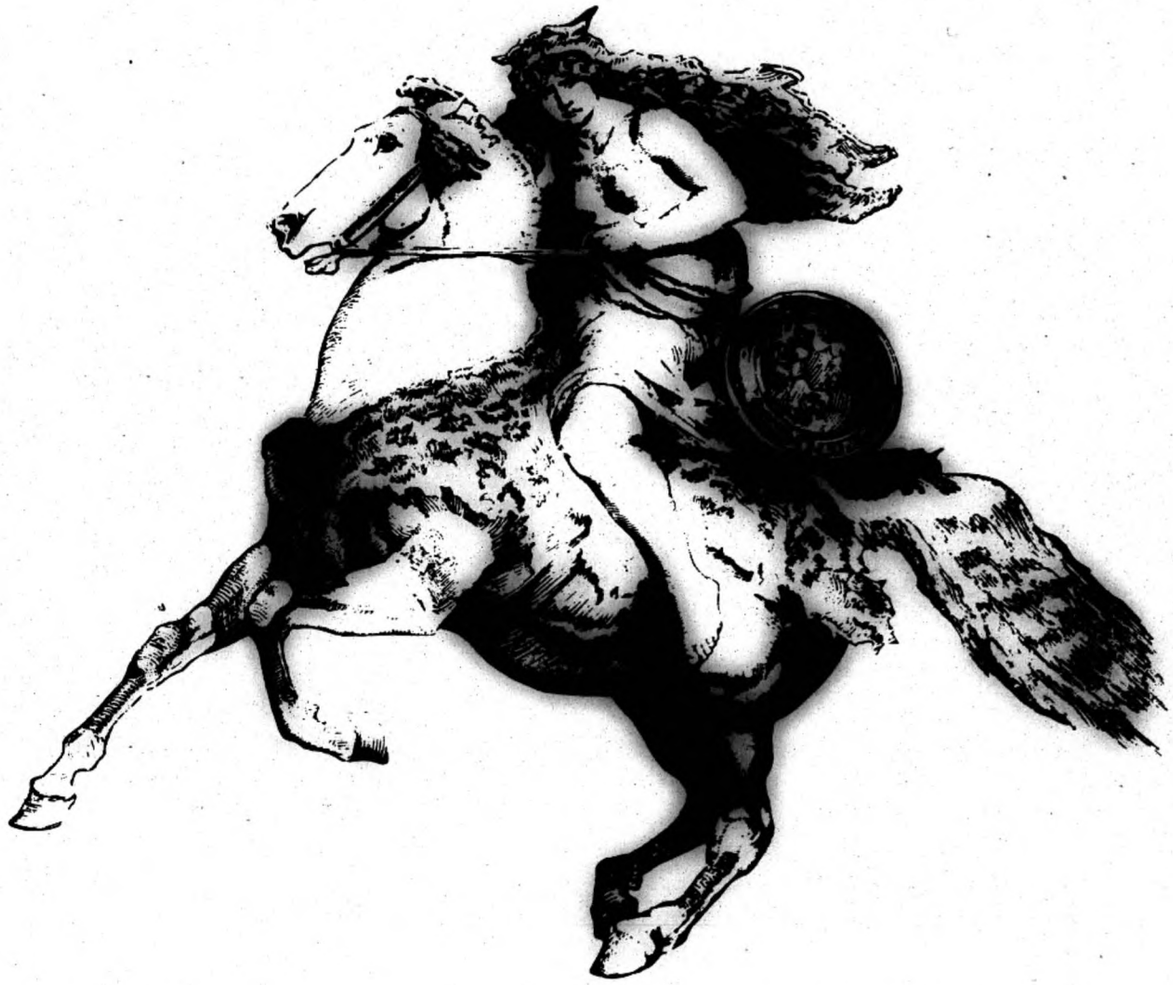
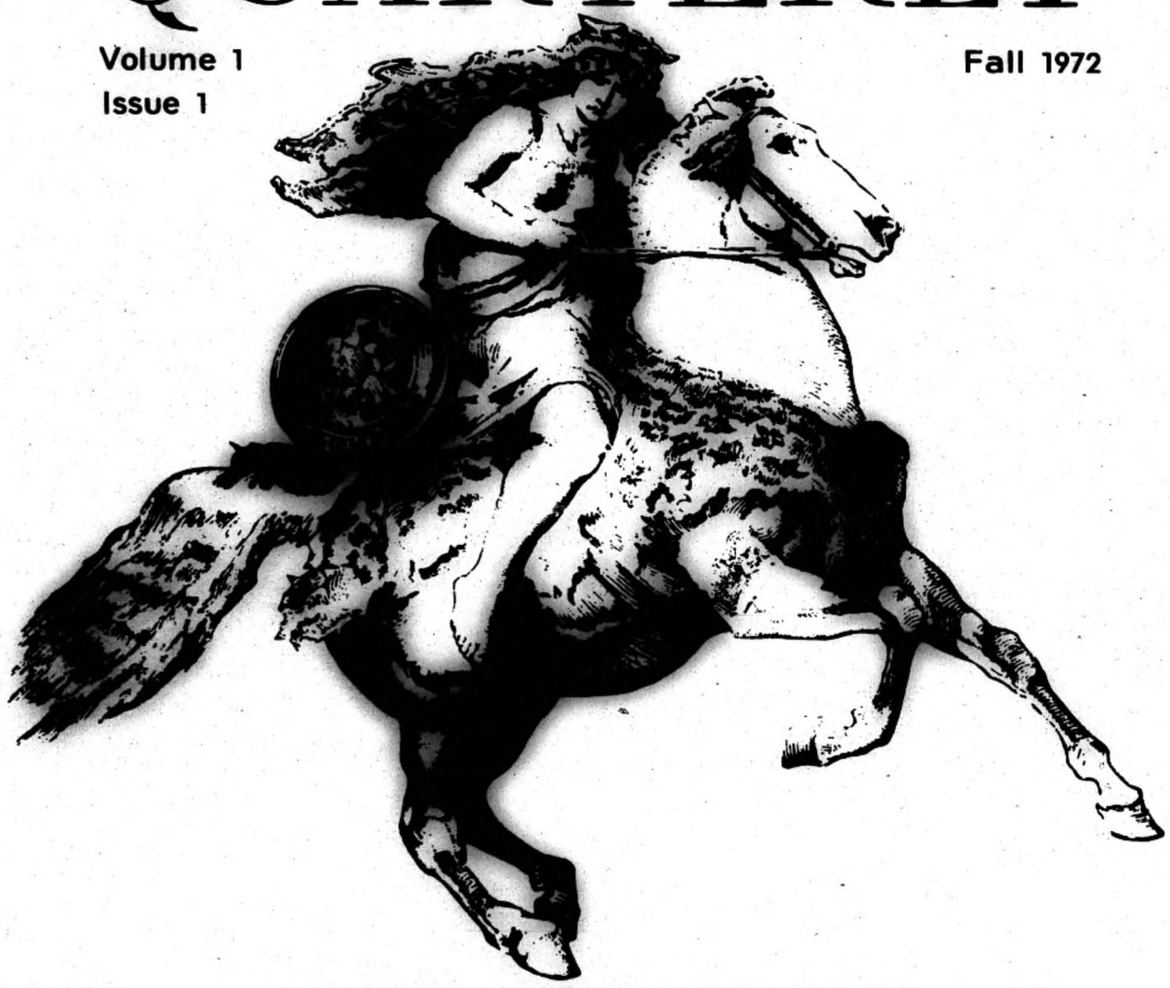


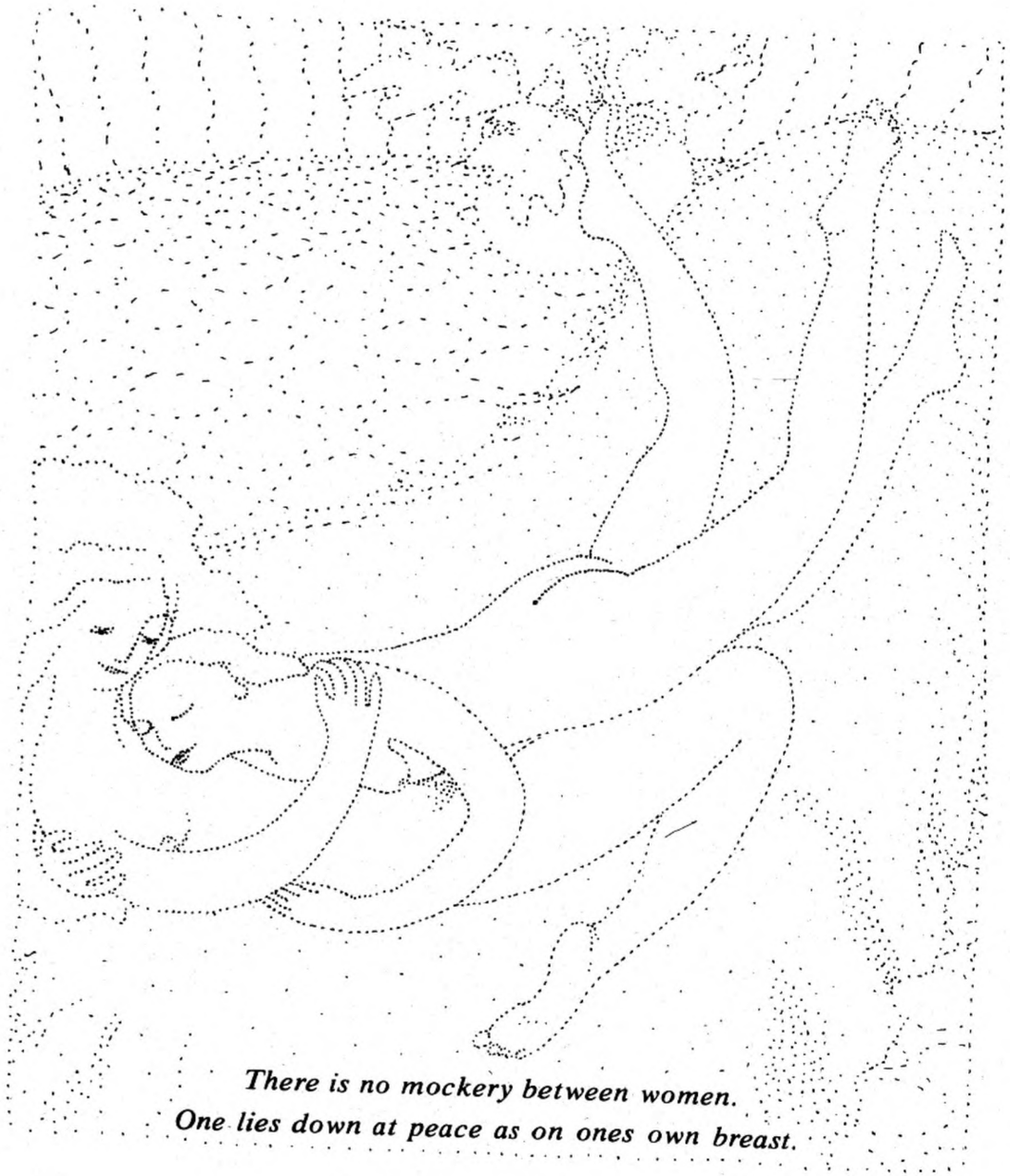
AMAZON QUARTERLY

Volume 1
Issue 1

Fall 1972



A LESBIAN-FEMINIST ARTS JOURNAL



There is no mockery between women.
One lies down at peace as on ones own breast.

AMAZON QUARTERLY

Volume 1, Fall

Editors: Gina and Laurel

Title page quote from *House of Incest* by Anais Nin.

We'd like to give special thanks to Subie Baker, Kit Bakke (typesetter), Gene Damon and *The Ladder* staff, Robin Morgan, Students of Berkeley, Inc., Bev Von Dohre, and all those with enough trust in us to subscribe sight unseen, for making this first issue of *Amazon Quarterly* a reality.

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AMAZON QUARTERLY

FRONTIERS

We want to explore through the pages of Amazon Quarterly just what might be the female sensibility in the arts. Freed from male identification, lesbians are obviously in a very good position to be the ones to cross the frontier Doris Lessing has told us the "free woman" stands at.

. . Though we define this as a lesbian-feminist magazine we aren't interested solely in stories that tell of lesbian love, the problems of being a lesbian, or the joys. Most of us who read this magazine are quite familiar with all that on the personal front. This is also a place for lesbians to explore whatever else is on their minds: it may be a theme generically of interest to lesbians or something which might interest almost anyone. The important factor is that it be in some way a launching out from all that we as women have been before into something new and uncharted. . . a voyage into the depths of your mind or a new connection you've discovered between something in your anthropology class and a book you were reading in herstory. Even science is not verboten.

. . We are calling this an arts journal in the sense that art is communication. The standard we want to maintain is not arbitrary: we simply want the best of communication from lesbians who are consciously exploring new patterns in their lives. We hope you'll help us make it even more than we can imagine.

. . Send us your fiction, poetry, plays, essays, reviews, drawings, etc. and include a stamped self-addressed envelope if you want them back. (Since we are a quarterly you should allow at least three months for their return.) Amazon Quarterly will be only as good as you help to make it. Risk something, sisters. Set down that thought you had in words. Let that story out of your desk drawer. Release the poem you've been harboring. Help us make Amazon Quarterly an exciting adventure.

. . And another way to help Amazon Quarterly is to interest a friend in a subscription (or order one yourself if you bought this issue at a bookstore). Subscriptions in the U.S. are four dollars per year. Outside the U.S. subs and plain brown wrapper subs are five dollars. The Ladder folded because of a money crisis; please, don't let herstory repeat itself.

As we go to press we are receiving more and more kind letters from around the country. The ones that touch me most are from my Southern sisters & endured my first twenty-one years there. May you have the courage to change it —

Laurel

by LAUREL

CONVERSATION

As I look back on my life I see that what I have desired and looked for more than anything else is good conversation. I have not had many. Only a handful, and those are indelible memories now.

In search of good conversation I emerged from the sludge of Southern small town ignorance and made my way to a university. I did not find it there. I stayed on for graduate school thinking surely this was another level of seriousness, a place where others would have the same hunger as I. I did not find it there.

Finally, I decided I must leave the South to find what I wanted. I came to Berkeley four years ago. I have found it occasionally, but still I am in contact at this moment with only a very few people who have any interest in conversation.

In the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries before the Romantic idealization of the inarticulate set (when in order to be "felt" something need necessarily be inexpressible), people used to have conversations. Yes, the rich, the leisure class—but what other art form is so accessible to the mass of humankind? It requires no material, no equipment—nothing besides two partakers (or more) and in this day and age the absence of television.

Sometimes it's hard to envision just what people did before Marconi. They talked. And if the human race then was at least as intolerant to boredom as we are today we know that they must have taken some pains to make their talk interesting—at least as interesting as t.v. or they should have all gone mad blathering in the drawing room every night, each other's sole entertainment.

I am sure good conversation is still possible despite McLuhan, despite television, and despite the general anti-egghead sensibility which all of us in America have been nurtured on. I operate on that hope. And it is largely that hope which was behind my starting this magazine.

What in the world has all this to do with lesbians or for that matter feminism? A lot. In all my endeavors to find conversation, until the last three years, I looked only to men—unconsciously of course—but most definitely I supposed them more interested in such things than women. A fatal assumption on my part because as I have come to define conversation it is all but impossible between a man and a woman—that is be-

by LINNEA DUE

Beka Lundberg came to Sarah Lawrence with a ready-made reputation. She was a poet; she'd already published poems in four magazines by the time she was eighteen. She was also a thief, though that might be putting it a little strongly. She just kept on getting caught (and laughing), while all the rest of us managed to shoplift with impunity. I asked one of the graduates of her Very Proper School for Young Ladies, if Beka had more than just anticipated her inevitable comparison with Genet. I suggested that on some dark and otherwise nameless night, little Beka, alone in the school chapel perhaps, had plotted her poems and plotted her thefts, eager to sacrifice social propriety for a leap ahead of other aspiring young writers. The graduate, disinterested in people's motives, never answered my question, but told me instead that Beka had been too drunk to walk up the aisle during the school's commencement exercises.

To me at first, Beka was no more than a tiny jab, a small irritant. No one compared me to Genet, possibly because I was careful never to be caught. I was a junior by the time she entered Sarah Lawrence with her reputation. My daily life had fallen into a routine: one day I spent studying, and that evening I'd drink from sundown til I passed out. The second day, I recovered from a blinding hangover, doing errands that weren't too taxing. I would write on the third day in this series, closeting myself in my room with Diet-Rite Colas and packs of cigarettes. The next day, I started the sequence again. It was a pattern that suited me.

I only allowed myself one luxury. My comfort was my fantasy woman lover, Mary. When I'd entered Sarah Lawrence, two years earlier, bereft of any kind of reputation, I'd meant to leave Mary back at my parents' house, curled up in my pillow, where she stayed when I wasn't around. But two months later, I gave in, and she flew out to New York and joined me in my tiny room. My room now was a little bigger, and I shared a bathroom with one girl instead of sixteen. Mary didn't care about my rise in status; all she wanted was to be with me, wherever I was. But my fantasy lover was no clinging violet. She had her own friends, and she painted brilliant hard-edge canvases in desert oranges and browns. Because she was imaginary, she was an ideal lover, there when I needed her, painting when I wanted to be alone. Childish games, I would say to myself in strong and repressive moments, but Mary would return, later that evening or the next day, and I would be comforted while I waited for her flesh and blood ebodiment to step into my life.

The morning of one of my hungover days was when I first spied this clever operator, Beka Lundberg. I was at a table in the old Oak Cafeteria, sipping coffee to perk me up, and gulping milk to calm me down, while my stomach bulged out like a tormented boil. Beka, tall and slender, her short hair a dark, curly cap, strode to the coffee machine like a gladiator about to fight. A cigarette hung from her lower lip, and I could see her teeth

flash in the morning gloom. I watched as she flipped the lever for black coffee. She waited impatiently for the cup to fill, like she had someplace to go, or more important things to do. I averted my eyes when she looked around for a table, but I watched her again as she crossed the dining room to join a group of freshmen. She walked like a panther, her weight controlled and forward, her shoulders back. I watched her breasts move under her white tee-shirt.

My stomach brought me back to my own table, where I discovered I didn't want to be. I pushed out of my chair and climbed back to the dorm, but her strong face climbed with me, a face as rough and as supple as her body. She excited me, her teeth, her impassive eyes, her black hair, and that hard face signalling caresses. I thought I would be scared to talk to her. I was closer the next time I saw her, and I concentrated on her hands, at once rough and red and clenched, and then suddenly splayed open, saying, forgive me, it's just the way I see it, but really saying, fuck you, don't ask me to see anything any other way than I want to see it. When she exposed that pale palm skin, she grinned, self-deprecating but giving up nothing. No one could argue with her; we were all stopped by her hands and her white grin. I watched her as she walked, a jungle beast purring in an African sun, and once again when she read a poem, changing into a rock cleaved open to the fire within. I was still too scared to talk to her.

