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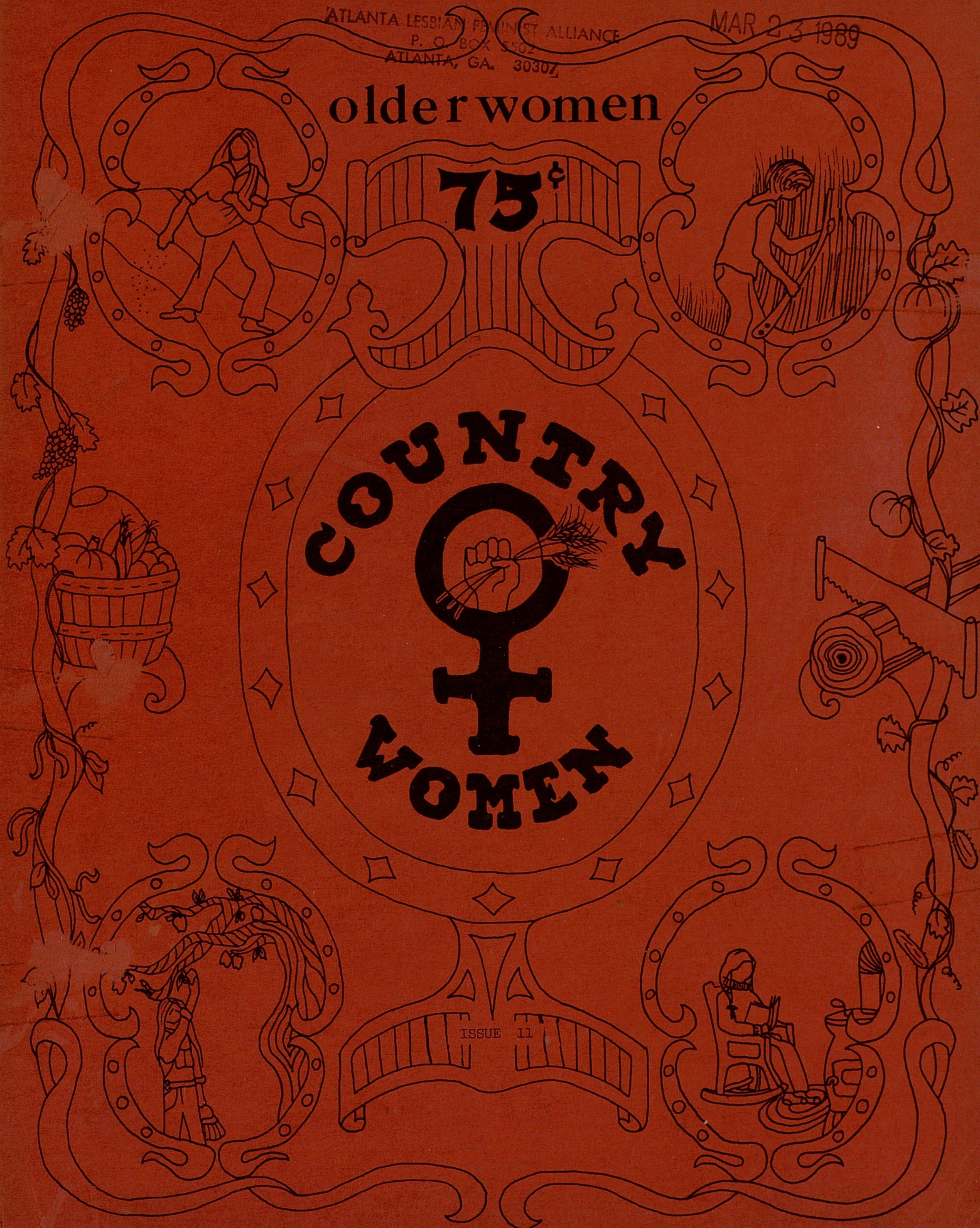
MAR 23 1989

