recovery.

Jan Goff-LaFontaine came up with a revolutionary idea: that reconnecting abused women with their sense of beauty—achieved through fine art photography—would assist them in throwing off the shame that abuse so often causes. Goff-LaFontaine says, "Helping abused women rebuild their self-esteem, I have watched the wounded become healers. My new workshops utilize digital cameras to help abuse survivors find the beauty within themselves. I've discovered this method to be empowering and liberating for abuse survivors."

Begun as a photography exhibit, "Out of the Shadows," the project started in rural Door County, Wisconsin, but eventually led Goff-LaFontaine to subjects across the nation as she sought to complete *Women in Shadow and Light*. The subjects are women who have experienced every economic situation from homelessness to the champagne lifestyle; they span many ethnicities and ages; they are the famous—such as Laura Davis, co-author of *Courage to Heal*—to the "ordinary" 62-year-old farm wife who left her abusive marriage. Each woman helped create her portrait as a personal symbol of healing, often focusing on one aspect of her body she felt was most affected in the healing process.

The Controversy

There are those who feel that photographing women—some who have been sexually abused—in the nude is somehow exploitive; that nakedness equals sex, and therefore creates more, rather than less, shame. Goff-LaFontaine disagrees: "To begin with, the history of Art is filled with female nudes, arguably the most beautiful of all forms. Because they have been abused, these women have lost their sense of personal beauty. Often they dress in dowdy clothes to hide themselves from the world. I worked with each woman to create a sensitive fine art photograph that shows her re-emergence into her self-worth. This is not exploitation, it is a celebration of beauty and empowerment for these women." This is no "bruises and broken bones" book about victimization; it is focused on reclaiming joy and learning to love their bodies again after abuse.

Women in Shadow and Light: Journeys from Abuse to Healing (ISBN: 0974961051; \$35; Women's Issues/Photography; library binding; Creative Minds Press; foreword by Iyanla Vanzant) by Jan Goff-LaFontaine is in your favorite bookstore, or on-line vendor or directly from Creative Minds Press <http://www.creativemindspress.com>; sales@beaglebay.com; 775.827.8654; 775.827.8633 (fax).