Worlds of Hurt presents a coherent rendering of the relationships between individual trauma and cultural interpretation, using as its focus the Holocaust, the Viet Nam war, and the phenomenon of sexualized violence against women. Survivors of these traumas constitute themselves as unique communities and bear witness to their traumatic experiences both privately and publicly. Each community has a vested interest in its own story and the stories told about its members by outsiders. The survivors themselves write a “literature of trauma” born of the need to tell and retell the story of the traumatic experience, to make it “real” to the victim, the community, and the larger public. In so doing, they draw on their understanding of previous traumas and other survivor communities, using them both as validation and cathartic vehicle. When traumatic stories are told and retold, they enter the vocabulary of the larger culture and become tools for the construction of national and cultural myths. The desires of the survivors and of the state are often in conflict, since the goal of a survivor is change, while the state is frequently interested in preserving the status quo.
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Reading the Literatures of Trauma

KALÍ TAL
For Robert Berkey

I can't think of him without smiling.
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Worlds of Hurt