For awhile, I tried not to think of her at all, especially when alone in my room, for I might offend Mary. I had no wish to make Mary jealous. She had stuck by me through trying times, junior and senior high school, and I considered her feelings enough to suppress my rebel thoughts and schemes. In her wrath, she might magically prevent me from finding my life-long lover, my Mary in the flesh. Many women at Sarah Lawrence waited for their Prince Charmings to ride up to the gate on a white charger and carry them away. I had no such illusions about my fantasy lover: Mary was my ideal, my yardstick, but I could not simply wait passively for her to appear. So I searched for her everywhere, in all the bars, at all the mixers, in the Cafeteria, in movie theatres. A few times, I thought I saw her, but the woman would speak and break up Mary's face, or she'd move and shatter the lines of Mary's lithe smooth body. People must have known I was looking, for every once in a while, I'd get a note in my mailbox, or a Valentine's Day card under my door. I'd find out the sender, and watch her move, watch her talk, and each time, I knew I'd have to wait longer for Mary to appear. For Mary to consent to appear to me at all, I must not succumb to these brief attractions. My first woman lover had to be my last for I knew she would only come once in my lifetime.

Beka was different. She was a steamroller, not like the others, quiet and frightened, clutching their double-message notes and cards. She plummeted past my careful schemes, shoved herself into my thoughts full-blown, and for me to compare her with anyone, even my cherished image of seven years, was impossible. But she was so unlike Mary, so different, and I could see she would be tied to no one. Tired of trying not to think, I began spending less time in my room, actually going to classes, then drinking every other day, rather than every third. I sensed Beka looking at me sometimes, her grey eyes settling on my face in crowds at the auditorium, her rough-red hand almost

touching mine as a mob of us stumbled laughing through the snow.

One dark night, in the dead of winter, I stood looking through my open window at the drifts of white, and at the flakes steadily pelting down past the dark fence. It was my drinking night, and it was almost a blizzard, and the bar was a mile away. I couldn't stay in my room; Beka had smiled at me the day before, and each time I relaxed, her face and her teeth were in my mind. I could have joined my friends, I even heard them laughing down the hall, but I didn't want to be with people. I could be alone at the bar, no matter how many bodies it housed during those noisy evening hours. I cut through the parking lot, shivering in my heavy jacket, my hands pressed close to my sides. Cars hissed by me like escaping steam, and my feet squeaked and slid in the packed snow.

I pushed open the bar door, my eyes downcast, unwilling to acknowledge there were others here, outside of edging past them to the counter. A moment later, a bottle of beer in my hand, I chanced raising my head, and found myself looking directly into Beka's impassive eyes. She smiled and patted the empty seat beside her. I crossed to her booth fuzzy-headed, a shocked fish reeled in by a skillful angler. She smiled again when I sat down next to her. "You come here often?" I nodded, drinking at the same time, so I could see her out of the corner of my eye. "I'll get a pitcher," she said. "it's cheaper." Her voice was like a husky, tortured river. I stood to let her by, and then squeezed back into the corner, glad for a wall behind me.

Beka set the pitcher down and grinned at me crookedly, like Mary does when she wants something. I got wet and shivered. We drank, while she told me in a self-effacing monotone all the stories I already knew about her. I bought another pitcher and told her about the fights I'd had in junior high school. The bartender, maybe sensing something, bought our third pitcher. When it was half-gone, Beka reached under the table and clasped my hand firm between her soft, pale palms. I floated there, my teeth exposed, looking around at all the people for the first time, strong myself, secure that my hand was as powerful as hers, with hers under that table, a statement too intimate and enormous to be wasted on fools in this small-town bar.

We left and bought a bottle of cheap wine at a liquor store, drunk now and laughing, pushing each other into great hunks of snow, yelling and running and falling, yelling louder when an enraged Bronxville resident switched on her porch lights and screamed at us. It took us forever to climb the long hill back to the school, but I felt like it would never take long enough. I could see the low, dark buildings looming through the night even then, and sobering, I unscrewed the top of the wine bottle, and we drank long gulps in the snowy silence.

No one came out when we stumbled down the hall to my room: everyone had grown used to my falling. They slept through it like I slept through the screaming bad acid trips across the hall, and the sobbing of the girl next door. My room was unlocked and we stole in like burglars, suddenly quiet. I was dizzy. I crossed to the bathroom, leaving Beka by herself, and I threw cold water on my face. I rinsed out my mouth and looked up at Beka in the mirror, watching her grey eyes narrow, and the skin across her throat grow taut. I turned quickly, avoiding her question, and drank more wine while I set a stack of records on the machine. Beka shrugged off her jacket and pried her boots off. I

wished I'd worn matching socks until I saw her curling brown and yellow feet.

She lay on the bed, her arms in back of her head, as I restlessly moved around the room, hanging up my clothes, putting shoes away, shoving records back into their cases. "You want some wine?" she asked finally, her voice even huskier. Relieved, I sat down next to her on the bed and up-tilted the bottle, noticing her elbow punching into the pillow. I shivered, and she smiled at me, her tongue stained wine-red, and her teeth that glistening white. I thought: does she really want to? does she really want to?, even as she caressed my knee and rubbed her long leg against me. Grinning again, she turned from me and mumbled: "Hey, give me a backrub?" I bent over her, my hands kneading her neck, her lower arms, her back, trying to control my breathing, still wondering, does she really want to?, but growing bold enough to take the plunge anyway. When she turned over, her arms outstretched, I fell on top of her, shakey but tender, my hands suddenly under her shirt on her breasts, her hands coursing through my hair, our tongues twisting across each other. We made love so fast, it was over in a minute, and I couldn't stop smiling, I was so proud of myself. The next time, we slowed down, quiet and tender, and when we'd finished, we shared a cigarette, lying there in the dark, the snow falling softly behind our heads.

I whispered: "Was that...that your first..."

"Yes. You?" I nodded, forgetting she couldn't see, but maybe she felt my movement, because she didn't ask again.

"Let's go to sleep," she finally mumbled, half-asleep already. I felt like shouting instead, waking up everyone I knew, shouting at them that I'm me and I'm happy, running and singing and touching the tops of trees. But I didn't want to move my head from her shoulder, or take my hand from her breast, so I stayed motionless, the falling snow whispering songs to me. I hummed along with the snow until the wine overtook me, and I fell asleep.

When I woke, Beka was in the bathroom, and I cursed myself for sleeping through the sweetness of her lying next to me, for she might not crawl back into my bed and cradle me against her long body. When she stepped back into the room, she was dressed, and she splayed up those palms at my hurt face. She flipped her jacket over her shoulder and smiled at me. "You can keep the wine," she said, and then she strode out the hall door.

We sat opposite each other in a writing class all the next year, and she never spoke to me, though she grinned a lot at the blonde sophomore who read poems about cocaine in a sugary Southern accent.

As we waited for the teacher to arrive one day that winter, the blonde came up to me and allowed that didn't I feel Beka wrote poems just like a man? I said I didn't know, I had no basis for comparison, I never read poetry, because I was afraid it would wreck my style. She laughed, silver notes floating across the big round table, and said, how lovely, how romantic, what a precious, romantic thought. But, she continued, grasping me hard by the wrist, her nails digging into my skin, didn't I think that Beka was ever so handsome? I shrugged, red by now, feeling Beka's mocking slate eyes boring into my cheeks. I waited until the blonde had paced around the table and settled into her chair

before I gathered my books together and left the classroom. I walked back to my room through the snow, so numb I almost fell once.

Letting myself in with the key, I sat down on my bed and lit a cigarette, looking around at the things that were mine. A stack of notebooks resting against the wall, and the empty gin bottle on the bureau painted a grey shadow the length of the dark empty floor. Now that Mary was gone, my room always seemed grey. She had left me that winter night nearly a year ago.

MAXINE

Her eyes are butterflies

in slow flight

her cheekbones hollow

with the weariness of

the day

zephyr hands

pour milk

cut bread

feed tokens of her

life

to those who care

by BEATRICE SUSSMAN

by BARBARA FREEMAN

THE NOVEL OF THE FUTURE: EXPLORING THE INNER LIFE

Sunday morning: I finished reading *The Novel Of The Future*. It is time to start working on the article. Have written 23 pages of notes; hope they'll be useful.

Sunday night: Spent most of the day typing notes. Also, I wrote the introduction:

"*In* The Novel Of The Future, *Anais Nin writes about what's necessary for creating literature that moves: a way of being which makes words grow, happen as naturally as a dream.*

The genesis of Nin's novels and diaries are a map which charts the course of artistic development. She shares with us the evolution of her five volume, continuous novel Cities Of The Interior, *how she chooses and evokes character, sources of imagery and symbol, how, as a young writer, she 'learnt the passageways.' Her art has already shown us that a 'deeply personal relation to all things reaches far beyond the personal into the general'; now* The Novel Of The Future *illuminates* why *this is true.*

The novelist of the future is an explorer of the inner life as well as the external world. She trusts the accident, the free-association, knows that if she listens to herself, a pattern of meaning will emerge. What compels can be transformed into poetic symbol, uniting and revealing the levels of reality in which we simultaneously exist.

The artist plays with the mathematics of feeling: emotions are like discs of an abacus, rosary beads, notations of composition. Write about what you love, hate, or are possessed by, and looking for meaning will be as unnecessary as looking for the sun on a hot day."

Monday: Just read what I wrote yesterday: it sounds like I'm writing a Ph.D. thesis. Why am I articulate and emotional in person, but dead on paper? And who am I writing for—an artificial "public" which exists in an artificial imagination, or myself? What I really want to do is share what I've learned from Anais Nin.

Through you, Anais, I realize I live in a room that is split down the middle.

One half is equations, geometrical shapes, philosophical fragments, phrases, numbers. A space in which every object, every word, is endlessly revised and never good enough. I've spent years learning to belong in this space, to be comfortable here, and now I know its limits and boundaries and potential. When I write from here, I've gotten degrees and jobs and money, but the words are dead.

The other side of my room is wild with color: crimson, deep blue, purple and soft, rich textures—furs from Spain and Peru, dry golden straw, velvets, mahogany, Mexican tile. Here I weep, make love, have tantrums, laugh. And when I write, my words come as easily as breathing, and they sing and fly, but never make public and accessible another's life, dreams, flesh.

When I read *The Novel Of The Future*, this is what happens: just one page, and I put down the book, pace between the colored tile on the floor of one side of the room and the linoleum on the other, go to the bed covered with sheepskin, and there I weave tapestries, write poems, make portraits of my friends. And then go back to the other side, the public space where my bed is buried under a white cotton sheet, where I intend to write an article about your book, and I put on the mask of a philosopher who arranges consistent, logical words, fitting phrases so closely it's as if they've been knit. I compress the ideas you've written 200 pages about into a few ponderous paragraphs, when what I should be learning is how to simultaneously unite the two sides of my room. For that is what *The Novel Of The Future* is all about.

You are a woman who cares about language the way a mother might love a child. I want to share the heights and breadth of this book: make a mantra which will chant the truth of your truths—that truth is a many colored prism, that there are grey truths, turquoise, raspberry truths, of burnt-ochre also and green, as many flavors and tastes of truth as there are flowers, spices and stars. And that each has a name and home. I am learning not to be satisfied until I make language that moves from my heart, to the rivers, to clouds, into the middle of the earth, and back. Yet still I cannot write about you without writing about me.

I will not write this article unless I can create my own answers to the problems you illuminate. How can I make your ideas accessible, without using language that's public, but colorless?

Tuesday morning: Last night, I had a dream about Anais Nin. She came to my room to read what I had written. She finished reading, didn't say anything, just went to the typewriter and re-typed a page. She typed so fast it was as if her fingers were on fire; took her only a fraction of a second. Then she handed me the page, and I saw that she'd simply re-designed the paragraphs, indented them more, making the writing more powerful visually. I asked her what she thought of my ideas. She looked at me for a moment, smiled, said "Barbara, don't ask, just go ahead and write."

But I don't know where to go from here; I feel frozen, barren. If Anais Nin were here

now, with me the way she was last night in the dream, what would her advice be? Or, if I use *The Novel Of The Future* as if it were the *I Ching*, ask the question and throw the coins, pretend that what the book tells me is a hexagram?

"To write without feeling is to miss the one element which animates every line with life. Translate how you actually feel and experience my book: vitality will come from the tension between your potential and fulfillment. The reality of The Novel Of The Future *will be communicated if you describe your relationship to it.*

My book is about the difference between conventional and revolutionary writing. Don't attempt, as the traditionalist's do, to depict our relationship as a unity, complete and already formed. We are mutable, in constant process: describe us as such and trust that form will come naturally, created by meaning. Never create an artificial climax, or include a detail which isn't necessary to reveal what you feel for me. The external story is what I consider unreal.

The dichotomy you struggle with between fragmentation and wholeness is mis-perceived, stemming from the outmoded conception of artificial unity you were taught. Objectivity is not detachment, but emotional honesty and self-knowledge. The truest objectivity of all is to be able to see what others see, and feel what others feel.

You will achieve a synthesis which can include fluctuation, oscillation, reaction. The fragments will become part of an organic living structure.

The closer you keep to the emotional reality, the more alive your writing will be. There is no neat end to life, and in writing there is never a final synthesis. Climaxes in writing are new steps in awareness, new stages of growth."

Tuesday night: I had dinner with Tom tonight, and I showed him what I've been writing. He read it slowly, then said: "It just doesn't work. You're writing a letter to your mother, not an article anyone will want to publish. I—the reader—am completely excluded; this is between you and Nin, it has nothing to do with anyone else. Besides, you must use that metaphor about your room at least fifty times."

He's gone now. I'm sitting at the typewriter; my arms are shaking. I feel like my world's been torn apart. The words in my head won't stop: "You're not a writer, you can't write, stop trying, giveup, you'll never be any good, you're a failure, failure." Somehow, I must force myself to write, even if nothing but the dumbest inanities come out.

We heard you, Anais, but can't yet completely believe. Other writers say men are deliberately excluded from your novels, that Jung said everything you write about before and more lucidly, that your characters are esoteric, only extensions of yourself, and that you destroy people and relationships by using them as symbols. These critics have loud voices, and the authority of success I don't yet have, and they speak louder than you—the way all of society speaks louder than the artist—and I still listen because I haven't yet trained my ear to learn a completely different sort of hearing which speaks to me only of the language of the heart.

But I choose *you* to learn from, you and not Norman the best of the Mailers, not Roth or Updike or Tom Wolfe—the successful dead writers who describe the physiology of dying, and conclusively show how anything alive can be changed into dead forms, dying organisms, if only you look at it long enough with a dead mind and a deader heart—

because you accept all feelings as valuable, and know that the inner world is the source of raw matter which can be translated, alchemized into writing that's universal, can be shared.

If I have the confidence to believe you, it means that my feelings, doubts, unsureness, passions are the only real and honest place from which to write. That the relationships which capture my heart and energies are not of value only to me: what connects people is feeling, that the difference between life and death is not a thought.

Because, you, in your art, are public and accessible to me, I am becoming an artist. Because you use your dreams and feelings as source in a bolder, different way, because you lived with people fully, and because, finally, your experience cannot be separated from what you write, I find a source of faith to keep me from returning to and getting recognition for the kind of writing I once did easily and well. The echoes of your voice bring me back to this typewriter on a winter night, and I work, sweat, my fingers tremble, and I struggle to create a world, capture a feeling, a moment, a life. This continent I'm giving birth to is more precious to me than anything outside this room. I carry it with me wherever I go: while I am driving, at work, when I read books, see friends, I'm listening to a voice which is my own now, and speaks about a new way of hearing and a purer kind of listening. A whole new appreciation of language and the way it can be used. Now I'm trying to do things with words I've never done before, engaged in catching a new image as if I were a fisherman catching a sacred fish, and I can play with stars, fog, eclipses, illusion. All parts and places of this and any world I care to travel in are open to me: I am connected to all the rivers, streams and oceans of this earth. No longer a passive intellectual, buying, filling, retaining; I am finding the strength to use my voice, make my chants, describe the journey that consumes my blood and muscles and vision. Because I discovered and internalized your image, Anais Nin, I know that I have the power and ability to transform life, to translate all the hideous passion of being alive, and I struggle to create, from my own life and experience, a universe others can live in too.

Wednesday morning: Today, this morning, I remember these quotations from your first, third and fourth diaries.

"I am aware of being in a beautiful prison,
from which I can only escape by writing."

"Did I see enough, learn enough, love enough,
did I listen attentively, did I appreciate,
did I sustain the life?"

"We are never trapped unless we choose to be."

by ERIKA

LESBIAN/WOMAN: A REVIEW

by Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon
Glide Publications (hardcover), $7.95
Bantam Books (paperback, just issued Nov. 72), $1.95

Lesbian Woman has a message. The message is that Lesbians are people. This news will come as no surprise to the readers of *Amazon Quarterly*, but it may to the straight reading public to whom much of the book is addressed.

Lesbian Woman is the work of Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon, two women who have spent most of their adult lives as lovers working for the right of gay women simply to be themselves. As founders in 1955 of the now internationally known Daughters of Bilitis, Del and Phyllis write from their own experience. This experience and that of the many women they have known and worked with over the years add up to the richest sense of Lesbian reality to be captured so far in a nonfiction book.

The whole spectrum of concerns that touch the Lesbian are here, shown as individual women have confronted them. Del, married and a mother, discovered she was gay when she found herself more attracted to a female neighbor than to her own husband. Phyllis discovered she was gay in her mid-20's when she met and fell in love with the now divorced Del. "When we first started living together as a couple we knew practically nothing about female homosexuality. We only know that we loved each other and wanted to be together. Somehow that tagged us as Lesbians and bound us to some mysterious underground 'gay' society of which we were only barely aware."

Finding out what this new existence was all about brought Del and Phyllis up against the issues that define the commonalities of Lesbian life. Is Lesbianism a sickness or a viable alternative life style? Is it natural for Lesbian relationships to have a dominant and a subordinate partner, a butch and a femme? Is it strong or suicidal to be open with parents, co-workers, and friends? Where is the line between realistic fear of loss and a crippling paranoia?

Monogamy imitates the nuclear family of straight society. Is couplehood good? Or does monogamy need to be redefined for the Lesbian? What about the Lesbian mother? What about the church's sin-and-guilt syndrome? What about the law? And especially for today—what about the time-and-energy priority conflicts for the individual woman faced with the separate pulls of the homophile movement, the women's movement, and the various liberating movements of the Third World? Not to mention the personal and career interests she may have to sacrifice to express her convictions through *any* of these movements.