older women

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COUNTRY  
WOMEN

ISSUE 11





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## DUST BOWL LITERATURE

She wrote speckly  
ON EASTER EGGS, CHRISTMAS CARDS, TEDDY BEAR  
CYCLOP DISASTERS, TEN FINGER EXERCISES FOR  
small span hands, skin soft moccasins  
stiffened with stiffened socks, HUDSON'S BAY  
bread and buns baking CONTESTS, NO EGGS NO  
butter COOKERY, an apple cut INTO eighths,  
DEPRESSION cheques, FESTIVAL programs,  
TOQUES, PETTICOATS, OXFORDS, TEXT books bound  
IN INK blots, coal oil shampoo FOR de-lousing  
sociably tangled heads, RECYCLED UNDERWEAR  
handed down the PUBERTY line, WEDDING cakes  
wedding layered SISTERS COUSINS AUNTS daughters  
ANTICIPATORY cakes, birth blasts IN unabashed  
rhythm, FUNERAL fanfare, phantom walks IN  
IMAGINARY drafts, TWILIGHT surgical charts and  
SETTING pins, ENVELOPES wrinkled through  
implacable mail chutes.

I WRITE her a STANDING OVATION, sealed late  
delivered (NO flowers) to myself.



# Letter from Kafi

May 10, 1974

Dear Country Women anywhere,

I have never written an article for a publication in my life--not that I haven't thought of the idea many times.

I will begin with December 7, 1912- San Francisco. I like to think that I chose my parents, my mother in particular because she bore me and raised me to the things she believed in. The doors of the music world were opened to me from the start. I loved the ballet and piano which I feel have strongly influenced my life and character.

When I turned eight years we moved to the country town of Corte Madera, Marin County. I recall my mother being permitted her first vote along with millions of women throughout the U.S. There was such a fine relationship with my mother. She taught me to crochet, embroider, bake, sew, and many other things that loving mothers do for their children. Then after three beautiful protected childhood years, with mixed childhood sufferings and happiness, we moved to Hayward, Calif., actually a small community called Tennyson. I attended the Tennyson country school house (two rooms). I was always eager to oblige by playing the piano for anything I was asked for. I especially was happy to play the background music when our teacher or a student made a recitation. It strikes me now that I guess it took the place of what I wanted to do, to play for the moving picture theatre. The talkies had long now taken over and the music in the show was canned.

I want to say that in moving to Tennyson we were really shifting gears from the lush redwood country living ways to kerosene lamps, and wood and oil burning stoves. It was pumping water from the well by hand for all needs, and, of course, the beautiful outhouse. I like the idea of all these different things, but I still missed the beautiful redwood lands of Corte Madera.

My stepdad was of the old customs of Greece and believed girls were to stay at home and not go to school functions. I was contemplating trying to get a live-in housekeeping job in Hayward later on. My parents would not hear of it and I didn't push the subject. I was the oldest of four and was needed at home. I thought to help with the chickens and rabbits, turkeys and pigeons. It was good. I loved the chores really and the smells of the little farm.

When I graduated from our little school, there was a decision to make. What was I going to study at high school in Hayward? My mother said I should take business because as a girl, I might have to make my own living some day. So I majored in business and minored in music. I always played for school orchestra and noon-time dances and programs and loved all the good days.



December 8, 1930 I was to go to the front door and meet my life-long mate, Harvey. In 1933 I was working a little in the cannery fruit dryer and giving piano lessons to the neighborhood kids. The country was going through the depression now in full swing. Harvey and I thought we would get married as we still were in love. He was working at the Holly Beet Sugar mill in Alvarado. The cutting season lasted from three to four months. His pay check came every two weeks, at 27 1/2 cents per hour, seven days a week and twelve hours a day. After five years, including the ones we were married, he received a raise to 32 1/2 cents per hour.

Harvey always saw to it that our shoes were soled and heeled. We made a shoe last in those days. I made our first quilt top, and since I knew nothing about quilting frames then, I had the ladies from the Mormon Church quilt it for \$3.00.

Around 1934 the first job Harvey and I ever got together we made 68 cents for an all day's work picking peas. That beet cutting season I got a job in the sugar mill lunch counter run by an older woman friend of ours. I took a shift by myself and had all the cooking and preparation for the next shift if I was working the early A.M. If I was working the late night shift then there was the cleaning, and mopping of the splintery floors. I was right there to serve the coffee to the men who usually had to eat on the run. There was a large bowl of red and green fresh chili peppers for the ones who like to pop them in their mouths. This was a taste of a little responsibility I had never really known before.

The little cottage we lived in on Railroad Ave. was to be our home for the next three years.



