

Difranco Ani

"Lost Woman Song"

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-for lucille clifton
I opened a bank account
when I was nine years old
I closed it when I was eighteen
I gave them every penny that I'd saved
and they gave my blood
and my urine
a number
now I'm sitting in this waiting room
playing with the toys
and I am here to exercise
my freedom of choice
I passed their handheld signs
went through their picket lines
they gathered when they saw me coming
they shouted when they saw me cross
I said why don't you go home
just leave me alone
I'm just another woman lost
you are like fish in the water
who don't know that they are wet
as far as I can tell
the world isn't perfect yet
his bored eyes were obscene
on his denim thighs a magazine
I wish he'd never come here with me
in fact I wish he'd never come near me
I wish his shoulder
wasn't touching mine
I am growing older
waiting in this line
some of life's best lessons
are learned at the worst times
under the fierce fluorescent
she offered her hand for me to hold
she offered stability and calm
and I was crushing her palm
through the pinch pull wincing
my smile unconvincing
on that sterile battlefield that sees
only casualties

never heros
my heart hit absolute zero
Lucille, your voice still sounds in me
mine was a relatively easy tragedy
now the profile of our country
looks a little less hard nosed
but that picket line persisted
and that clinic's since been closed
they keep pounding their fists on reality
hoping it will break
but I don't think there's a one of us
leads a life free of mistakes

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