Starting DOB in the shadow of the McCarthy era, Del, Phyllis, and the other original members came together in search of their common identity as Lesbians. But conflict soon developed over the direction the organization was to take. Del and Phyllis rejected the idea that DOB should play it safe by remaining a secret Lesbian social club. Several members, fearing exposure, dropped out, and the organization evolved toward "educating the public to accept the Lesbian as an individual and eliminate the prejudice which places oppressive limitations on her life style..." It began to sponsor public forums, provide speakers, and publish educational literature on the Lesbian. Public belief that Lesbians were women with malformed sex organs, that they were super-sexed, that they were child molesters—or, on the other hand, that they were simply heterosexual women who had settled for "second best" because they couldn't get a man—these were only a few of the myths that DOB set itself to combat.

Del and Phyllis plunged into working within a predictably hostile system. Writing today, they make it clear that by now "No halfway measures will do...We want equal rights and full citizenship—be it in relation to marriage, joint income tax returns, inheritance, property, adoption of children, job opportunity, education or security clearances." *Lesbian/Woman* emerges from their continuing commitment to the goal of full and open participation for the Lesbian in the mainstream of American life.

GINA

by LAUREL

PRIAPUS PARESIS

"I'm impotent with most women. I have to trust a woman, know her as a person, you know."

It'll break a woman's heart every time. Sets up a challenge number 1 to get up the stick and number 2 appeals to her undernourished "person," heretofore unnoticed by all those crass sex-first boudoir athletes. The fact that the old bugger is 63 and his scraggly scrotum might well have trouble pumping up the stuff—well, that's not the point is it?

One of our self-made local millionaires, Mark Barton, the old devil in question, sitting now lugubriously sipping his pre-dinner drink, perched atop the very highest hill in Berkeley enjoying the view out the 18 panes of glass that enclose his living room. Already he's opened up, made me feel right at home, plunging into the heart of the matter—can't get up the stick, poor man. He spends his leisure throwing pots and has written three serious works—much too good to have ever been published—with crazy Latin names and mixed myths to appeal to the Joyce in all our natures. Especially to the young demoiselles lured into the Lion's den of accumulated literary acquaintances.

"Oh, Henry told me he wouldn't write a preface for Anais's fiction—not her best work you know—didn't want to encourage laziness in a girl with so much potential—you know."

Well, I do know. I know how you're sucking the life, the sweet youth, out of my friend Leah, and graciously giving her in exchange the use of your elegant Berkeley hills house, your gourmet foods, literary friends, and your insecure prick that needs all her attention, all Mama's love and devotion to do its best. Uh huh. Behind every great man is a woman. Leah. A young but well used thirty. Been the hard licks road with her first husband—exciting up and coming writer, alcoholic, benny-popping, maniac. Tied her down one night and had his best friend rape her. Then he sent her off to the hospital for her hysteria.

"Incoherent doctor, she's sinking fast. Talks like her erotic fantasies really happened."

Well coming from that and two months in the loony bin anything looks good. Even that wilted prick, hog jowls, and a torso like a cypress stump. Christ, he is 63 years old! What could she possibly see in him. But of course . . .

Aldous Huxley. Now there's a conversation stopper. Across the flickering candlelight shimmering over our soup I ask him coyly, hoping to bring out a lack in his attempt at cosmic consciousness, "Mark, have you ever taken acid?"

"Oh, yes, Aldous and I were taking it back in 61. Pure chemical stuff straight out of the best clinics in Europe. Not like this stuff around now you know. But of course he really preferred peyote."

Well blow me down. Ain't that nice! Anybody who trips with Aldous, boy, he's gotta be o.k. Stamp of approval, vintage 1961.

Leah looks up approvingly, "Have some more soup Mark? Did you get enough meat?"

Me too damn it.

"You, Rima, how about you?" Leah remembers to throw in.

We tell each other stories to bide the time. They all sort of start with "My parents were so fucked up they . . ." and the idea is to top the atrocity that has just gone before.

So I pull up one of my very best. When I was thirteen and deeply in love with a willowly mysterious girl—thirteen and already a passionate artist, Morgan was her name—my father found our letters . . . explicit in every detail I'm afraid. He came into my room wielding an axe and chopped to tiny bits a 6 foot miraculously life-like self-portrait she had painted for me. Then he beat me with his belt and threatened to kill me if I ever spoke to that pervert again.

Not bad. Poor me, my father could have stepped right out of Faulkner, silent dumb Southern type, given to violence and religious self-righteousness.

But lo, with a tiny bathroom parable Leah betters me in a single blow. "Last time I was home, a couple of years ago . . ." (the candles dim appropriately as she speaks) "I finally made a major breakthrough with my mother. All our childhood my sister and I weren't allowed to hang our wet underwear in the bathroom to dry. That was my mother's privilege. Her bras, and slips, panties, and nylons reigned supreme, unchallenged by the underling females' unmentionables. Her domain. Our underwear dripped into our shoes in our closets strung across under our clothes."

"Why not the clothesline?" I ask.

She pales. "Oh no, never. We were really quite orthodox and sort of rich you know. Never outside for all the neighbors to see." (Come on Leah, you're as lower class as me!)

Well, I thought, that takes it. I mean with that tiny detail she'd opened up ten or fifteen good solid neuroses, unsurpassed by a comparatively well-deserved taste for violence in my father, over his certainly understandable regrets about his daughter's being a lesbian at thirteen.

But it's Mark's turn and we wait expectantly. "Well," he begins, "as you know my aunt was Isadora Duncan . . ."

"Have some more salad Mark. "Even Leah couldn't bare another one of those. Pump

some wine through his veins. Maybe that'll soften up the rigor mortis set in thirty years ago during his involvement with the "cultured."

"But, you know all about me," he graciously picks up the hint. Of course, Mark, you're chronicled in every famous autobiography east of the Yellow River . . . "So tell me about yourself, Rima." Leah tells me you were once a Mormon."

Now we're getting somewhere. With a few crummy details he'll be able to use this somewhere in another great work. Sweet girl, Southern, a lesbian but not like the usual you know, a Mormon too. She, her old man, and her lover all baptized in the same tank one night. Not bad, converted so they could see each other night and day right under the old man's nose. Every morning seminary at five a.m. and then meetings all night and all day Saturdays and Sundays.

But then comes the gory part. The purloined letters and the bishop's inquistion. "Alright, how many of you have been touched by that girl?" And it turns out that just about the whole youth group had been doing some touching not to mention one poor boy who threw himself off a bridge over his unrequited love for the bishop.

Not bad huh Mark? How'd that sit with your friends from the fifties sitting around the Village playing poor, smoking reefers, steeping in jazz and pornopoetry? I'd be a hit you know. You drug in something different this time, not your usual disenchanted seven sister school dropout. Nope. Not a bad member of your collection sweetheart.

Leah, to bring in the warm human touch, turns to Mark: "Rima's been working for Kelly Girl to get some money."

"That's good," approves Mark the self-made god. "I sold potato-peelers door to door when I first started to write" he condoles, the unspoken point being—and look at me now. And Mark's so generous he wants to help everyone be self-made—even Leah who he only partially supports; gives her a feeling of self-sufficiency you know. She works weekends in an after hours bar down in the flatlands. Wonder if he's been so considerate of all his wives and mistresses? Wouldn't want his million to spoil them you know. Bad enough to live atop the highest hill in Berkeley in a wall to wall wrap-around-view glass mansion.

So we stretch a bit and take in some—Bay Bridge, Golden Gate, Richmond Bridge, San Mateo, Dumbarton. Christ! Now that's a view. Five bridges—the very limit. A five star view.

"There, there, and way out there . . ." Mark does the grand old tour. Bay Area at your feet. Starting with the campanile in the foreground and ending up with believe it or not an outdoor elevator in the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco. "Look you can see it going up and down." He's right of course, you can almost see the people. Here's the church and here's the steeple. Pulls on my sympathy somehow—poor old guy—like some old codger showing off his coin collection.

Just about now the doorbell rings. Enter the Lion's literati. Cocktails all around and Mark turns on four speaker Mahler. Another good ice-breaker cause of course Mark knew him when . . . and we're off.

Leonard, Missy and Doyle. Leah has tact enough not to stress that this is Leonard Steinmitz, "published author," five novels and two or three dozen short stories, nor the most important data about Missy, that she's his part time mistress, nor that Doyle, under pseudonym just published his first novel (about homosexuals in the fifties, but of

course purely fictional or so he tells his wife.)

Lovely, all writers, each hoping for some little tidbit he or she can fit in somewhere—a particularly spicy snatch of dialogue, a well-wrought anecdote—something to make the night worthwhile at least . . . unless, but well, that's not likely.

So politely to deny it they all ask me what I'm writing. And of course I trot out my shocker—a novel about lesbian love. A bit early, maybe Mark was hoping to save it til later, but everybody's put away a couple by now. So we get right to the core of it.

"Autobiographical?" asks Doyle hoping to nail me in a word.

"Of course, isn't yours?" Touche!

He lit a cigarette and leveled his gaze at me slowly. "Well not really. I'm far too busy selling real estate to live a double life."

Mmmm—and who would ever suspect that cute little lightning fingered Kelly Girl typist?

Leah jumps in as I let Doyle's line curl through the room on the smoke rings. "Rima's quite outspokenly lesbian Doyle, by choice apparently, converted at twenty-four. Except for an early adolescent affair she's been with men for the most part."

Leonard flashes a smile. "Might even appeal to a publisher right now . . . you picked the right time my girl."

Yup, my boy, no time like the present.

"Latest Kinsey study, done right here in the Bay Area a couple of years ago, shows about 50 percent of women and about 70 percent of men have tried it," Mark throws in debonairly.

"But undercover of course. How brave you are" Missy smiles across the room. "Really it would be nice if everyone were so open."

"Your last story dealt with it too didn't it Leah?" Leonard has it by the tail now. "How about you? Autobiographical?" Chuckles all around—all except Mark.

"Well yes, Leonard, I have some fantasies, but it's a long story . . ." She trails off as she heads toward the kitchen to get the food.

Doyle perks up and picks up the sagging parley: "But where did you find Rima, Mark?" A little blurred, not clear on the vowels, but he's put down 3 or 4 stiff ones by now."

Mark laughs, "I don't know, writers attract I guess."

"Now Mark, don't take the credit. I met Rima in a writer's group," Leah puts in from the kitchen.

"All women Leonard—how's that strike you?" Mark rejoins.

"Goddamn, afraid the men will put the make on you huh? Might be right. Met Missy at a writers group couple years ago . . . she hasn't written two words since."

Laughter all around as Leah returns with a banquet of little toothpick-speared delights.

"But really, Leonard, Rima might be very right in getting into this thing now, just in time to ride the tide with this women's liberation stuff."—Good old Mark—how considerate!

"Publisher told me the other day that this is going to be bigger than the Black Movement. Imagine a whole slew of lesbians—the Lesbian School—a rebirth for the novel—

shot in the arm for worn out sex plots." Mark waxes eloquent, himself riding the tide of half a dozen martinis.

"How do you mean?" Doyle pipes up. "S'not so different, just one thing left out is all."

Missy giggles. "Really Doyle, how would you know?"

"Can't argue with that," he croons spearing a shiny pearl onion.

Oops, another lag—but Leah's too far gone to bridge the gap. Now's my chance.

"What say we liven things up a bit.Your sauna working Mark?" I toss in with a grin. He nods. "Great—let's roast ourselves good and then take a dip in the old whirlpool bath. Who's game?"

Mission accomplished. The men back out. "Wait a bit I'll be in later, etc. etc." "Three's all can fit in there comfortably—you girls go ahead." General agreement all around. That grand old cliche ladies first still works. And we're off, Leah and Missy and me, for all the world like teenagers at a slumber party, giggly and bleary-eyed.

Not to spoil the analogy I decide that what we need is a little fun. "Hey Missy—what say we skip the sauna and just scoot around to the patio and catch what the men have to say about us."

"Good idea, we might learn something," Missy rather thickly responds dropping what's left of her drink down her blouse.

"O.k. but we've got to do this right" Leah commands shuttling the troops into the dressing room. "Put on a robe" she orders "so it will look like we've been in the sauna."

Wonder what they're thinking to let their women run off with a lesbian—let's find out.

We crawl out into the night—light everywhere—city below and stars above. Mark's elysium. Crouched over on all fours we thread our way through the ferns and giant snake plants remembering, remembering our lesson from *Deerslayer*—think Indian and watch out for dried twigs. What a sight! Three terry bedecked white fannys proceeding through the jungle in the moonlight.

Wafts of conversation begin to drift through the foliage and we find a peep hole. "Christ! Never occurred to me. Not here for god's sake..."

"Oh I don't know.Might be kind of exciting—especially if we could watch." Doyle, the kinky bastard, getting drunker by the second.

But Leonard is still cool and sophisticated. "Really it wouldn't bother me at all, if that's what Missy wants. I don't have time these days to really satisfy her. Little on the side wouldn't hurt . . . not much to worry about . . . she'd get tired of it soon enough."

"I don't know how you can say that Leonard, Leah's been writing this lesbian stuff for months and Missy's been devouring it hot off the typewriter. If I didn't know better I'd say something's up between them. Let alone Rima who I know is hot for the spoils. Christ, how'd you like to see them run off with young Sappho. Might not be so amusing you know."

"Oh come on Mark, Leah's not going anywhere. Just a fad—it'll pass. Doyle's right, may as well enjoy it. Sure a lot better than running around with men."

"That's old stuff for Leah. You know what she says the other day: 'Well at least I can't get pregnant.' That out of a thirty year old woman! As if for sure that makes it

o.k. I should just keep her side of the bed warm and wait 'til she's had her thrills and comes dragging home."

Doyle cautiously stumbles over to the bar for another drink. "You guys crack me up. Best porno movies on Broadway got two cute chicks feeling each other up. Gets me hot as hell. Christ, here's your chance."

"Yea, right Doyle," croaks Mark, "but you forget we haven't been invited. Those three could be in there acting out scenes from Satyricon while we're in here getting more incapacitated every minute."

Poor Mark, worried about that again. Like heading into battle with a dull sword.

"Goddamn it. I tell you we ought to do something about this" he yells. "Those girls don't know what they're getting into. That Rima—she'll fight dirty. Cheap little bitch. Goddamn it I wouldn't take this from a man. She acts like a man goddamn it she's gonna get treated like one."

We can almost see Doyle and Leonard lighting up with the prospects of a good scene. Drunk as they are, they'll be lucky to remember it though.

"Well shit," Doyle says, "'stead of talkin' why don't we go have a look."

Doyle and Leonard reach for the bottle to take with them, collide, and make a speedy descent back onto the couch. "It seems, it uh" Leonard stammers "looks like we've had a bit to drink."

Mark grasps the arms of his chair and gives it a try. Plop! He just sits there lead-bottomed, looking surprised.

We crack up hushing each other and then dissolve into more spasms of laughter. Missy's still drunk enough to do a really good imitation of Mark. She squares her shoulders, spreads her feet for a wider girth, lowers her head so her eyes peer out from under her eyebrows and growls "Gonna get em! Goddamn it! Gonna get them perverts!" Then she staggers and falls against the wall convulsed with laughter.

Time to steer the troops inside before we're discovered. Leah and I grab Missy by the elbows and grope our way back through the bushes to the sauna room. Clothes on, soberer, we march back into the house to survey the damage.

I tell you it's a disappointment. What kind of ending can I make out of this? They're too stewed to even put up a good fight. Leonard and Doyle a clump in the middle of the couch and Mark a zombie staring dazedly out the windows muttering quietly to himself. My only worry that Leah's going to want to mother them. It's a weakness, the old Jewish mother bit, but fortunately Mark rouses himself enough to kill her pity.

"Leah. . . Leah goddamn it!" He grinds his fists into his eyes straightening out the picture, (Oops that wasn't Leah) he finds her finally, "goddamn it what do you think you're doing?"

It's a classic switch, I swear. Leah puts on her sweet wounded bunny rabbit voice (even a little Southern accent thrown in) lowers her eyes and cocks her head to one side and coos "Mark darling, us girls are just going over to Rima's for a minute. Won't be long sugar. Maybe you better help Doyle and Leonard into the guest room."

Left him there with his mouth hanging open staring out at his five star view. Poor old codger. Not even a consolation prize Mark old boy. I got a copyright on this one.

GINA

by JUDY GRAHN

A GEOLOGY LESSON

Here, the sea strains to climb up on the land

and the wind blows dust in a single direction.

The trees bend themselves all one way

and volcanoes explode often.

Why is this? Many years back

a woman of strong purpose

passed through this section

and everything else tried to follow.

AT HOME IN SAN JOSE JUDY LINHARES

by PEGGY ALLEGRO

THE STRANGE AND THE FAMILIAR:

THE EVOLUTIONARY POTENTIAL OF LESBIANISM

The Strange

I've been reading a book on witchcraft which begins with this paragraph:

"In the circle of firelight which we are pleased to call an enlightened, scientific civilization, we usually feel secure in the knowledge that most of our worst childhood terrors and nightmares were merely fantasy. But if and when the firelight happens to dim, at those times when the **unknown** *presses hard against us, in the presence of death or insanity or insurmountable calamity...we once again experience the old childhood terrors."*

Witchcraft is a study of these "outer regions of night" of which most people are so afraid. I like this passage because it describes with such evocative power, the human image of the **unknown** or **strange**.

Ability to deal with the **strange** (the unknown, the new) is an important faculty for a species to develop—it is essential to evolutionary potential. The dinosaurs are a classic example. When the Ice Age came they completely failed to deal with their changed environment, to adapt to new conditions—or respond to the new information about changing conditions that must have been all around them. In an evolutionary sense, ability to deal with the strange is ability to adapt. Our own species' development of this faculty has been severely thwarted by the male supremacist social organization we acquired thousands of years ago.

Our ability to adapt to the **strange** determines how successfully we can adapt to a changing environment. This capacity involves the ability to see the **strange** (to see new information and changing conditions) and the ability to make the **strange** familiar—to assimilate the new experience (and information) into our organism.

A cycle of Familiar——Strange
and Strange——Familiar

Good adaptation is creative responsiveness to the environment. So it is not surprising that the Familiar-Strange, Strange-Familiar cycle is a good description of creative process in any area.

The basic project of the artist is to reveal a new angle that makes everything look different.

"To make the familiar strange is to distort, invert or transpose the everyday ways of looking and responding which render the world a secure and familiar place. This pursuit of strangeness is not a blase's search for the bizarre and out-of-the-way. It is the conscious attempt to achieve a new look at the same old world, people, ideas, feelings and things." **[Synectics]**

Synectics contains specific techniques through which a person can attempt to invert their experience, see with the innocent eye and thus increase creative capacity.