We had a flower garden, fruit trees, a few chickens and the always outhouse. We managed to save money out of our meager checks for a few months. There was no employment insurance in those days. I still had a couple of pupils I gave lessons to and 50¢ a lesson was like a gift to me. Harvey and I cut apricots for seven cents a cannery lug at the local fruit dryer.

I became pregnant and got the notion we should move into town. In the late summer the mill would start and Harvey would go back, but this year, 1936, we had had enough of the slave-like working conditions at Holly Sugar mill and decided to shift gears. The W.P.A. came into being and Harvey got a job in it for \$12 a month, for one week's work, so that the work would stretch for more people to benefit by it. We got behind in our utility bill and rent. We moved into town owing our landlady rent.

I thought I had two months before our baby would come but I began to have low back pains and by night my water had broken, so the substitute doctor said he would go to the hospital to get ready for me. Harvey gathered me up in his arms and took me to the hospital. Upon arriving at the hospital we found the front door locked. Harvey kicked at the door to attract attention and was finally asked if we had made arrangements- and here we were with the water running down my husband's pant's leg. Doctors had quit letting women have their babies in the home by this time. I had a real fast delivery and felt fine. Our baby was so tiny, and I lost my milk. She became blue and the doctor said to find a nursing mother. We did and Lois Pearce breast fed our little girl for almost three months. I was not as lucky with our premature baby boy who came in 1938, still the depression years. Sammy was born in Highland Hospital, Oakland. I was staying at my mother's in Hayward so Harvey could transport my milk every night after work to Oakland in our dump truck (he was trying to eek out a living by hauling gravel with it). We found out when we picked up our baby that my milk was never given to him, it was thrown out.

We were living in the country now in Alvarado. I put up fruit and was fortunate in having many vegetables given us by the neighbor farmers. One day Harvey drove up in our dump truck and had a surprise for me. It was my 26th birthday and it was a lovely old upright piano and the tone was soft and mellow. I had arthritis by now and it was painful for me to play or walk.

We decided to try it in Colorado. Grand Junction is where Harvey wrote a friend to see if there was work there. The friend wrote back and we sold most every thing for six dollars and left my piano as security for payment on the old Plymouth car we purchased. So leaving my few treasures at my mother's we migrated to my husband's home town. I was in better spirits and Harvey also was eager to do for his little family. We had the sum of \$35 or \$37 to make the trip. We found Colorado less hospitable than California and the job was not there that Harvey was promised. We came back to California within the month with \$12 to make the

trip.

We next tried Daly City where Harvey thought there would be better opportunity for work. Our car broke down and when Harvey did get work he had to carry his tools on the street car. But things were looking better. Daly City was just a small district in those days before the war. Beautiful backyard gardens, vegetables and fruit. I played games with our babies and sang to them and danced with them.

Now there seemed to be plenty of work because we were just on the line of war. Harvey was working in Vallejo on Mare Island. The commute was too much so we purchased a little 14 ft. homemade trailer and moved to Mission Motel in Vallejo. Those were such fast changing times. Harvey got into the labor union and then the Carpenter union, but not easily.

My husband went on jobs building everything on construction for the war machine now in full swing.

Then World War II as we know it was declared December 7, 1941. I was 29 years old that very day. In 1942 we moved to San Pablo, and Harvey by now was working at the Kaiser shipyards. We bought two lots and a little larger trailer to live in while we built our first home. It was done all from scratch and after working hours and on weekends. I got a job at the master files office at Kaiser shipyard and worked the shift from midnight to 7:00 a.m. and got paid for nine hours.

We bought two pianos and I was teaching. Every one had money and I was building up quite a class of piano students. I also was studying piano from Lillian Carrier in Richmond. (The two piano studio idea I believe I'm about to realize again in 1974.)

For some unknown reason I really never felt I was growing older, only when a person would make some remark - like- well after all you are past thirty or you're too old to start this or that. It hurt my feelings sometimes, and now I realize I let them hurt my feelings.

After World War II, Richmond was skyrocketing with all kinds of people from all over. The children were in split class sessions. When I took the family skating with the Brownies or Girl Scouts it was like a jungle pandemonium. Therefore, we gave some thought to moving north into the Sierras. We moved to Susanville, Lassen County, purchased another small trailer and sold our beautiful home. We purchased a two acre piece of land along the railroad and began a new life. Shifting past thirty seemed like a real challenge and the children were thrilled and happy. We were interested in just making a modest living and sending our children to school. We still had the notion that public education was an opportunity and hadn't quite yet been turned on to the different life style we are in today.

