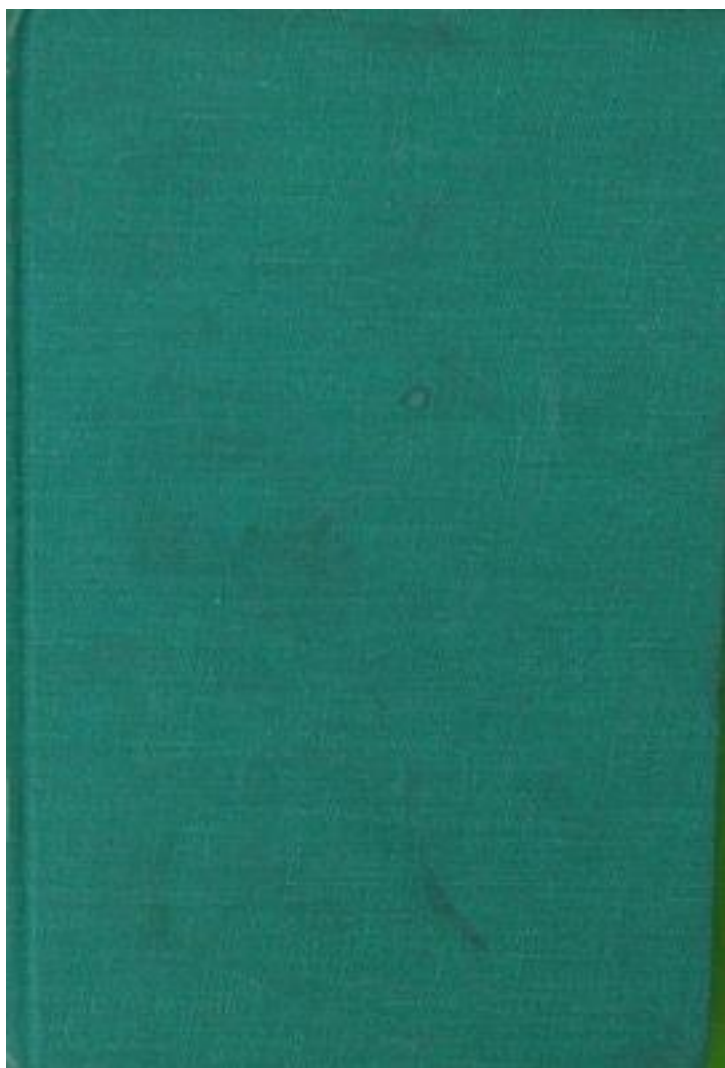


My mother/my self



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MOTHER LOVE
> I have always lied to my mother. And she to me. How young was
> I when I learned her language to call things by other names? Five
> four--younger? Her denial of whatever she could not tell me that
> her mother could not tell her and about which society enjoined
> us both to keep silent distorts our relationship still.
> Sometimes I try to imagine a little scene that could have helped
> us both. In her kind warm shy and self-deprecating way mother
> calls me into the bedroom where she sleeps alone. She is no more
> than twenty-five. I am perhaps six. Putting her hands (which her
> father told her always to keep hidden because they were "large
> and unattractive") on my shoulders she looks me right through
> my steel-rimmed spectacles: "Nancy you know I m not really
> good at this mothering business" she says. "You re a lovely child
> the fault is not with you. But motherhood doesn t come easily to
> me. So when I don t seem like other people s mothers try to
> understand that it isn t because I don t love you. I do. But I m
> confused myself. There are some things I know about. I ll teach
> them to you. The other stuff--sex and all that--well I just can t
> discuss them with you because I m not sure where they fit into
> my own life. We ll try to find other people other women who can

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