The psychedelic movement was essentially a search for this experience. However most people are not consciously searching for this experience through tripping or practicing **Synectics** techniques etc. It is an experience that the majority shies away from. The organization of most people's lives seems designed to block out the **strange**. But no one can block it out forever. No matter how much you shut yourself off from the changing environment eventually you are brought face to face with it. Example: You are middle aged and conservative and your daughter becomes a hippy or a lesbian or both. And then you freak out—since you have not been in practice of dealing with the **strange**, you put out energy to maintain the familiar at any cost. As you become more and more rigid and conservative, you are less and less able to cope with change or the **strange**. This syndrome turns cultural forms into rigid institutions which oppress rather than inspire people.

It is important for people to see the **strange**—that is, seeing how things change. The other side of the process, making the **strange** familiar, is equally important. What is called a "freakout" is getting stranded in the **strange**, being unable to convert the **strange** back into the familiar.

After I graduated from high school, I spent about a year in a community where people were heavily into tripping—the hetero freak scene. This community really had its own culture—an accumulation of "pieces of wisdom" and anecdotes most of which were about the experience of tripping—on acid, mescaline, psilocybin etc. One of the basic ideas the group shared was that tripping involved breaking down the structures and grids through which we "pigeonhole" experience—bringing you into contact with the "raw material" of your experience——raw sensory energy before it is shaped and patterned by the mind...the **strange**.I no longer, as in my earlier psychedelic days, place such a value on the experience of the **strange** (experience with grids suspended) in itself. As we'll see later this was a very male value.

This experience must always be balanced by making the **strange** familiar, that is, the point is not to

have no grids at all but to have grids that are uniquely yours and which are extremely flexible. The grids are **tools**—devices by which we make the **strange** familiar. What we call **mind** is a principal one of these tools. **Synectics** says: "The mind compares the given strangeness with data previously known and in terms of these data converts the strangeness into familiarity." This process is analogous to physical digestion, in which the **strange**—food intake—is absorbed into the cells of the organism so they can multiply (grow).

Another way to describe making the **strange** familiar is "bringing it down to earth"—or giving it a form, organizing it. The basic political question in any situation is—who determines how we incorporate the **strange**? And how do they do it?

Suggestion, Myth Perception, Archetypes

Our psychic development and socialization is essentially a process of being molded by **suggestion**. Commonly thought of as restricted to hypnotic trance—**suggestion** is, in fact, a powerful influence on the human psyche at all times. As a matter of fact, unless we give ourselves strong suggestions, we end up being controlled and molded by the strongest suggestions made to us—from "society" or from specific people. This process continues throughout our entire lives. Suggestions can determine how we incorporate the strange. The most effective suggestions are indirect.

Deep in the human psyche there is a being who perceives mythologically. (Others may be more comfortable to see this being as a "layer.") This being also generates myth. Getting in touch with this mythical-symbolic level though dope or insanity is a very intense experience. We are generally unconscious of how much this layer affects us.

The most powerful kind of suggestion is a mythical image (or archetype). According to Levi-Strauss, myth is essentially indirect. The mythological cycles of various cultures that he studied seemed trivial at face value. So he postulated that behind the manifest sense of the stories, there must be another non-sense—a message in code. He also says that the myth is a medium through which the collectivity of the senior members of a society unconsciously transmit to the junior members a basic message. The basic message from the collectivity of elders is about the rules of each person's **role**. First—the sex role, and then the kinship relations (roles such as daughter, wife, mother, aunt etc.) The roles in the kinship network of a society determine the **character archetypes**—the collective images of its universal roles.

The archetypal characters in our culture (or the basic structure of kinship relations) would include: Male, Female, Father, Mother, Son, Daughter, Child, Aunt, Uncle, Sister, Brother, Cousin, etc.

The archetype is the most general version on the role. For instance, the archetypal Mother is an image based on the experience of Mother common to the greatest number of people. (If we took a random sample of maybe 1000 people from our culture and found the elements in each's experience of Mother held in common, we would have a fairly good picture of what the archetype of Mother is in this culture.) Knowledge of the rules that go into playing your set of roles (your masks) is transferred mythically (through messages in code, suggestion) from generation to generation. This process is unconscious for the most part (the parts that are conscious are like the top of an iceberg) and a lot of the communication is on a non-verbal level.

And there are multiple layers of roles—some masks are more generalized, some more specific. My image of the process is of a slot machine with a hundred panels instead of the usual three. When the machine stops spinning, you get a particular line-up of panels—each is a mask. The most general masks are those universal in human culture, then those of your specific culture, then those of your subculture. The most specific are the masks unique to your individual family. (As in R.D. Laing's description of how parents will unconsciously mold a child to be like a specific uncle or grandparent).

It is in terms of archetypes that Mother represents the familiar and that Father represents the

strange and that Father is the authoritarian figure in the family. Many specific families may deviate from the norm with the personal Father embodying some of the Mother archetype and vice versa. In neurosis, these early archetypal patterns continue to determine an individual's experience-behavior. (And remember, human civilization is neurotic.) A measure of health is how much you relate to individual personalities vs. archetypes. The most neurotic live completely in a world of archetypes.

"Normal" Socialization — Archetypal Process

The first experience all of us had was living inside a womb where we felt completely secure and where our surroundings were perfectly familiar. Birth is our first exposure to the strange—we find ourselves expelled into a new and unfamiliar realm. Yet there is one familiar landmark—the body of our Mother—when held in Mother's arms hearing her heartbeat or sucking at her breasts, we are able to experience a return to the familiarity we knew before birth. But Mother leaves us sometimes and we find ourselves there—amidst the strange. The most striking contrast in our early lives is the difference in our experience when things seem familiar and things seem strange. And soon this contrast is seen to coincide with another contrast—when Mother is with me and when Mother is not with me.

Such a sensitive and crucial spot in the child's development—her-his ability to face the world as an autonomous whole being will be dependent on a free flow of creative powers into dealing with this basic problem—"here I am, alone in the strange." But as we shall see, the requirements of a society organized around a male supremacist division of labor between the sexes work to brutally thwart time and again the child's (particularly the little girl's) attempt to deal with this problem creatively. The kinds of "thwartment" the little girl and the little boy experience are quite different and the little girl's is both more complicated and more brutal.

Children do try to develop tools to deal with the experience of the strange. Freud tells the story of a little boy he observed playing with a toy. First the boy would look at the toy and exclaim "Here it is!" Then he would hide it from himself and say "Now it's gone!" He is inventing a game through which he gives himself a sense of control over the absence and presence of the toy (which is a substitute for his Mother). Lacan, a contemporary psychoanalytic thinker, considers this a crucial phase in child development (for both male and female children)—and universal in our culture. It is the attempt of the child to assert itself as subject.

In this early stage, when the child's universe consists only of self and Mother (with chief variable being her presence and absence) the strange is not terrifying but something about which the child is basically curious. But the child soon picks up fear of the strange—from Mother who fears it (and we will see why soon) and also because Mother's absence (the strange) is soon connected with Father. He is the third person to enter the child's universe—Mother is absent when she is with him.

The child's basic reaction to the Father is fear. Father is a violator. He violates the primacy of the Child-Mother relationship (from the point of view of the child) and since he dominates Mother and child (the situation being described is within the context of our male supremacist culture) he is a violator of her personhood and that of the child as well. Because the child fears the Father both as a rival for Mother and as a dominating force over itself (and later the one who disciplines it into the oppressive rules of society) and because Mother is afraid of the strange, the child equates Father and the strange—and grows up terrified of the strange.

This terror is quite effective in shattering the child's earlier strength and curiousity about the strange—the love of exploration, the creativity (of course the complete suppression of these facilities is not really accomplished until the late teens but this is where it is begun). The more frightened the child is of the strange, the more desperately it clings to Mother and is terrified of her absence. And the more is at stake in the child's rivalry with Father.

The Oedipal stage of development is the story of this rivalry. It is within this early dynamic in

socialization that the little girl is taught her basic psychic structure appropriate to her role and the boy the one appropriate to his. Both are frightened of the strange and Father and must be pried away from clinging on to the Mother—and impelled to admit Father into their universes. Each must learn the heterosexual role appropriate to her-his sex.

The basic difference:

The boy, in preparation for his adult role, must overcome his fear of the strange—from this point on he is encouraged to deal with the strange (to become like Father), to deal with the public realm—ultimately as an explorer . To support him in this project he is given the security that when he grows up he will have a wife (just as Father has Mother) to fuck and to maintain the familiar for him like Mama. The promise of a woman of his own in the future enables most boys to come to terms with their rivalry with Father.

When the little girl is pried away from Mama, she is pried away for good. The society does not have a wife waiting for her in adulthood. Thus her rivalry with Father has a far more humiliating outcome than the "normal" little boy's. In addition, she is continually discouraged from dealing with the strange (because her adult role will be to have a man face the strange for her). Thus her desperate clinging onto Mother is of a greater intensity than the little boy's. And to top it all off, to fulfill her adult heterosexual role she will have to transfer her primary physical and emotional attachment from Mama onto someone on the model of her rival and tormentor—Daddy. She is forced into a pattern of eroticizing her oppressor.

Neither sex can really deal with the strange. The man is not afraid of exploring it, but is underdeveloped in his capacity to transmute it back to the familiar. He depends on women for that. The woman is terrified of the strange as well as coerced into "loving" it and men on the Daddy-model. Her role is to maintain the familiar—and to transform the strange (which she is in contact with only through the mediation of her men) into the familiar for men. The familiar-strange, strange-familiar process is split into a sexual devision of labor. Given the institution of the family, and a male supremacist social structure, this whole process is self-perpetuating from generation to generation.

The Material Base

In male supremacist society, the basic economic role of women is to "have children and turn things into people privately at home." (Rubin, Gorlick, and Anderson) The basic economic role of men is to "publicly apply their labor to the natural and social world and in consuming objects produced by mothers, sisters and wives, producing things which have to be connected again through household labor into people."

There are two distinct economic realms in this society—the male public realm and the female private realm.

The private realm=the Familiar
The public realm=the Strange

In adulthood, women are essentially confined to the private realm. If she is to fulfill the primary female economic role under male supremacy, to be responsible for the feeding and maintenance of a man and the children she bears, a woman must be effectively confined to this sphere. The confinement is actually built into the structure of her personality in childhood. (She has been made terrified of the strange and incapable of dealing with it directly). In addition, men have made the public realm a brutal place—so she has even more immediate reason to stay within the protection of the private realm. Women are confined to the familiar while men explore the strange and have the women convert the strange back into the familiar for them.

The economic relation between the male public sphere and the female private sphere is always defined as reciprocal, but is, in fact, exploitative of women.

This economic relationship between men and women is exploitative (though always socially defined as reciprocal) in almost exactly the same way as the relationship between the proletarian and the capitalist in our society though the **measures** *are totally different. That is to say that both the women in the household and the workers in the factory produce the use value needed to (re)produce their own existence and then in addition produce a surplus—but in both cases the surplus is not directly realizable at all by its producer. The surplus labor of the worker in the form of commodities is realizable to the capitalist when it can be converted into money on the market, while the worker is paid money enough to buy the commodities necessary (for his wife) to (re)produce his existence (and to produce children). The surplus labor of the woman is embodied in the very lives and well being of her sons, brothers, husbands, daughters etc. and is realizable in the case of daughters in labor for other men and in the case of men, in labor time socially applied, usually outside the home.*

The time men do not have to spend maintaining their own existence (i.e.—bringing things down to earth, maintaining the familiar) is spent in social labor, in ritual, in travelling (i.e.—exploring the Strange, in the public realm). The men then have an enormous opportunity to organize themselves to **produce the social world** *by realizing the surplus private labor of their women."* **[Rubin]**

Separateness, Subjectivity, Language

Language is the key to dealing with becoming separate, to learning how to deal with the strange. Even if people weren't being fucked over through the Oedipal triangle, we would still have to resolve being separated from our mothers. (But the reason we are so frightened is that separation from Mother for us was equivalent to brutalization by the strange).

The way we resolve separation is by acquiring subjectivity. And from the experience of subjectivity (the appropriation of language) we are able to reach out to others and experience a unity like the one we knew before being separated from Mother. But unlike it too, the new unity is a dialectic of separation and unity.

The unity I can achieve in social relations through language, if it is to be healthy, never means suppression of my separation—my existence as an autonomous subject.

Most people are so desperate in their search for unity that they try to return to the pre-ego unity. Dissolving one's ego in social relations (into a "group")= clinging to the group= clinging to form= clinging to Mother. This involves being an object rather than a subject. The false unity achieved by dissolving, losing your subjectivity, involves a particular relation between self and language—i.e. failure to appropriate language from the other for yourself (and since Daddy is the other, this is a political seizure).

Most people in this society are objects. We must struggle to become subjects, to deal with the strange directly. In the basic socialization model I outlined before, I described this division as between men and women, i.e. that men deal with the strange directly and women deal with the strange through men (each woman does it through her man). The system is actually more complex than this. Women deal with the strange only through their men, but this information, for most women, is closer to being tenth hand than second hand. Relationships to the strange are like hand-me-down clothes in a big family.

Most men relate to the strange through the mediation of their superiors on the male hierarchy. The higher a man's position on the hierarchy, the more of an "individual" he is—the more he actually deals with the strange directly—although all but a few men have the security of knowing there is somebody "above" them.

Kings and popes etc. don't. This is why the predicaments they get into are depicted in the majority of drama and literature. These are the predicaments of subjectivity (i.e. in Shakespeare, Greek drama)—and the people on the top of the hierarchy are the main group of people who have been subjects throughout human history (the other group is deviants). And men have more subjectivity than

women.

Men have more subjectivity than women, but their kind of subjectivity is inextricably wound up with hierarchies of authority. In the male system, you are more a subject, more an individual the higher you are on the hierarchy. Those who are individuals mediate between all those below them and the strange, and thus mediation insures that they remain in power over those below them.

No more mediators! We women must reject the mediation of a man between ourselves and the strange.

We are not caught in the hierarchical model of subjectivity as men are. We have not had much of a chance to be subjects at all—because our culture (female identity) is so underdeveloped, because our energy has been exploited into building male culture and male identity. But this means we can leapfrog ahead of male-identified men and develop a subjectivity distinct from the male model.

Three modes of experience: 1. Being an object (shielded and insulated from the strange through mediators, "authorities"); 2. being a subject, male model (dealing with the strange directly—how far determined by position in male hierarchy—having power because you mediate between the strange and those men lower than you on the hierarchy and all women); 3. becoming a subject, new female model (nobody mediates between you and the strange, and your social relations are with others who face the strange directly. Neither mediator nor mediated for.

Public Language — Private Language

The new form of subjectivity described involves **everyone being a subject.** Every person is a center. There is no one center. (Just as every point is the center of the universe.) Thus there is no one set of grids (language) that is authoritative—everyone must create their own grids through which they will perceive the strange.

Some sets of categories (languages) are healthier than others. (What I'm saying is not that everything is relative—there are certain standards for sanity.) However, my definition of health is radically different from the prevailing one.

A grid-language is healthy when it is a good tool for creativity—when it is flexible, open to the strange. Having grids imposed on you is neurotic. Imposing your grids on others is neurotic.

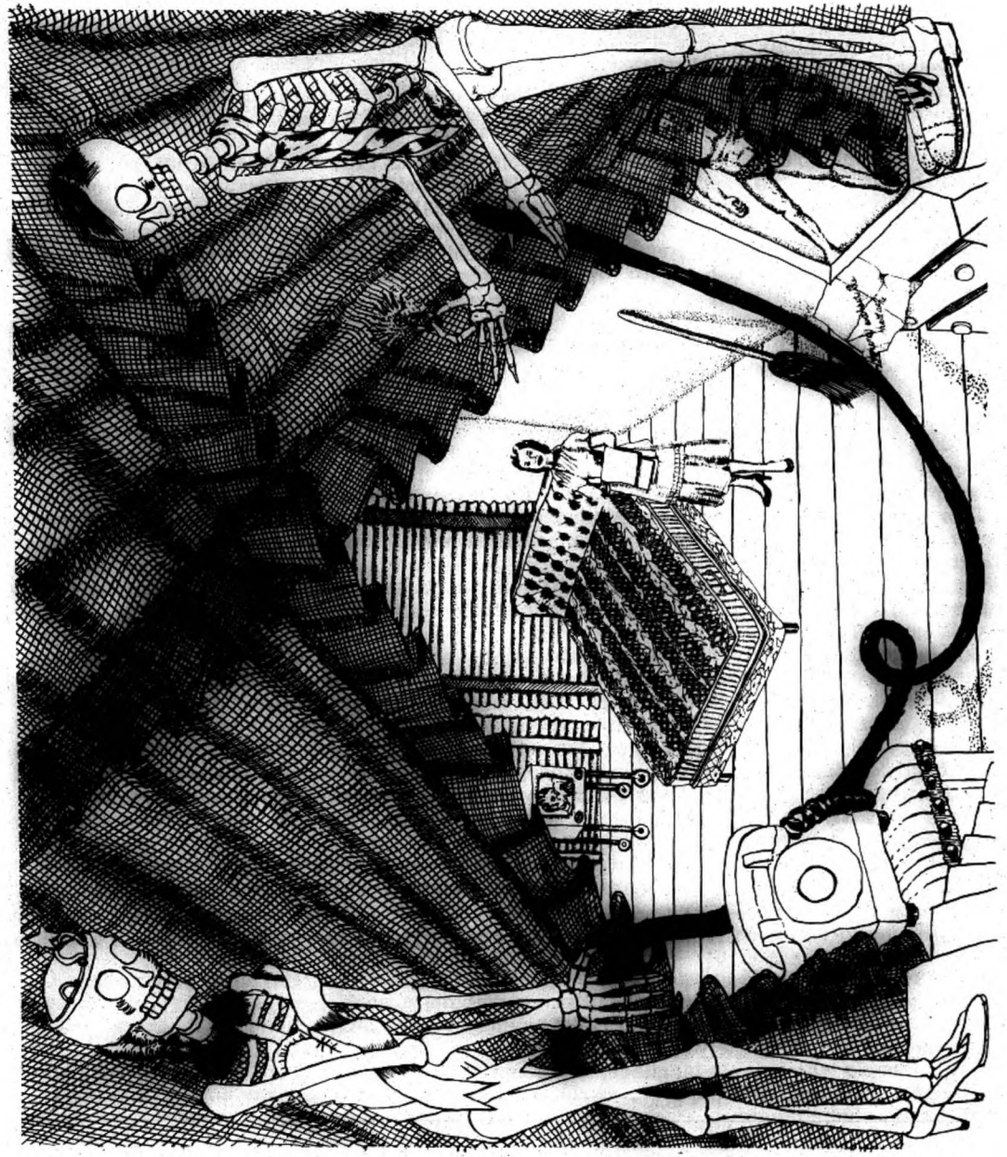
As children, before our creativity is suppressed, we generate our own language (create our own grids). At a certain point the public language (in the family—the language of the Father) is imposed on the child and the child has to give up its "private language." (Which could have become social if the child had been allowed to develop its own language—i.e. when two individuals who are dealing with the strange directly meet each other, if they want to communicate, they can share their "private" languages. They they begin to generate language together. This is communication without one person mediating between the other and the strange.)

