This book represents a transformation. A conscious, lovingly-crafted collection of thought, theory, and research, born of a feminist conference in 2009. There, for the first time any of us could remember, women who are experts on rape came together to dialogue proactively — and not in response to a current legal atrocity or funding cut, or in competition or crisis. It was as if by magic.

Okay, not magic at all, but hard work, and then, something thrilling that captured us on those two winter days, warmed us, reminded us of community, its power and comfort, the exhilaration it can produce. Presentations from around the globe — about sexual assault of all things! — filled us up, made us giddy with possibility, validated our work and what we knew, introduced us to new thought and concepts. We were revitalized, renewed, transformed. And then we all went home, back to our agencies, institutions, and bureaucracies, back to our homes, reserves, and shelters. But transformation is an ongoing process and, like any good process, has multiple stages to connect, layers to mix and mash, fears to be defined and understood. This book is a layer, a piece we did not have before, a building block.

Formal comments about the conference were glorious and called overwhelmingly for more. Since then women have been raped and murdered at unprecedented rates: raped for war, for sport(s), for marriage, in pursuit of university degrees, because of poverty, disability, race, and immigration. Raped for all manner of reasons and institutions and lack of cause; raped because they are women. Funds have been cut and legal atrocities abound in Canada and globally. As it ever was.

But here is the difference, the magic. Here in these pages, this art, the very thing you hold, is the prospect to transform, to stimulate, and to inform yourself and others about one of our most grievous and systemic of crimes. Now, if all of this is sounding a bit too grand or esoteric, let me put it another way. This is the textbook you want in your law classes, as well as in journalism, medicine, social work, and the humanities — in all of the disciplines that impact and influence our responses
to sexual assault and the women who experience it. Tell your professors and administrators. *Sexual Assault in Canada: Law, Legal Practice and Women’s Activism* will assist all of us in beginning to understand rape. And, when we do, we can craft meaningful solutions and resolutions.

Let’s get started.