We built our home in a little district called Johnstonville, out of Susanville. The Sierras and a dry climate was definitely another change for me. We planned to have a feed store business and farm implement supply store on consignment. We couldn't acquire a bank loan to get our start and would have had to

continued



put up our property and home for security, plus a large down payment. The mountain town did not seem too friendly somehow. Harvey was a skilled carpenter and craftsman by this time. We had a well drilled by a so called experienced well driller. The water was not the best because he did not go deep enough or to the right strata. But that was all the outside work. We did all the rest.

We had the land to plant and our dear farmer neighbor loaned us a plow and harrow. We had no horses so we used our big World War II radio command car four wheel drive to pull the plow. The garden was spectacular, we never had such a beautiful vegetable garden: beans, potatoes, cabbage, tomatoes, squashes and corn, etc. I guess we really hit a good year. Then the next year was a short season and frost and snow came early and cut our garden down. Things froze and we were saddened. My new fruit trees all froze except for one cherry.

As I mentioned, Harvey was a skilled craftsman carpenter now and Susanville was fortunate to have him. The building and hard work was taking a toll on his health though, so we decided to go into a business that would include our children too. We bought a pumice brick plant and put it up on our land. We made the most beautiful Pumice blocks, different colors of the rainbow, and had many requests for them. We were now in our forties but since we started on a shoestring we couldn't get ahead any amount. Harvey was still getting requests to build houses and do remodeling. So the small business was being hassled and he decided to return to carpentering for someone else. I didn't go totally along with the idea but he was the head of the house.

I went to work in the small Greyhound depot restaurant, making pies from scratch, peeling dozens of apples a day and preparing other stuff, besides waiting on counter. It was like starting a new vocation once more. I was complimented on the things I made and it was gratifying. Our daughter Claudia came to work during the summer and it was real fine to be able to relate to each other. I was still teaching piano now and had about six students, adults and children.

One day during a time when every other person had some kind of flu I too came down with it. I phoned the cafe that I was ill and could not come to work. I was told I need not return to work. I later went to work in a drug, magazine, fountain and liquor combination store. I stated that I had my music students and would have to have certain time off. In the meantime I had been a 4-H sewing leader and was teaching round dances to the 4-H kids.

On my 42nd birthday I felt fine. I really never worried about insecurities. Harvey has always made me feel secure to live my life without difficulties. So what is maturing? I think it is staying young at heart and spirit. I never really have given much thought to Harvey and I being young or old.



We sold our holdings in Susanville in 1962 and moved down to Marin County where my country life began back in 1920. We could not afford the high price of land there and so we bought a lot in Lake County. Once again we built from scratch in 1963. One day we were driving to the coast to see if we couldn't get closer to the ocean; really it was just an outing. We purchased the thirty acres of land we now live on and started with the land once more. There were no electric wires up the road and the county road was gravel to the coast. We developed the spring and our #1 grandson, then twelve years old, helped grandpa bring the plastic pipe and water to our living pad. We said how we wished we had settled here in our earlier years. But then we would not have known all the sweet joys of poverty as we remember them now.

Now I am working on a so-called senior citizen training program, called Operation Mainstream. It's a training job to supplement your income. I started here in the valley, in the school libraries. I was finally told that I didn't relate to the students. The Superintendent and principal stated they could not recommend me to the school board. (I suppose my life style had something to do with the decision. I have been called the lady with the bone in her hair.)

Harvey and I are applying for our social security the end of this year. I am now playing the piano again and trying to get the Scott Joplin ragtime music to play for fun.

Some time back I felt the need to have friends closer to my years of age because the ones I know now do not accept my simple life style or what I wear. I wear my hair loose and not done up in high style. However, I believe there is a loosening up of acceptance throughout the land. The younger women and men are our friends and they write to us from all parts of the country. ♀



# Suitable for a Mother of Five

My experience of being an older woman in the country is greatly colored by the fact that when I came to Mendocino in the fall of '73 it was to be the first time in my life that I ever lived in the country and also the first time that I ever lived in a "relatable" environment. I had longed for such a world to live in. Being an older woman means I have had many many years to feel longing, many years of living in suburbs with unrelatable neighbours, longing for people "like me". Everyone telling me "there's no such place...people are the same all over..." But I never lost hope and I have been rewarded.