A contemporary psychoanalyst and linguist, Jacques Lacan, sees the Oedipal Father as the public language. In his system, the neurotic is someone with a private language. Successful "adjustment" means accepting the public language—vicarious dealing with the strange.

But Daddy is the most neurotic of all!

Although people who have private languages are usually neurotic, I believe that what psychoanalysis sees as "private language" is a basically healthy function. Having a private language means that you haven't completely given up dealing with the strange directly. You have never really accepted Daddy (and the public language). Not having a private language means that your dealings with the strange are completely vicarious.

However, people with private languages are generally very paranoid and defensive. They know that they are deviating from the group norm—that their private languages may at any point be crushed by the public language. Particularly when they are isolated, they get defensive towards public language. They suffer the continual threat that communicating with others will dissolve them—that the lure of the group will destroy their sense of separateness.



ROMANCE WITHOUT THE HEARTACHE JUDY LINHARES

But what deviants (people with private languages) really need is not psychiatrists, but other deviants with whom they can form a group...a group in which public language grows out of a synthesis of private languages vs. the suppression of private languages.

The Authoritarian Love Object

Every culture has a unique set of archetypal characters and dramas (the basic slots in the kinship network). Some archetypes are universal in the history of human culture. I have been studying the archetypes of power—the evil Father archetype (Daddy) and the evil Mother archetype (black widow) which are universal in male supremacist culture. The basic archetypal drama of power is Father beating Child (although the overall story is different for male and female children), of strong egos dominating weaker egos.

Ego strength=ability to deal directly with the strange. The stronger deal with the strange more directly than the weaker. The weaker introject the words of the stronger. To introject is to swallow down chunks of experience without digesting them yourself (i.e.—vicarious dealing with the strange). The introject dominates you, sucks your energy and blocks your growth. Egos grow like bodies—through digestion of the food made available—experience-information. The introject is a result of hampered digestion. When you are burdened with introjects, your ego remains weak (in the infantile stage); it does not get the energy it needs to grow.

Here is a description of the introjection process from **Gestalt Therapy**:

"When one looks upon the introject as an item of 'unfinished business' its genesis is readily traced to a situation of **interrupted excitement**. *Every introject is the precipitate of a conflict given up before it was resolved. One of the contestants, usually the impulse to act in a given manner, has left the field, replacing it, so as to constitute some kind of integration (although a false and inorganic one) is the* **corresponding wish of the coercing authority**. *The self has been conquered. In giving up it settles for a secondary integrity—a means of surviving, though beaten, by* **identifying with the conqueror and turning against itself.** *It takes over the coercer's role by conquering itself, retroflecting the hostility previously directed outward against the coercer."*

Identifying with the conqueror—or the Oedipal Father, means that Daddy ends up inside of you. And this inside is continually projected onto the outside. The weak ego is continually paranoid—Daddy is lurking everywhere. (And so is the black widow—the devouring Mother.) The weak ego feels guilty all the time. Daddy beating the child is the archetypal model of guilt...punishment for desire.

The weak ego hates itself. When it encounters hostility from others, it shrivels up—writhing in a vision of horrible images of itself.

Powerlessness has been psychically built in. It is relatively simple for anyone who wants to dominate a weak ego to reactivate the beating Father—and thus push it into terrified passivity.

In addition to a paranoid self-image, a weak ego has an **ideal ego image** (the Daddy within) that persecutes it constantly. The ideal ego image-persecutor is an authoritarian love object. This structure—of weak ego, introjection, persecution by ideal ego image, is analogous to and interlocked with the **female heterosexual role**.

The female heterosexual role, for a girl, means displacement of affections from Mother to Father—Daddy, the authoritarian love object, the strange she must love but never understand (for the man she loves will mediate between her and the strange). It means the eroticization of the oppressor. The relationship to the authoritarian love object also determines the relationship of individual ego to group. Two's company. Three's a crowd. The child-Mother original love relation was two. When Daddy comes into the picture you have to deal with the existence of three—the basic group.

Because Daddy is an oppressor whom we eroticize, our basic relation to groups becomes passive—a striving to get into in-groups (to get at the energy at the top of the hierarchy)—upward mobility. The

desired crowd collectively becomes an authoritarian love object. Yearning to be part of that crowd corresponds to sexual yearning for Father and calls up the same guilt. The crowd will punish me for wanting to belong—Father beats me for wanting Mother and him sexually.

Charge

Some people are authority figures to us and others not. The authority figures have been "charged"—by our projecting an archetype of power (Daddy or the Black Widow) onto them. And charge and sexual attraction are linked.

I am not saying that charge is what causes power relationships, nor do I mean that there can be a purely psychological revolution—that power relations will automatically crumble when people stop projecting power archetypes onto others. There are two kinds of domination—although the two are interrelated—that by charge and that by material conditions (when someone is in the position of being able to withdraw something you need). A slave who is oppressed only by material conditions can still plan how to fight back, how to rebel. Oppression by charge paralyzes this activity.

However, slaves oppressed by material conditions usually end up charging their masters. (i.e.—in relationships with men which began on a non-charged, egalitarian basis, we've experienced the invasion of material conditions—the formation over time of a power relationship in which the man would dominate, the invasion of the hierarchy of men over women which is reinforced everywhere in this society).

Keeping this in mind, these are the possibilities for non-power-oriented relationships between the following combinations:

1. If a woman charges her male lovers, in a heterosexual relationship, she will be dominated by material conditions and by charge.
2. If a woman does not charge other women, even as lovers, there will be a minimal basis for power relations between them—it will not be reinforced by material conditions or charge.
3. If a woman does charge other women, she still has a good chance of developing non-power relationships with other women (as lovers too)—if she struggles with her tendency to charge—because there is no material base for power (unless there is a significant class difference between the two women—which is unusual considering the economic position of most unattached women).
4. If a woman does not charge men, she will be pressured to charge them, particularly in a heterosexual relationship, by material conditions. She might possibly be successful in struggling against this tendency and maintaining an egalitarian relationship, but it isn't likely.

Deviance

Deviance is essentially refusal to conform to normal Oedipal socialization. To remain in rebellion against Daddy. Most people succumb to Daddy. Their growth is paralyzed at the very early stage—their egos are weak, they follow the rules, they believe in "authority." For those who struggle to grow there is a dialectic between complete rebellion and incomplete rebellion—between times when you are not determined by Daddy, free and creative, and times when you are caught in **reacting to him** (on the defensive vs. the offensive).

The Oedipal Father is the archetype with many meanings—it is not only the Father in the family who separates Mother and child, violating both, but also the Public language, and the strange, and the public realm and imposed social rules.

Rebellion against Daddy takes many forms. On a sexual and emotional level, I see lesbianism as perhaps the most total rebellion. The gay woman has refused to displace her attachment to Mother onto Father.

Another rebellion involves refusal to give up one's private language (Daddy as Public language), or, for a woman, rebellion from the private realm (insistence of a life outside the home).

Deviants are people who are in varying degrees independent of the public language—(have developed private languages—i.e. dealing with the strange directly). In the case of a woman, it means she does not have a man mediating between her and the strange (even if he is a deviant himself). What I call a dyke, is a woman who deals with the strange directly—a woman who is exploring the social-economic public male realm—or the up-to-now male realms of concepts and images (interior exploration).

The Mass, Group Rules, Cultural Conservatism

Most people sacrificed their autonomy and subjectivity long ago. They passively accept Daddy—the public language, group rules and group expectations of them. They are directed entirely from the outside—in the complete control of their society's leaders and authorities. They are dead objects. Their outside identities are subsumed in a group because their egos are so weak. Their lives are controlled by the rules and ideal ego images of the groups they are in. To the extent that they have not become entirely numb, they feel humiliated and guilty most of the time. They are pitifully submissive. They are suckers of Daddy.

The mass is by its very nature rigid and conservative. For those on this level, a threat to group rules is a threat to self. Since the group is their whole identity, they resist change in its organization. They are terrified of the strange and are compulsively dependent on those who mediate between it and them. They compulsively cling to **cultural forms** to get a sense of security...to one particular unchanging grid that shuts out the strange. Keeping the grid shut=defensiveness=fear of the strange=clinging to Mother (and Daddy)=clinging to form=cultural conservatism=rigidification of structure=institutionalization. Clinging to form=terror at death.

The evolutionary potential of the mass is very low.

The Isolated Deviant

Deviants are punished by the Father with ostracism and isolation. Which is a powerful enough threat to keep most people in line. Further, deviants are made into group scapegoats and are taught to hate themselves.

To continue to be a deviant in a world of non-deviants, you must be able to sustain diverse images simultaneously—i.e. between what you believe and others believe, between your self-image and the image others have of you (which may be very humiliating since most people are afraid of deviants.) When isolated long enough, deviants either go insane or lose their ability to maintain this tension between images—i.e. get sucked into the public language again (vicarious dealing with the strange). She-he is put into a double bind—either she is isolated or she loses her autonomy. Because of this we experience conflict between autonomy and relating to others. Forming a **deviant group** or community is an attempt to resolve this conflict.

The Deviant Community

In order to survive, deviants must form groups—and these groups have far more evolutionary potential than the mass. I believe it is from such groups, which are active and creative rather than passive, that a revolution can develop.

To be a revolutionary force, the deviant group must remain dynamic; it must be organized (so that it is self-directed) but not rigid or hierarchical. The deviant group must struggle to avoid the patterns of a mass group. All its organization must be flexible, and it must be made up of persons with strong egos. Each must be autonomous—dealing with the strange directly. When "authorities and leaders" emerge—i.e. mediators between the strange and the rest of the group—potential for being a class force is dissipated and the group dissolves into the mass.

A deviant group is formed when deviants share their private languages. When they are able to coordinate their individual symbol-systems without one dominating the others, they become a class force.

We must however, beware the tendency in our deviant communities to merely impose a new public language, a new hierarchy. We must avoid creating a new ideal ego image to persecute people.

The Lesbian Community

I have been struck by the enormous evolutionary potential of the lesbian community. Because it is all women unattached to men, there is little reinforcement for hierarchy within the group from material conditions (in contrast to heterosexual deviant groups, or women's groups where women's attachment to men higher and lower on the hierarchy creates a huge class gulf between women).

Also, there is much less of a tendency to become "culturally conservative," to institutionalize forms. Deep down (in her primary sexual-emotional orientation) every lesbian is a rebel against Daddy—a woman asserting subjectivity—who has refused to eroticize Daddy. Any lesbian, no matter how into role playing or power games, is an incredible deviant in this society.

To sustain group criticism, she must be highly developed at maintaining tension between two images. She must have a sense of individual indentity separate from group identity, to de-charge and de-legitimize power relationships, to refuse introjection, and to remain in a state of rebellion against "group rules."

Being a lesbian is saying NO to Daddy.
DADDY DADDY I'M THROUGH!!!
from the depths of your being.

Flags and the Ideal Ego Image

Once I had a conversation with a friend of mine in Berkeley about what we say "Gay Women's Liberation" is. The essence of it was something like this: "It's like a flag that we are putting out...GAY WOMEN'S LIBERATION. The people who are attracted to the flag will all get together and these will be people with a certain state of mind in common—Then they can begin to coordinate things together."

I have a sense of a certain history of flags that I've been involved with. For awhile I lived in a community (of sorts) that had gotten together around the flag of "freak." Then I was in groups where the flag was "Women's Liberation." Now I'm in groups where the flag is "Gay Women's Liberation."

I think these flags can serve a good function—but that in all these cases the function was perverted. A lot of it has to do with who creates the flags. For instance, there is a flag floating around now called "Women's Lib" that was actually created by TV and the big newspapers and magazines.

The public knows all about "Women's Lib" and "Fem Libbers." These creatures appear in situation comedies and comic strips. This "Women's Lib" flag is very different from the "Women's Liberation" flag that I was attracted to 3 years ago. The basic difference is that the "Women's Liberation" flag was created by a group of women as an expression of a new consciousness in their lives. But the "Women's Libber" is a fantasy created by the mass media. However—maybe at this point (the women's libber image has been around for about two years) she does exist—that is, there are women who were attracted to the mass media created flag and who now identify with it? If they exist, they are certainly not connected with the women who were part of women's liberation two years ago.

I no longer consider "Women's Liberation" as part of my identity. This flag isn't worth anything because of the distortions it has been put through by that media created flag—"Women's Lib."

At a certain point flags can begin to dominate people. For instance, women are oppressed by the flag of the "freak feminist dyke." There are all kinds of rules, shoulds and shouldn'ts, in this community that result because of the image's power.

The problem goes something like this: even a flag created by a grass roots movement (vs. a media created flag) becomes the ideal ego image of the movement (or community). Ideal ego images have their place—as fantasies, myths through which we extend ourselves when we live through our imaginations. But in an authoritarian culture, ideal ego images can become persecutors. People who are closest to the image are on top of the community hierarchy—those farthest away are low on the hierarchy. You are humiliated to the extent that you don't fit the image.

This is a dynamic that practically every group falls into, and when it happens it means that the movement (which may previously have had a lot of revolutionary potential) has just become another institution or rigidified structure. It's very important that women in this community resist and struggle against the ascension of the Image as controller. We have to watch ourselves carefully to see how we and others relate to group ideal ego images.

Do we attempt to live up to them, to embody the ideal? Humiliated when we fail? Hating ourselves for not fulfilling them?

I've found the best way to resist the power of a group ideal ego image is to invent my own. But you can be persecuted by your own ideal ego image too unless you are careful. Essentially, we have to separate ourselves from all these images—to the point where we can use them as tools, not worship them as masters.

Ideal ego image as persecutor grows out of clinging to form. What this means to me, practically, is that it is important to have an identity that encompasses several communities. If your identity is completely tied in to one community, then when it is criticized you're being criticized, and you get defensive. The rules of the community become part of your identity. Thus you become basically conservative—more concerned with clinging to form, the present order of things in the community—than with seeing the community change for the better. If your identity includes a number of communities, it is separate from the rules of any one of them. You are able to minimize your defensiveness and to break out of the inertia that rigidifies most people and their communities.

The key is to create your own flags and use them as tools. People who create similar flags and put them out, find each other. New flags are produced by synthesizing the experiences of a number of communities (another reason why it's not good to restrict yourself to one).

Our goal as I see it might be to constantly be open to new language, new ways of making the strange familiar, new ego images, and new ways of synthesizing our private languages with each other. Our success will be in direct proportion to our ability to say no to Daddy, to resist the rigidly enforced male language (way of perceiving the strange), and our ability to prevent ourselves from, like Daddy, imposing our private language on each other.

If we can become clear on how our conditioning impedes us, if we can understand how certain grids and archetypes (modes of perceiving) keep us locked in, and we work to overcome this, the evolutionary potential of lesbianism should be unlimited.

We are standing on the frontier of woman's experience. Let us hope we can find the strength to forge ahead.

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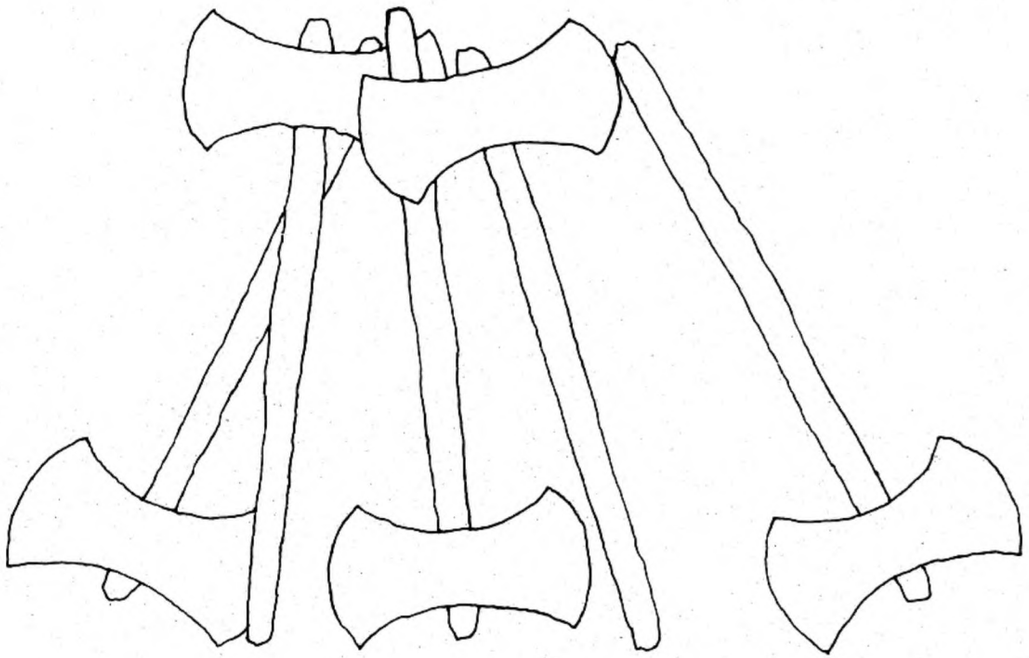
by ANN FORFREEDOM



THE LABRYS

Long before the rise of Rome, or Athens or Sumeria, the rule of women in matriarchies and queendoms was solidified and spread across the continents. Wherever the Amazons roamed, wherever the great queens or sacred priestesses of the Great Goddess went, the labrys (or labyris), the curved double-axe, came with them, aiding in their conquests.

In brush-covered lands, the labrys was a tool for clearing the land. In mountain-covered Greece and Russia, the labrys was a tool for clearing away angry patriarchs. In Crete, where priestesses ruled in the name of the Goddess for over 1500 years, the labrys became a symbol of the Goddess in her aspects as moon-deity, protectress of women, and giver of life and death. Through time, the Cretan labrys came to represent even more; the double-axe became the symbol of divinely-sanctioned leadership, the repository of female physical and philosophical might. The great palace at Knossos was named the Labyrinth, the Place of the Double-Axe, and the Cretan symbols for woman came to include the labrys as axe and as butterfly, as deadly weapon and as psychological symbol of life-amid-death.

