

# 3

## Risky Business

No one in the family has asked me yet if I am frightened. My sister and my aunt know of course, that I must be but they hesitate to challenge me about it, for which I am grateful. Uprooting my daughter with disabilities and moving her from one state to another, is a risk. Everyone knows that. I sometimes tell people about one of her early doctors, a leading endocrinologist at New York Hospital, who never missed an opportunity to remind me that my daughter was an “at risk child.” Isn’t that just the thing to say to an exhausted mother chronically teetering on the edge of control? Once, when a friend stopped to talk with me on the street in Queens, she saw that I looked frazzled. I told her I was a little nervous. “Nervous?” she quipped “Why?” “You have a seriously disabled 13 year old daughter with no impulse control, but a lot of sexuality in a knock out body, roaming around NYC in the age of AIDS...what’s to be nervous about?”

Believe it or not, I hadn’t put those particular elements together until that moment. This is why relatives try not to alarm me. They assume my husband and I have assessed the situation and come to a rational decision. But rational decisions can still entail risk. Getting married at an older age was a risk, having children at an older age was a risk, having a second child was a big risk. I noticed I have gotten worse about risk- taking in general after age 65. I have started to draw inward. I say “no” more often. I notice people do more urging around me now. I am risk averse, in truth. I hate that high ledge my now grown daughters both love to walk on when we hike, yet I seem to be on it *all the time*.