My appreciation of the country and natural, simple life is intensified because of the years spent longing for it. Here, I am deprived of material comforts, yet overwhelmed with natural gifts. I use my body more to climb, carry, lift and I feel stronger rather than weaker, the older I get. So the element of contrast pervades all my experience and I'm constantly forced into an awareness which says, "Look at you Diane, you're doin'it."

Since coming here I have been able, at last, to recognize my true nature as a dancer, free of stereotyped images of what is suitable for a 40 year old woman, mother of five. I sat on my uncontrollable urge to dance to music for 20 years because it embarrassed my husband and my children to see me dance. And I was too embarrassed to dance among friends. I'm just beginning to get free of the inhibitions which say dancing is frivolous and sensual and therefore unsuitable for a middle-aged woman.

"Unsuitable", it occurs to me, is probably the one word that ruins my life the most. It stops me from enjoying the crazy, dangerous, ridiculous fun that young people are free to enjoy. It watches every venture I make into that kind of freedom and takes half the fun out of it. It reminds me of what "normal" women of 40 act like. Years ago when I yelled Fuck!, my husband would say in mock shock, "Diane, such language from a mother of five!"

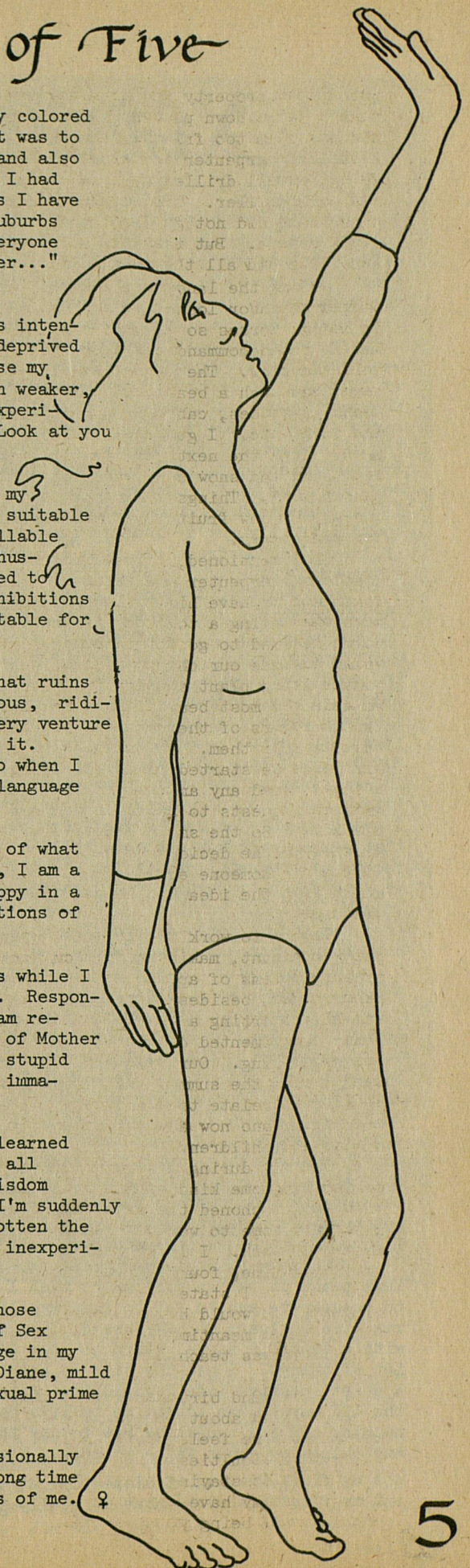
I finally recognize the fact that what I do is an example of what at least one 40 year old woman is like. There is no precedent, I am a precedent. (Everyone is, really, a precedent.) I'm an old hippy in a world of mostly young hippies. Youngness is one of the definitions of hippy. I become a new definition.

I have been a Mother figure for 5 children for 19 1/2 years while I still have an unfulfilled need to live out my own childishness. Responsibility was forced on me before I was ready for it and now I am removing myself, for a while at least, from the responsible role of Mother figure. I do that by fucking up--by not being responsible. A stupid sacrifice it seems, but I can't figure out how to reconcile my immaturity with my maturity.