A flint double-axe was used in ceremonies to bring rain, to sacrifice victims to the chief deity, to break sod, and to reap grain. Some Amazon groups used the labrys as a major weapon in hard-fought battles against vicious male enemies in Thrace, Attic Greece, and in Asia Minor, in the areas near the rivers Thermodon and Iris. The double-axe has been found painted on temple walls in Crete and in Catal Huyuk (Anatolian Turkey), carved on walls in pre-Celtic Stonehenge, and laid in the graves of "Paleolithic" European women. The labrys has been a symbol of gynocracy (rule by women) among the Lycians, the Lydians, the Etruscans, the Attic Greeks, the Gauls, the Druids, and the Scandinavians (Thor's hammer and Zeus' thunderbolt both used to be the double-axe), as well as among the Aegean peoples, the Thermodontine Amazons, and the male-oriented Romans.

Artistic portrayals of the labrys have been stylized in a variety of ways. When the top and bottom parts are removed, the remaining four arcs can be seen as the cave-art symbol of woman. Laid flat, the labrys is a butterfly in flight, wings spread, joyous and bright though short-lived. When the two curved edges are emphasized, they resemble two half-moons, or the parallel patterns inherent in the flow of life. The labrys also has been stylized as a double spiral, or as a snake; in the snake aspect, representing the guardian of the graneries and the prophetic impulse, the symbolizations of gynocracy have been predominant in ancient Egypt, Africa, and Central America.

As women delve deeper into our female past, the physical, touchable evidence of gynocracy, with its attendant matriarchies, priestesshoods, and Amazon maidens, becomes more meaningful and more precious. The mythology of femina sapiens is rich beyond present comprehension. This is our heritage—and our challenge, for though we are the daughters of men, we also are the heiresses of Amazons and wisewomen.

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by GINA

(This is the first in a series of articles on the lives of little known women artists and writers.)

EMILY CARR

I'm sorry that expenses prevent us from printing reproductions of Emily Carr's paintings—they can be seen only in the Vancouver Art Gallery or in Emily's published journals, *Hundreds and Thousands*. But Emily Carr's writing, which you *can* sample here, is as vibrant and profound as her paintings with the same startling depth and power modestly cloaked in homespun language and everyday images.

In a painting called "Houses Below Mountain," Emily evoked all the vast wild immensity of untamed Western Canada, and at the same time miraculously contained it in a simple mound shape that keeps a tenuous balance with the cluster of houses below—a breathtaking visual interpretation of the precarious relationship between people and nature in the land Emily loved.

Most of her paintings don't show such traces of civilization, but record Emily's direct experiences with the forests and land of Western Canada. She painted trees, undergrowth, sky, roots, with a combination of simple boldness and infinite subtlety that could come only from a lifetime of rapport with them on canvas and in life.

British Columbia during Emily's time (1871-1945) may have been an inspiring natural environment, but culturally it was a wasteland. To continue working as an artist in Emily's situation, isolated completely from the support and influence of other artists, was a task that had to be reckoned with every day. To be besides, a woman artist living without a man, in a society where a woman engaged in any activity besides marriage was considered to be a superfluous freak—it took a strength matching that of the Canadian forests.

Emily Carr developed her courage and independence early. She wrote in *Growing Pains*, her autobiography, of her first rebellion against the rule of her Victorian Father:

I heard a lady say to Mother, "Isn't it difficult, Mrs. Carr, to discipline our babies when their fathers spoil them so?"

Mother replied, "My husband takes no notice of mine till they are old enough to run round after him. He then recognizes them as human beings and as his children, accepts their adoration. You know how little tots worship big, strong men!"

The other mother nodded and my mother continued, "Each of my children in turn my husband makes his special favorite when they come to this man-adoring age. When this child shows signs of having a will of its own he returns it to the nursery and raises the next youngest to favour. This one," she put her hand on me, "has overdrawn her share of favouritism because there was no little sister to step into her shoes. Our small son is much younger and very delicate. His father accuses me of coddling him, but he is the only boy I have left—I lost three."

Father kept sturdy me as his pet for a long time.

"Ah," he would say, "this one should have been the boy."

Father insisted that I be at his heels every moment that he was at home. I helped him in the garden, popping the bulbs into holes that he dug, holding strips of cloth and the tacks while he trained Isabella (his grapevine). I walked nearly all the way to town with him every morning. He let me snuggle under his arm and sleep during the long Presbyterian sermons. I held his hand during the walk to and from church. This all seemed to me fine until I began to think for myself—then I saw that I was being used as a soother for Father's tantrums; like a bone to a dog, I was being flung to quiet Father's temper. When he was extra cranky I was taken into town by my big sister and left at Father's wholesale warehouse to walk home with him because my chatter soothed him. I resented this and began to question why Father should act as if he was God. Why should people dance after him and let him think he was? I decided disciplining would be good for Father and I made up my mind to cross his will sometimes. At first he laughed, trying to coax the waywardness out of me, but when he saw I was serious his fury rose against me. He turned and was harder on me than on any of the others. His soul was so bitter that he was even sometimes cruel to me.

"Mother," I begged, "need I be sent to town any more to walk home with Father?"

Mother looked at me hard. "Child," she cried, "what ails you? You have always loved to be with your father. He adores you. What is the matter?"

"He is cross, he thinks he is as important as God."

Mother was supremely shocked; she had brought her family up under the English tradition that the men of a woman's family were created to be worshipped. My insurrection pained her. She was as troubled as a hen that has hatched a duck.

Emily's mother died when she was twelve years old and her father died two years later, leaving her in the care of an older sister (there were three more sisters and a brother besides) who imposed a discipline every bit as harsh as her father's had been. After years of enduring this unhappy home life—finding solace only in the forests and fields which would later become most important for her work as a painter—Emily found a way out. She went to the man who had been appointed guardian of the Carr children by her father and persuaded him to arrange for her education at the San Francisco School of Art (now the San Francisco Art Institute). So began a new phase of Emily's life.

It was in San Francisco that Emily experienced two of the three thwarted love relationships she would in later years remember as "deadly blows" to her young psyche. Of

the three (all of them women) the friendship with Ishbel Dane takes precedence in Emily Carr's autobiography as the deepest and most dramatic, and the one which hurt her most. Emily and Ishbel were roomers at the same boarding house as well as classmates at The School of Art, and both the boarding house ladies and Emily's school friends expressed disapproval of the relationship, though it is never made very clear why. Here is Emily's account of her feelings for Ishbel, and what became of their friendship:

(The two young women belonged to a banjo and guitar club.)

I had to go to the music studio for some music. The Club leader was giving a lesson. He shut his pupil into the studio with her tinkling mandolin, followed me out onto the landing. As I took the roll of music from him he caught me round the wrists.

"Little girl," he said. "be good to Ishbel, you are her only *woman friend and she loves you. God bless you!" His door banged.*

I a woman's friend! Suddenly I felt grown up. Mysteriously Ishbel was my trust. I went down stairs slowly, each tread seemed to stretch me, as if my head had remained on the landing while my feet and legs elongated me. On reaching the pavement I was grown up, a woman with a trust. I did not quite know how or why Ishbel needed me. I only knew she did and was proud.

While I was out a letter had come. I opened it. My guardian thought I had "played at Art" long enough. I was to come home and start Life in earnest.

Ishbel clung to me. "Funny little mother-girl," she said, kissing me. "I am going to miss you!"

A man's head was just appearing over the banister rail. She poked something under my arm, pushed me gently towards my own room. A great lump was in my throat. Ishbel was the only one of them all who hadn't wanted to change some part of me—the only one who had. Under my arm she had pushed a portrait of herself.

Two weeks later, back in Canada, Emily received this news:

From the boarding house one of the grandmothers absolutely sniffed in writing, "Ishbel Dane died in the 'Good Samaritan' hospital on Christmas Eve. Under the circumstances, my dear, perhaps it was best."

...I carried my crying into the snowy woods. The weather was bitter, my tears were too.

Similarly moving events that Emily Carr recounts in *Growing Pains* are far too numerous to skip over briefly here. Both the autobiography and the journals are scarce—maybe to be found in a chance library here and there. They're worth looking for. The following selections from *Hundreds and Thousands* start with a mature Emily Carr, settled in British Columbia and working steadily at her painting and writing.

Emily Carr in her studio.

November 23rd, 1930

Yesterday I went to town and bought this book to enter scraps in, not a diary of statistics and dates and decency of spelling and happenings but just to jot me down in, unvarnished me, old me at fifty-eight—old, old, old, in most ways and in others just a baby with so much to learn and not much time left here but maybe somewhere else. It seems to me it helps to write things and thoughts down. It makes the unworthy ones look more shamefaced and helps to place the better ones for sure in our minds. It sorts out jumbled up thoughts and helps to clarify them, and I want my thoughts clear and straight for my work.

I used to write diaries when I was young but if I put anything down under the skin I was in terror that someone would read it and ridicule me, so I always burnt them up before long. Once my sister found and read something I wrote at the midnight of a new year. I was sorry about the old year, I had seemed to have failed so, and I had hopes for the new. But when she hurled my written thoughts at me I was angry and humbled and hurt and I burst smarting into the New Year and broke all my resolutions and didn't care. I burnt the diary and buried the thoughts and felt the world was a mean, sneaking place. I wonder why we are always sort of ashamed of our best parts and try to hide them. We don't mind ridicule of our "silliness" but of our "sobers," oh! Indians are the same, and even dogs. They'll enjoy a joke with you, but ridicule of their "reals" is torment.

A picture does not want to be a design no matter how lovely. A picture is an expressed thought for the soul. A design is a pleasing arrangement of form and colour for the eye.

July 16th, 1933

I wonder will death be much lonelier than life. Life's an awfully lonesome affair. You can live close against other people yet your lives never touch. You come into the world alone and you go out of the world alone yet it seems to me you are more alone while living than even going and coming. Your mother loves you like the deuce while you are coming. Wrapped up there under her heart is perhaps the cosiest time in existence. Then she and you are one, companions. At death again hearts loosen and realities peep out, but all the intervening years of living something shuts you up in a "yourself shell." You can't break through and get out; nobody can break through and get in. If there was an instrument strong enough to break the "self shells" and let out the spirit it would be grand.

July 23rd, 1933

Dreams do come true sometimes. Caravans ran round inside of my head from the time I was no-high and read children's stories in which gypsies figured. Periodically I had caravan fever, drew plans like covered express carts drawn by a fat white horse. After horses went out and motors came in I quit caravan dreaming, engines in no way appealed to me and my purse was too slim to consider one anyhow. So I contented

myself with shanties for sketching outings, cabins, tents, log huts, houseboats, tool sheds, lighthouses—many strange quarters. Then one day, plop! into my very mouth, like a great sugar-plum for sweetness, dropped the caravan.

There it sat, grey and lumbering like an elephant, by the roadside—"For sale." I looked her over, made an offer, and she is mine. Greater even than the surprise of finding her was the fact that nobody opposed the idea but rather backed it up. We towed her home in the dark and I sneaked out of bed at 5 o'clock the next morning to make sure she was really true and not just a grey dream.

August 31st, 1933

A wet day in camp. The rain pattered on the top of the Elephant all night. Mrs. "Pop Shop" and I went for our nightly dip in the river. It was cold and took courage and much squealing and knee-shaking. Neither of us has the pluck to exhibit the bulges of our fat before the youngsters, so we "mermaid" after dark. I dare not run back, the footing among the cedars is ribbed with big roots. One's feet must pick and one's eyes much peer through the dim obscurity of the great cedars and maples. Once inside the Elephant, scrubbed down with a hard brush and cuddled up to a hot bottle, I thought I loved the whole world, I felt so good. But last night as I stood in my nightie and cap, a male voice made a howl and a male head thrust into the van. Well, all the love and charity fled from my soul. I was red hot and demanded his wants. By this time the dogs were in an uproar and I couldn't hear his answer. Finally I caught, "Can I get any bread?" "No," I replied tartly, "The shop is shut out there." He disappeared in the night and then I felt a beast and ran to the door to offer him what I had in camp but he had vanished, swallowed up in the black night. I might have been more tolerant, but I hate my privacy being torn up by the roots. I thought of that one word "bread" every time I awoke.

September 8th, 1933

I made two poor sketches today. Every single condition was good for work, but there you are—cussedness! What a lot I'd give tonight for a real companionable pal, male or female, a soul pal one wasn't afraid to speak to or to listen to. I've never had one like that. I expect it is my own fault. If I was nice right through I'd attract that kind to me. I do not give confidences. Now look at Mother "Pop Shop." There she is in her tiny shop doling out gingerpop, cones, confidences and smiles to all comers. Let any old time-waster hitch up to her counter and she will entertain him and listen to him as long as his wind lasts. Tonight one was there a full hour and a half. She has nothing to sit on at the counter. She's awfully fat and heavy but she lolls with this bit of fat on a candy box and that bit on a pop bottle and another bit on the cream jars and the counter supports her tummy while she waggles her permanent wave and manifold chins and glib tongue till the sun sinks behind the hill and her son whimpers for supper and the man has paid his last nickel and compliment. Then she rolls over to the cook stove complaining at the shortness of the day. Does she get more out of life by that sort of

stuff than I do with my sort of stuff? I wouldn't change—but who is the wiser woman? Who lives fullest and collects the biggest bag full of life? I dunno. . .

September 14th, 1933

I have found winter grazing for the Elephant after much tramping. It has settled in to pour. Mrs. Hooper supped in my camp and by the fire we sat long, talking. There is a straight-from-the-shoulderness about her I like. She does what comes to her hand to help people—reared a worse than parentless girl, looked after and helped old poor sick women. Through her conversation (not boastfully) ran a thread of kindness and real usefulness. I feel wormy when I see what others do for people and I doing so little. I try to work honestly at my job of painting but I don't see that it does anyone any good. If I could only feel that my painting lifted someone or gave them joy, but I don't feel that. I enjoy my striving to express. Another drinks because he enjoys drinking or eats because he enjoys eating. It's all selfish.

December 12th

Emily Carr, born Dec. 13, 1871 at Victoria, B.C., 4 a.m. in a deep snow storm, tomorrow will be sixty-two. It is not all bad, this getting old, ripening. After the fruit has got its growth it should juice up and mellow. God forbid I should live long enough to ferment and rot and fall to the ground in a squash.

April 6th

The old longing will come. Oh, if there was only a really kindred spirit to share it with, that we might keep each other warm in spirit, keep step and tramp uphill together. I'm a bit ashamed of being a little depressed again. Perhaps it is reading the autobiography of Alice B. Toklas—all the artists there in Paris, like all the artists in the East, jogging along, discussing, condemning, adoring, fighting, struggling, enthusing, seeking together, jostling each other, instead of solitude, no shelter, exposed to all the "winds" like a lone old tree with no others round to strengthen it against the buffets with no waving branches to help keep time. B-a-a-a, old sheep, bleating for fellows. Don't you know better by now? It must be my fault somewhere, this repelling of mankind and at the same time rebelling at having no one to shake hands with but myself and the right hand weary of shaking the left.

May 14th, 1934

Now let's see if I am kidding myself about being too tired to work or if it's just laziness about assembling my stuff and setting out. How life does tear us this way and that—what you ought to do and what you want to do; when you ought to force and when you ought to sit! There's danger in forcing but there is also danger in sitting. Now hens know just when they ought to sit. Hens are very wise.

June 16th

There is no right and wrong way to paint except honestly or dishonestly. Honestly is

trying for the bigger thing. Dishonestly is bluffing and getting through a smattering of surface representation with no meaning, made into a design to please the eye. Well, that is all right for those who just want eye work. It seems to satisfy most people, doers and lookers. It's the same with most things—the puppies, for instance. People go into screams of delight over them—their innocent quiet look, their fluff and cuddle, but when the needs of the little creatures are taken into consideration they are "filthy little beasts" and a nuisance. The love and attraction goes no deeper than the skin. You've got to love things right through.

August 12th

I haven't found one friend of my own age and generation. I wish I had. I don't know if it's my own fault. I haven't a single thing in common with them. They're all snarled up in grandchildren or W.A. or church teas or bridge or society. None of them like painting and they particularly dislike my kind of painting. It's awkward, this oil and water mixing. I have lots more in common with the young generation, but there you are. Twenty can't be expected to tolerate sixty in all things, and sixty gets bored stiff with twenty's eternal love affairs. Oh God, why did you make me a pelican and sit me down in a wilderness? These old maids of fifty and sixty, how dull they are, so self-centred, and the married women are absorbed in their husbands and their families. Oh Lord, I thank Thee for the dogs and the monkey and the rat. I loafed all day. Next week I must step on the gas.

June 30th, 1935

The wind is roaring and it is cold. I revolted against wrestling with the campfire and shivering over breakfast in the open field, so I breakfast in the van. It is a day to cuddle down. Even the monkey pleaded to come back to her sleeping box, tuck her shawls about her and watch me.

I did two sketches, large interiors, trying to unify the thought of the whole wood in the bit I was depicting. I did not make a good first of it but I felt connections more than ever before. Only three more days of this absolute freedom and then I have to pack up and get back to the old routine, though it will be nice to get back to those two dear sisters who plod on, year in and year out, with never a break or pause in their monotonous lives. But it would not give them a spacious joy to sit at a little homemade table writing, with three sleeping pups on the bunk beside me, a monk at my shoulder and the zip and roar of the wind lifting the canvas and shivering the van so that you feel you are part and parcel of the storming yourself. That's living! You'd never get that feel in a solid house shut away securely from the living elements by a barricade!

December 24th

We just had our present-giving at Alice's, just we three old girls. Alice's house was full of the smell of new bread. The loaves were piled on the kitchen table; the dining-room table was piled with parcels, things changing hands. This is our system and works well: we agree on a stated amount—it is small because our big giving is birthdays. Each

of us buys something for ourselves or to our own liking, goods amounting to the stated sums. We bring them along and Christmas Eve, with kissings and thankings, accept them from each other—homely, practical little wants, torch batteries, hearth brooms, coffee strainers, iron handles, etc. It's lots of fun. We lit four red candles in the window and drank ginger ale and ate Christmas cake and new bread and joked and discussed today and tomorrow and yesterday and compared tirednesses and rheumatics and rejoiced that Christmas came only once per year. We loved each other, we three; with all our differences we are very close.

Christmas Day

Two would-be art critics came to the studio. They were "pose-y," waved their paws describing sweeps and motions in my pictures, screwed their eyes, made monocles of their fists, discoursed on aesthetics, asked prices, and expounded on technique. One paints a little and teaches a lot, the other "aesthetics" with I do not quite know what aim. Both think women and their works beneath contempt but ask to come to the studio on every occasion. Why?

February 9th,

. . .Lovers' letters I destroyed years back; no other eye should see those. But there was a note, written forty years and more after the man had been my sweetheart and he loved me still. He married as he told me he should. He demanded more than I could have given; he demanded worship. He thought I made a great mistake in not marrying him. He ought to be glad I did not; he'd have found me a bitter mouthful and very indigestible, and he would have bored me till my spirit died.

April 16th, 1937

I have been thinking that I am a shirker. I have dodged publicity, hated write-ups and all that splutter. Well, that's all selfish conceit that embarrassed me. I have been forgetting Canada and forgetting women painters. It's them I ought to be upholding, nothing to do with puny me at all. Perhaps what brought it home was the last two lines of a crit in a Toronto paper: "Miss Carr is essentially Canadian, not by reason of her subject matter alone, but by her approach to it." I am glad of that. I am also glad that I am showing these men that women can hold up their end. The men resent a woman getting any honour in what they consider is essentially their field. Men painters mostly despise women painters. So I have decided to stop squirming, to throw any honour in with Canada and women.

December 13th

Sixty-six years ago tonight I was hardly me. I was just a pink bundle snuggled in a blanket close to Mother. The north wind was bellowing round, tearing at everything. The snow was all drifted up on the little balcony outside Mother's window. The night before had been a disturbed one for everybody. Everything was quietened down tonight. The two-year Alice was deposed from her baby throne. The bigger girls were

sprouting motherisms, all-over delighted with the new toy. Mother hardly realized yet that I was me and had set up an entity of my own. I wonder what Father felt. I can't imagine him being half as interested as Mother. More to Father's taste was a nice juicy steak served piping on the great pewter hotwater dish. That made his eyes twinkle. I wonder if he ever cosseted Mother up with a tender word or two after she'd been through a birth or whether he was as rigid as ever, waiting for her to buck up and wait on him. He ignored new babies until they were old enough to admire, old enough to have wills to break.

January 9th, 1938

You forget how much some of the friends of the past loved you till you read again some loving letters. Some men and lots of women loved me fiercely when I was young. I wonder when I read the old letters from friends not given to talk and flattery, was I as generous with love to them? My love had those three deadly blows. Did it ever fully recover from those three dreadful hurts? Perhaps it sprouts from the earth again, but those first vigorous shoots of the young plant were the best, the most vital. I have loved three souls passionately. I have known friendship, jealousy and dreadful hurt.

March 5th

The world is horrid right straight through and so am I. I lay awake for three hours in the night and today as a result I am tired and ratty even though the sun is as nice as can be. I want to whack everyone on earth. I've a cough and a temper and every bit of me is tired. I'm old and ugly, stupid and ungracious. I don't even want to be nice. I want to grouch and sulk and rip and snort. I am a pail of milk that has gone sour. Now, perhaps, having written it all down, the hatefulness will melt off to where the mist goes when the sun gets up. Perhaps the nastiness in me has scooted right down my right arm and through my fingers into the pencil and lies spilled openly on the paper to shame me. Writing is a splendid sorter of your good and bad feelings, better even that paint.

December 13th, 1940

I do not mourn at old age. Life has been good and I have got a lot out of it, lots to remember and relive. I have liked life, perhaps the end more than the beginning. I was a happy-natured little girl but with a tragic streak, very vulnerable to hurt. I developed very late. Looking back is interesting. I can remember the exact spot and the exact time that so many things dawned on me. Particularly is this so in regard to my work. I know just when and where and how I first saw or comprehended certain steps in my painting development. Of late years my writing has shown me very many reasons for things. I do not resent old age and the slowing-down process. As a child I used to say to myself, "I shall go everywhere I can and see and do all I can so that I will have plenty to think about when I am old." I kept all the chinks between acts filled up by being interested in lots of odd things. I've had handy, active fingers and have made them work. I suppose the main force behind all this was my painting. That was the principal reason why I went to places, the reason why I drove ahead through the more interesting parts of life,

to get time and money to push further into art, not the art of making pictures and becoming a great artist, but art to use as a means of expressing myself, putting into visibility what gripped me in nature.

Why call this manuscript Hundreds and Thousands? *Because it is made up of scraps of nothing which, put together, made the trimming and furnished the sweetness for what might otherwise have been a drab life sucked away without crunch. Hundreds and Thousands are minute candies made in England—round sweetnesses, all colours and so small that separately they are not worth eating. But to eat them as we ate them in childhood was a different matter. Father would take the big fat bottle off the shelf in his office and say, "Hold out your hands," Father tipped and poured, and down bobbed our three hands and out came our three tongues and licked in the Hundreds and Thousands, and lapped them up, lovely and sweet and crunchy.*

It was these tiny things that, collectively, taught me how to live. Too insignificant to have been considered individually, but like the Hundreds and Thousands lapped up and sticking to our moist tongues, the little scraps and nothingnesses of my life have made a definite pattern. Only now, when the river has nearly reached the sea and small eddies gush up into the river's mouth and repulse the sluggish onflow, have they made a pattern in the mud flats, before gurgling out into the sea. Thank you, tiny Hundreds and Thousands. Thanks, before you merge into the great waters.

Sources:
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by LAUREL

MARGARET ANDERSON

—drawing by Gina from photograph by Man Ray—

Although our plans for *Amazon Quarterly* were well under way when I happened upon Margaret Anderson's autobiographies and back issues of her magazine, *The Little Review*, she has inspired us, given us hope, and raised our sights for this magazine.

On the assumption that few of our readers will have access to her books (out of print until recently and now costing $25 for the set of three from Horizon Press) I have summarized here what I think are the most delightful parts of her first volume, *My Thirty Years War*, published in 1930 and covering her childhood through 1929.

What follows does not deal extensively with her lesbianism, but a reading of all her books can leave no doubt as to her passionate involvement with the three loves of her life: Jane Heap, Georgette LeBlanc and Dorothy Caruso.

Perhaps because the artists in the Twenties were a wildly unpredictable lot anyway, perhaps because lesbianism then was in no way a political threat—whatever the reason—Margaret Anderson never felt called upon to make much of an issue of it. She states her complete disinterest in men quite clearly:

"I am no man's wife, no man's delightful mistress, and I will never, never, never be a mother."

Next issue we will take up where this leaves off (covering *The FFiery Fountains* and *The Strange Necessity*) but if you can possibly lay hands on the books themselves—do! The last volume takes us up to the 1960's and leaves Margaret

living alone near Cannes, France, which is to the best of my knowledge where she, in her eighties now, still lives. There are no other sources of information worth mentioning about her except for a section in *Ladies Bountiful* (W.G. Rogers, 1968). She, perhaps for obvious reasons, didn't make it into *Notable American Women* or *Who's Who*, or even the *Dictionary of National Biography*—she is a forgotten great. Her only other works are some unpublished lesbian novels which we would dearly love to see. Hope you like the tidbits to follow:

Margaret Anderson is another proof of the theory that determined passionate artists are more often the products of artistically, intellectually vacuous parents than of geniuses. Margaret detested her family life with a passion, and it was this passion that drove her to be something different—something at least more interesting—and to lead "a life which was to be beautiful as no life had ever been."

The Andersons were rich but uncultured: her mother discouraged her reading, her piano playing, and generally repressed Margaret's current desire regardless of what it was. After college, Margaret returned home as every unwed girl was expected to, and once again found herself the prisoner of her family:

"*I had a green room overlooking lilac bushes, yellow roses and oak trees. Every day I shut myself in, planning how to escape mediocrity (not the lilacs and roses but the vapidities that went on in their hearing.)*

Escape and conquer the world.

I already knew that the great thing to learn about life is, first, not to do what you don't want to do, and, second to do what you want to do."

She escaped more by chance than by plan. Clara Laughlin, an editor for *Good Housekeeping*, in response to Margaret's long letter describing her family and her desire to escape and her question as to whether this was crazy, wrote to Margaret to assure her that she wasn't crazy at all. And further, she said that Margaret's letter was the most interesting she had ever received. Miss Laughlin was so taken by Margaret that she invited her to come see her in Chicago.

Margaret, of course, plowed her way through the family's objections and went to Chicago. There she was intoxicated by Clara Laughlin's world: the talented artists and writers—people who had something to say when they talked.

And apparently, Clara was intoxicated by Margaret. The day after she returned home the family received a special delivery letter from Clara who said Margaret was a very "unusual girl" who should be "given an opportunity." She promised to take her under her wing, provide her with a job, and a home.

After an onslaught of Margaret's arguments (she passed out the more complicated ones in carbon copied pages to her mother, her father, and her sisters) they finally let her go.

As soon as she got there she began indulging her craving for music. Nearly every day she went to concerts. She absorbed Chicago's "culture" like a sponge. Clara arranged a job for her

reviewing books (fifty a week for which she received only the amount of money she could sell the books for.) But she met people and she learned from what she read. From this she went on to work as a clerk in Brownes Bookstore in the Fine Arts Building, the literary oasis of Chicago, and then to being the literary editor of the *Continent*.

Again, repression brought out the best in Margaret. Chafing under the narrow morality of the *Continent* and their preference for "taste" over merit she was besieged one night by a brainstorm:

. ."*I was now twenty-one. And I felt it was time to confer upon life that inspiration without which life is meaningless...*

I had been curiously depressed all day. In the night I wakened. First precise thought: I know why I'm depressed—nothing inspired is going on. Second: I demand that life be inspired every moment. Third: the only way to guarantee this is to have inspired conversation every moment. Fourth: most people never get so far as conversation; they haven't the stamina, and there is no time. Fifth: if I had a magazine I could spend my time filling it up with the best conversation the world has to offer. Sixth: marvelous idea—salvation. Seventh: decision to do it. Deep sleep.

In the morning I thought no more about it. I didn't need to think. To me it was already an accomplished fact. I began announcing to everyone that I was about to publish the most interesting magazine that had ever been launched."

And that is exactly what Margaret Anderson did.

Despite wise discouragement from those in the know about the feasibility of such an enterprise she went on with it. She demanded contributions, she railroaded people into subscribing, and she solicited material from the very best writers of the day.

And they loved her. What was good (as ever) was not popular, and most of them were happy to have her publish their work though she didn't (couldn't) pay them a dime. (Needless to say her parents had "cut her off" by now.)

The first issue of *The Little Review* was a launching out into impossibility. Margaret betrayed her passionate (if somewhat naively romantic) fervor for the arts on every page. Her tone was poetic, inspiring, almost religious when she talked of her hopes for the magazine:

"*If you've ever read poetry with a feeling that it was your religion, if you've ever come suddenly upon the whiteness of a Venus in a dim, deep room, if, in the early morning, you've watched a bird with great white wings fly straight up into the rose-colored sun...If these things have happened to you and continue to happen until you're left quite speechless with the wonder of it all, then you will understand our hope to bring them nearer to the common experience of the people who read us.*"

The feeling of awe, reverent wonder, which Margaret evoked in this passage was the keynote of the magazine, that and her unflagging courage in exploring the new. The list of her contributors is impressive in itself: Sherwood Anderson, Richard Aldington, Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound, Vachel Lindsay, Emma

Goldman, Carl Sandburg, Ford Madox Ford, Amy Lowell, Hemingway, Marianne Moore, James Joyce, Yeats, Apollinaire, T.S. Eliot, etc. (Mostly men, yes, but there was an article on some element of feminism in almost every issue—an unpopular stand at the time.)

At twenty-one then, she began what was to become the apotheosis of the avant-garde—"the world's best literary magazine." The going was anything but easy. There was never enough money. The people with money tended to only be interested in making more and Chicago wasn't really the cultural capital it had seemed to her at first.

But Margaret was enterprising. When she and her sister and her sister's three children found themselves without money to pay the rent on the house they were living in, Margaret managed to convince them to move onto a deserted shore of Lake Michigan. For seven months (from May to November) she and the family and the volunteer "office boy," camped illegally on the beach near Braeside.

Each morning she dressed in her one suit and her one blouse (drip-dry fortunately) and went into *The Little Review* office in Chicago by train. It rained coming and going. It poured, it lightninged, it thundered. But she made the best of it:

"*I would squeeze a few buckets of water from my suit, pat it gently into shape, hang it on a cord in my tent and go downtown the next day looking immaculate.*"

In November, just as the first snows had begun to powder their tents and they thought they all would freeze, a man offered them a house in Chicago rent-free because he believed in *The Little Review*. This was the first of a string of such offers throughout Margaret Anderson's life. She never had money for rent, but she managed to live in some of the most beautiful houses in the world.

That winter, "the most interesting thing that happened to *The Little Review* (and to Margaret) took place. Jane Heap appeared."

In Jane, Margaret found what she had always been looking for: a conversationalist.

"*Jane Heap is the world's best talker.*

It isn't a question of words, facility, style. It isn't a question of erudition. It isn't even a question of truth. (Who knows whether what she says is true?) It is entirely a question of ideas. No one can find such interesting things to say on any subject. I have often thought I should like to give my life over to talk-racing, with my money on Jane. No one else would ever win—you can't win against magic. What it is exactly—this making of ideas—I don't know. Jane herself doesn't know.

Things become known to me, she says."

Jane was to become Margaret's lifetime friend and the first of her three major love relationships. The story of their intimate life together is too good to be exerpted. But here are a few choice tidbits:

'*...Our talk began with luncheon, reached a climax at tea, and by dinner we were staggering with it. By five o'clock in the morning we were unconscious but still talking. Chiefly we talked ART—not "aesthetically" (no talk is so callow) but humanely. We talked of the human being behind the art...In other words we talked psychology...My mind was inflamed by Jane's ideas because of her uncanny knowledge of the human composition, her unfailing clairvoyance about human motivation. This was what I had been waiting for, searching for, all my life.*"

Tired of city life and hungering for a haven where they could have uninterrupted "conversation" they uprooted and moved to Mill Valley, California *Little Review* and all. They had the time of their lives in a ranch house which belonged to the local sheriff: playing piano, riding horses, eating exquisitely, and of course "conversing."

"*By early autumn our conversations on the ranch had attained such proportions that our physical lives had to be completely readjusted to them. There was such a spell upon us when our talk went well that it was difficult—it was destroying—to break it up by saying good-night, going to bed, and calling out from one room to the other our final intellectualizations. It seemed to me that this shock could be avoided with a little ingenuity. So I moved our beds (divans) into the living room, placing them on the floor at each side of and at right angles to the fireplace. Between them I put a low table and we dined in pajamas in order to avoid the brutality of breaking up the conversation to undress. There was nothing to do after dinner but push the table away, light another cigarette, and when we could talk no more fall off to sleep under the impression that we hadn't stopped.*"

Their stay in California was not all sweetness and light—their temperments not entirely compatible—but they and *The Little Review* hung together (they were co-editors by now) and moved back to Chicago when California's rainy season got too much for them. They arrived there penniless as usual, then a "kind-hearted woman" offered them a mansion.

Ever restless, they soon moved on to New York. There, the artists and writers flocked around them seeking entry to *The Little Review*. Rich in culture, but utterly poor, they one day realized they had nothing left but a sack of potatoes.

"*For three days we ate nothing but potatoes, arranged in every possible way to which the potato will lend itself.*"

And that in a way is the secret of their charming life together. Penniless wherever they went, they managed to arrange what they had into a semblance of elegance. They were interior decorators, they were carpenters, plasterers, floor layers, gardeners. Wherever they lived was transformed by their talents. Whatever they set their minds to do they did, despite lack of materials, money and know-how.

One of the most impressive accomplishments was the publishing of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Beginning in March, 1918, *The Little Review* ran *Ulysses* serially month after month for three years. Joyce (after seven years of work on the novel) had been unable to find a publisher anywhere. He had exhausted all possibilities when Ezra Pound sent the first chapter of the manuscript to Margaret.

She immediately decided to print it which caused her the scorn of just about every critic, every reviewer, alive at the time. They were accused of being pur-

veyors of filth by the critics, the United States Post Office burned all the copies mailed of four separate issues for obscenity, and finally Margaret and Jane were arrested, brought to trial and fined a hundred dollars for "obscenity." (A friend paid their fine.)

Only after they had championed Joyce and endured this kind of harassment for years did the literary establishment begin to take Joyce seriously.

After ten years of struggling with *The Little Review* Margaret felt it was time for her to do something else. "Ten years of one's life is enough to devote to one idea" she said, "unless one has no other ideas." Jane could not have disagreed more. Always "at swordpoints over our ideas of human development," Jane saw no reason at all to suddenly dissolve *The Little Review.*

Margaret decided that what she really wanted to do was to go to Europe and meet some of the people she had always wanted to know.

She "gave" *The Little Review* to Jane, but then at the last minute Jane decided to go to Europe too and so *The Little Review* took up residence in Paris.

It was Paris in the Twenties—Ezra Pound, James Joyce, Gertrude Stein, Hemingway, Cocteau, Gide—and Margaret was in the thick of it.

Jane apparently was not. She moved *The Little Review* back to New York and during 1924-27 she made it "the American mouthpiece" for modern art: German expressionists, Russian constructionists, French surrealists.

Finally, in 1929 Margaret and Jane agreed that *The Little Review* should be brought to a close—but of course with a bang not a whimper.

For their final extraordinary issue she and Jane decided to send out a list of essential questions to "fifty of the foremost men and women of the arts." The responses were amazing (see *The Little Review Anthology*), but perhaps not as good as the questions themselves.

I reprint them here in hopes, dear reader, that they may evoke from you some thoughts of your own, and possibly new material for *Amazon Quarterly*. We'll continue the saga of Margaret and Georgette LeBlanc et. al. next issue.

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What should you most like to do, to know, to be? (in case you are not satisfied.)
2. Why wouldn't you change places with any other human being?
3. What do you look forward to?
4. What do you fear most from the future?
5. What has been the happiest moment of your life? The unhappiest? (If you care to tell.)
6. What do you consider your weakest characteristics? Your strongest? What do you like most about yourself? Dislike most?
7. What things do you really like? Dislike? (Nature, people, ideas, objects, etc. Answer in a phrase or a page, as you will.)
8. What is your attitude toward art today?
9. What is your world view? (Are you a reasonable being in a reasonable scheme?)
10. Why do you go on living?

by BARBRY and NANCY

LESBIANS: BY, FOR AND ABOUT

NOVELS

Bannon, Ann	**I Am A Woman** (Fawcett)
Barnes, Djuna	**Nightwood** (New Directions) **Ryder**
Barney, Natalie Clifford	**The One Who is Legion** (London, Eric Partridge, 1930)
deBeauvoir, Simone	**She Came to Stay** (Dell)
Bedford, Sybille	**A Compass Error** (Ballantine)
Bolton, Isabel	"Ruth and Irma" in **21 Variations on a Theme** (NY, Cory)
Colette	**In School in Paris** and the entire Claudine series
Haggerty, Joan	**Daughters of the Moon** (Bobbs-Merrill)
Hall, Radclyffe	**The Well of Loneliness**
Harris, Bertha	**Catching Saradove** (Harcourt, World and Brace) **Confessions of Cherubino** (Harcourt, World and Brace)
Hellman, Lillian	**The Children's Hour** (Signet)
Howard, Elizabeth Jane	**Odd Girl Out** (Viking)
Jackson, Shirley	**Hangsaman** (Ace) **We Have Always Lived in the Castle** (Popular Library) **The Haunting of Hill House** (Popular Library)
Kavan, Anna	**Asylum Pieces** (Doubleday)
Leduc, Violette	**La Batarde** (Panther) **Ravages** (Panther) **Therese and Isabelle** (Dell) **Mad In Pursuit**
McCarthy, Mary	**The Group** (Signet)
Mallet-Jorris, Francoise	**The Illusionist** **The Witches**

Miller, Isabelle	**Patience and Sarah** (McGraw-Hill)
Morgan, Claire	**The Price of Salt** (Bantam)
Murdoch, Iris	**The Unicorn** (Avon) **An Unofficial Rose** (Viking) **The Italian Girl** (Avon) **An Accidental Man**
Nin, Anais	**A Spy in the House of Love** (Swallow) **Children of the Albatross** (Swallow) **Ladders to Fire** (Swallow)
Olivia (Dorothy Bussey)	**Olivia** (Berkeley)
Renault, Mary	**The Middle Mist** **Promise of Love** These 2 books are virtually unavailable.
Rochefort, Christiane	**Warrior's Rest** (Fawcett) **Stanzas to Sophie**
Rule, Jane	**Desert of the Heart** (London, Secker and Warburg) **Against the Season** **This is Not for You**
Sackville-West, Victoria	**The Dark Island** (Doubleday)
Sarrazin, Albertine	**Astragal** **The Runaway**
Slead, Christina	**Dark Places of the Heart** (Holt, Rhinehard, Winston)
Stein, Gertrude	**3 Lives** **Lucy Church Amiably**
Torres, Tereska	**Women's Barracks** (Fawcett)
Weirauch, Anna	**The Outcast** **The Scorpion** (Avon, Fawcett)
Wittig, Monique	**The Opopanax** (Simon & Schuster) **Les Guerilleres** (Viking)
Woolf, Virginia	**Orlando** (Signet) **Mrs. Dalloway** (Harvest) **To the Lighthouse** (Harvest)
Wollestonecraft , Mary	**Mary, A Fiction** (London, Johnson, 1788)

NON-FICTION: ESSAYS, DIARIES, ETC.

Abbot, Syndey, and Love, Barbara	**Sappho Was a Right-On Woman** (Stein & Day)
Barnes, Djuna	**Ladies Almanac** (Paris, 1923)
deBeauvior, Simone	**The Second Sex** (Bantam)
Brooks, Romaine	**No Pleasant Memories**
Colette	**Earthly Paradise** (NY, Farrar) **The Pure and the Impure** (NY, Farrar)
Damon Gene and Stuart, Lee	**The Lesbian in Literature**, available by sending $2.25 to The Ladder, Box 5025 Washington Station, Reno, Nevada, 89503.
Davis, Elizabeth Gould	**The First Sex** (G.P. Putnam's Sons)
Diner, Helen	**Mothers and Amazons** (Julian Press)
Foster, Jeanette	**Sex Variant Women in Literature**
Goldsmith, Margaret Leland	**Christina of Sweden** (Doubleday)
Martin, Del and Phyllis Lyon	**Lesbian/Woman** (Glide)
Mavor, Elizabeth	**The Ladies of Llangollen** (London, Michael Joseph)
Nin, Anais	**The Diary of Anais Nin, I, II, III, IV,** (Harvest)
Solanas, Valerie	**S.C.U.M. Manifesto** (Olympia)
Stein, Gertrude	**Selected Writings** (Vintage) **World Is Round** (Camelot) **Fernhurst, QED, and Other Early Writings** **Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas**
Troubridge, Lady Una	**The Life and Death of Radclyffe Hall** (NY Citadel)
Barney, Natalie Clifford	**Souvenirs Indiscrets** **Pensees d'une Amazone**

by LINNEA DUE

Beka Lundberg came to Sarah Lawrence with a ready-made reputation. She was a poet; she'd already published poems in four magazines by the time she was eighteen. She was also a thief, though that might be putting it a little strongly. She just kept on getting caught (and laughing), while all the rest of us managed to shoplift with impunity. I asked one of the graduates of her Very Proper School for Young Ladies, if Beka had more than just anticipated her inevitable comparison with Genet. I suggested that on some dark and otherwise nameless night, little Beka, alone in the school chapel perhaps, had plotted her poems and plotted her thefts, eager to sacrifice social propriety for a leap ahead of other aspiring young writers. The graduate, disinterested in people's motives, never answered my question, but told me instead that Beka had been too drunk to walk up the aisle during the school's commencement exercises.

To me at first, Beka was no more than a tiny jab, a small irritant. No one compared me to Genet, possibly because I was careful never to be caught. I was a junior by the time she entered Sarah Lawrence with her reputation. My daily life had fallen into a routine: one day I spent studying, and that evening I'd drink from sundown til I passed out. The second day, I recovered from a blinding hangover, doing errands that weren't too taxing. I would write on the third day in this series, closeting myself in my room with Diet-Rite Colas and packs of cigarettes. The next day, I started the sequence again. It was a pattern that suited me.

I only allowed myself one luxury. My comfort was my fantasy woman lover, Mary. When I'd entered Sarah Lawrence, two years earlier, bereft of any kind of reputation, I'd meant to leave Mary back at my parents' house, curled up in my pillow, where she stayed when I wasn't around. But two months later, I gave in, and she flew out to New York and joined me in my tiny room. My room now was a little bigger, and I shared a bathroom with one girl instead of sixteen. Mary didn't care about my rise in status; all she wanted was to be with me, wherever I was. But my fantasy lover was no clinging violet. She had her own friends, and she painted brilliant hard-edge canvases in desert oranges and browns. Because she was imaginary, she was an ideal lover, there when I needed her, painting when I wanted to be alone. Childish games, I would say to myself in strong and repressive moments, but Mary would return, later that evening or the next day, and I would be comforted while I waited for her flesh and blood ebodiment to step into my life.

The morning of one of my hungover days was when I first spied this clever operator, Beka Lundberg. I was at a table in the old Oak Cafeteria, sipping coffee to perk me up, and gulping milk to calm me down, while my stomach bulged out like a tormented boil. Beka, tall and slender, her short hair a dark, curly cap, strode to the coffee machine like a gladiator about to fight. A cigarette hung from her lower lip, and I could see her teeth

by LAUREL

CONVERSATION

As I look back on my life I see that what I have desired and looked for more than anything else is good conversation. I have not had many. Only a handful, and those are indelible memories now.

In search of good conversation I emerged from the sludge of Southern small town ignorance and made my way to a university. I did not find it there. I stayed on for graduate school thinking surely this was another level of seriousness, a place where others would have the same hunger as I. I did not find it there.

Finally, I decided I must leave the South to find what I wanted. I came to Berkeley four years ago. I have found it occasionally, but still I am in contact at this moment with only a very few people who have any interest in conversation.

In the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries before the Romantic idealization of the inarticulate set (when in order to be "felt" something need necessarily be inexpressible), people used to have conversations. Yes, the rich, the leisure class—but what other art form is so accessible to the mass of humankind? It requires no material, no equipment—nothing besides two partakers (or more) and in this day and age the absence of television.

Sometimes it's hard to envision just what people did before Marconi. They talked. And if the human race then was at least as intolerant to boredom as we are today we know that they must have taken some pains to make their talk interesting—at least as interesting as t.v. or they should have all gone mad blathering in the drawing room every night, each other's sole entertainment.

I am sure good conversation is still possible despite McLuhan, despite television, and despite the general anti-egghead sensibility which all of us in America have been nurtured on. I operate on that hope. And it is largely that hope which was behind my starting this magazine.

What in the world has all this to do with lesbians or for that matter feminism? A lot. In all my endeavors to find conversation, until the last three years, I looked only to men—unconsciously of course—but most definitely I supposed them more interested in such things than women. A fatal assumption on my part because as I have come to define conversation it is all but impossible between a man and a woman—that is be-

tween two people who do not have equal self-images. A man, even the most radical exception to chauvinism on earth—a pure lamb—can be matched with a woman and unless she is free of every vestige of her old inferior self-image the discourse will be unequal and the energy impeded. The above situation would be close to ideal compared to the more usual situation where self-image does not even have a chance to enter in—where the male's image of the woman is so negative that the woman's self-image really makes no difference.

So, the first criteria it seems to me for a good conversation is that the people have equal self-images. Neither feels intimidated by the other and neither feels the other to be less stimulating, less intelligent, less experienced, etc. than herself.

We've all had days when we've talked to several people in succession and noticed that some exchanges were completely and hopelessly awkward making us feel like real dolts and then others left us amazed at the ease and the fruitfulness of the talk. But usually we don't stop to compare them and to try to figure out what the dynamic is behind a good conversation. I want to do that—to try to understand what the factors are in a good conversation so that, hopefully, I'll be able to have more of them.

The self-image criteria is very important, I think. Even between women—between lesbians—it could get in the way. Lots of things bespeak our self-image; many of them in body language. The way we hold our head, whether or not we look directly into the other person's eyes, how we use our hands and the rest of our body when we talk.

Submission gestures are not limited to the interaction between men and women. Many women I know, lesbians even who think of themselves as real "tough tits," come on just like their straight sisters: smiling constantly even though what they say is not humorous or even pleasant, their head cocked to one side, their glance averted or their eyes cast down at the floor. Research with primates (monkeys, chimpanzees, apes) has surfaced a whole battery of submission gestures which distinguish the female from the male among monkeys. These gestures are the key signals in maintaining their hierarchical culture. I'm not aware of similarly detailed studies of submission gestures among humans, but certainly we should be able to translate the findings. Of course, women do not corner the market on this. Many men who have failed in a sexist culture to bare the cross of masculinity also project submission gestures—sometimes even to females. And there are vestiges of submission gestures even in lesbians.

This may seem a digression, but I think this factor of body language plays a very significant part in determining the course of a conversation. Many of our cues to how we will speak and how we will listen we pick up from nonverbal signals. If my partner is chewing her nails to the quick, looking at the ceiling between each sentence and tapping the floor with a fury I do not look forward to a good conversation. If my partner's eyes seem to loom at me from the ceiling, her voice is twice too loud, and her gestures look like boxing exercises I am too intimidated to even think about conversation.

Leaving the physical, there are also verbal cues that tell us (even if subconsciously) that the conversation is doomed to be very shallow or very awkward because the two people do not have equal self-images. If a person couches every remark with a barrage

of self-doubting qualifiers ("I think, perhaps I'm wrong but, it seems to me, etc.") or if she cannot seem to use any but the vocabulary of the hippy handbook ("Far out, with it, together, out of sight") or some equally role-ridden language I give up quickly. This is not a person but a role that I'm encountering.

I am talking, you might say though, about being *articulate*. Recently there has been much discussion of that word because of an upsurge of interest in class among lesbians. In Berkeley several class workshops have formed to discuss how lesbians of the middle class oppress working class lesbians. One primary outcome of this has been the assertion that middle class women are more "articulate" and therefore oppress working class women by "outtalking" them. *The Furies* has been driving this point home now (with hardly any variation) every issue since the paper started. They take it so seriously it seems that every writer on the paper has decided to write and talk inarticulately. The paper is now a mess of shoddy journalism and consciously dull writing. (Lest you think I'm suspect, my father was a barber, my mother a "housewife," and I only pay $1.00 for my food stamps.)

The way to handle this problem of unequal articulacy is not to hush the women who for some reason (and I'm not sure class is necessarily the reason) can speak their thoughts directly, but to come to a better understanding of why some women cannot and how they begin to break down their barriers.

That, I suppose, is the province of psychology, but conversation as I think of it is the province of art. Once two people feel themselves to be equal and that they have some common interest to talk about, real conversation as opposed to communication becomes possible (not likely, but possible).

I think of conversation as an art directly related to but even more exciting and demanding than writing. I have not said better. Certainly the written word is much better for communicating a lot of things than the spoken word. But the timing, the immediacy of a conversation, is to me usually more exciting than my interplay with my typewriter. It is thinking on my feet which excites me—the fact that sometimes when I open my mouth in reply I do not know what will come out. I love being surprised—learning from my mind what I could not have predicted it would say. And I love the glow on the other person's face that tells me she too is thinking and discovering as she speaks. It is this mutual act of discovery which I would abandon an icecream cone midway for or even, I suppose, rise from the conjugal bed. Gina tells me it is only my satiety on this front which allows me to make such a glib remark, but I'm not sure. I'm really not sure. I love great conversation (as little as I've had of it) nearly, I think, above all else in life.

I love it so much that I have gone to some length to try to figure out just what the circumstances are that produce the fever in my cheeks and the rising adrenalin in my system that tells me I'm having a good conversation.

First of all, I think, good conversation must be about something—something which is equally important to the conversers. This presupposes a certain amount of "common ground"—a common field of experience of knowledge from which to draw. This need

not be a narrow range however: Sally whose interest is in Chinese culture may find many fertile cross-currents with Nancy who has a passion for Classical Greece. The generalizations they draw from their exchange of information may take them far beyond what either of them suspected—off as far as their own fantasies—perhaps even beyond the conscious mind. The starting points appear mundane, but with equal risk-taking the conversation may soar far beyond the topic.

Equal risk-taking. I think that's very important. That means that Sally will risk being wrong knowing that Nancy has no objection at all to her trying out theories on her and then maybe later erasing them if they prove to be wrong. Saying only what you are sure of—sticking to the facts—is not conversation—it is recitation. The beauty of the dance between you is that you are not confined to the box step. You can go anywhere discovering potential in yourselves you had never dreamed of. Look for new patterns. Put your thoughts together and see what generalizations you can draw.

A meaningful conversation for me is one in which each person contributes her experience in order to increase the range of perceptions available from which to draw conclusions about how to live. That's a mouthful that sounds something like a textbook definition or rules on the lid of a game. But the important part is that this conversation may have the effect of changing the way I live. In order for any real excitement to build that has to be the case. I have to think there is potentially some way that this conversation will change my life. If I smugly assume that this will have no effect on me—it won't.

So far I've been talking about preliminaries—attitudes that are necessary before the act. Equality, some common ground, a willingness to risk being wrong or even absurd, and an openness to the changes the conversation may precipitate.

Assuming all those things are in good order what about the conversation itself. How should it develop? There is of course no "should" but I do think there must be short cuts and pitfalls which are predictable.

First, it seems to me, each contribution to the conversation should develop the previous one in some way. It might show exceptions to what has been said, alternate means of perceiving the same material, add a confirming example from another range of experience, or question in further detail what was meant. The conversation is not really developing if the unspoken point behind any contribution is "yes, that happened to me too—we are so much alike" or even "no, that never happened to me—we are so different." The point is not for two people to sort out likes and dislikes, not to compare orientations, life styles, beliefs, etc. (a static and ultimately meaningless activity), but to benefit from their mutual pool of experience.

And a quick leap from pools to mires here—there are certain pitfalls which can be avoided . . . or stated differently there are certain conversational games which we can steer clear of.

I try to notice if there are too many questions being asked rather than statements being made without invitation. Two problems here—either there might be some kind of cat and mouse interaction where a certain shyness to speak unless requested to is coming out, or worse, the person asking the questions—asking for an opinion on this or

that—may just be politely opening up the course to giving (ladling out his-her) already formed opinion.

If I notice that there are a great number of anecdotes being exchanged I ask myself why. I think this comes from a desire for the safety of remaining in past experience. I try to get out of the past and launch into what the past indicates might be the future.

If I or the other person has said something before and we feel the necessity of quoting ourselves from a previous conversation with someone else what are either of us learning? Some ideas, some episodes from our past will no doubt prove useful in several conversations with different people, but it surely would be a waste to keep dragging them out of the closet every time because they already have a ring of truth about them from before.

As a conversation progresses it should be obvious that often we have several choices of ways to respond. Maybe they might even be contradictory. I try to notice if my choice is based on which of the several ideas will be easiest to convey, which I think will impress my partner most, which my partner will swallow the easiest, or ideally, which really comes closest to my present feeling. Every time we open our mouths it seems to me there are at least two or three possible choices of ideas and hundreds of ways we could express them. How do we choose our words once we've selected the idea? Why sometimes do we hear ourselves being terribly professor-like, rational as can be, and then other times we sound to ourselves like we've just taken a tremendous dose of acid even when we haven't? I don't think the variety is bad—probably it helps to vary your mode of response when you can. If usually I select what is easiest to convey though, I should try choosing the hardest thing to say or the most unlikely (unprovable) of my ideas if I am usually cautious.

Overall, I think a good conversation moves inductively. Neither partner knows exactly what it is that the conversation is "about" until the end. The patterns, the true significance of what has been said, come out in the course of the talk. Ideally we shouldn't be concerned with convincing anyone, but with fertilizing the soil, increasing the possibilities in the thoughts and actions of each.

Good conversations for me tend to end with a hug—at least some physical expression of the joy at having grown together through the exchange. And of course, there is really no need to wait 'til the end. Physical communication during a conversation even if it's only squeezing a hand to emphasize important points makes verbal communication a lot more forceful.

You may wonder at this rambling on so about conversation, but for me it is preliminary to love. It is the creation of a spark between me and another which may allow us to open our lives to one another and then our arms. It is (good conversation) saying look we will explore some changes together. May our voyage be risky and our spirit dauntless . . . Love may lie on the other side.

(And that's another chapter my hardies, defining that "love" will have to wait. Would someone out there like to try her hand at it?)

CARSON BYERS

CONTRIBUTORS

ANN FORFREEDOM — Los Angeles feminist and editor of *Women Out of History: A Herstory Anthology.*

BARBARA FREEMAN — When called on at 7:15 on the night of November 2 by the editors of *Amazon Quarterly* to give two sentences of autobiographical copy, Barbara Freeman said, "I think autobiographical information is bullshit."

CARSON BYERS — Makes etchings and water color paintings and goes to California College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland, California.

ERIKA — I am an intermediate Lesbian, having come out too late to be an "old" Lesbian and slightly too soon to be a fully certified "new" one. I am an editor and I live in San Francisco.

GINA — I am learning to have my cake and eat it too.

JUDY GRAHN — Works with the Women's Press Collective in Oakland.

JUDY LINHARES — An artist and teacher, currently initiating a women's studio class at California College of Arts and Crafts.

LAUREL — Spending half my life on *Amazon Quarterly* at present—writing some and loving.

LINNEA DUE — I graduated from Sarah Lawrence in 1970 and I've been trying ever since to write full time.

PEGGY ALLEGRO — This article, composed 1½ years ago under the influence of hashish, was my last written statement to the world. After all, what else was there to say. I now channel my abilities for creative expression into playing guitar in a rock and roll band.