Part of me feels like a wise, old, experienced woman. I learned a lot in the last 20 years and I'm proud of my experience. But all that is the past. It has nothing to do with my present. My wisdom comes out stale and flat and it bores me. My life is new and I'm suddenly a beginner again. Far from knowing all the answers, I've forgotten the ones I once had. It's hard to reconcile my experience with my inexperience.

And, of course accepting the physical signs of old age--those dreaded physical signs of old age...Feeling like the Goddess of Sex inside, while the graying hair and aging skin destroy that image in my mirror, causing me to run to the phone booth and change into: Diane, mild mannered mature woman. What irony that women are in their sexual prime long after they lose their fleur de jeunesse.

Regardless of the gray hair, wrinkles setting in and occasionally aching back, I feel younger and more alive than I have in a long time and I'm letting my image create itself out of the raw materials of me. ♀





# AGEISM IN PARADISE

How can I say what it is like - being an "older woman" in the country? Is it really any different than ageing in the city? Does the fresh, sea air of this north coastal life keep the roses in my cheeks, chase away the crow's feet, make the young and carefree studs around me more aware of me as a person, now that I am away from the commodity-sex of the city? Do my kids dig the wisdom I have acquired through the inevitable suffering/joy of living on this earth for forty one years? Is it easier raising kids alone in the country, away from the city's corruptions, as I had hoped it would be? And, the real question in my heart when I came here as one of the walking wounded, would I finally get my head screwed-on straight if I left the distractions, the irrelevancies of urban life?

The result of America's cult of youth and beauty worship is ageism and we all know it, but honestly facing its effects on the woman over thirty five is another matter. Living in the country is better only because it is harder; it is hard because, without those multi distractions of city life, one comes face to face with oneself, one's life, one's choices. But I didn't know that in the beginning when I came first to the small town and, two years later, out into the country. I really thought I would be able to drop my defenses here, and that sex and age would become relevant as only facets of the total projection of me. I was very naive in those days. It was necessary to be so. If I had known all the heavy changes that awaited me here, I think I just might have copped-out and stayed where the kids and I could have had available all the instant anesthesia of the plastic jungle.

So I uprooted my children, against their desires and despite the bitter objections of their father. I told all those people, who thought I was crazy to leave a good job and move to the middle of nowhere, that I knew what I was doing. And I did, too. Only I really didn't know it in my heart then. The reason for this was that my heart was half-dead anyway, and all I had to think with was the remnant of a shriveled brain that had been burned out by a high pressure, highly paid job that I loved even though it drained my insides away.

With this transplanting came the discovery that peace in the country meant that I had time to recuperate and to get to know myself. There was time to learn to bake bread, chop wood, deal with a franklin stove, learn to live without a lot of things. I had the time to get to know a quiet, passive lady I would have passed by in the old days. She taught me to live on next to nothing and she taught me how to use the I Ching - two things of great value to know. I think I got my first feeling of sisterhood at that time, and my first awareness that it really is easier

to share with someone of your own vintage and sex - someone who has experienced the same kinds of pain. We would talk about our ageing bodies and laugh - not knowing that we were not really laughing.

I had time to get to know my children. After all, that was one of the things I said that I came here to do. We all remember that first year, the only one when I have not worked an outside job, as a good year for knowing each other. That is not to say it was easy. My daughter's anger and resentment, directed at me for leaving her father, and my son's incessantly spoken need for "a man in my life" was a tremendous amount of negative energy for me to absorb alone. And I was so alone. No one came rushing forward to meet me in that tiny country town.

Because of the rapid influx of ex-flower children, the mores of this community were in a tremendous state of upheaval. Out of this chaos would come something stable and workable, but at that time, there was much splitting and stratification and no real social structure for the ex-middle-class would-be-hip newcomer. When, finally, I crawled out of my shell and into a corner of a subgroup I discovered my first new rule for living. This new rule was: you can do anything you want as long as you don't hurt anyone else too much by doing it. So I did. I burst out of that old social/moral structure like a rocket to the moon and fell flat on my ass. From the upheaval of this experience came my second new rule for living: discarding the outmoded life-style does not mean that it is necessary to become a thirty six year old adolescent, particularly when you are raising two children who are sharing your pain. Although I think I have stopped hating the man who was my partner in this fiasco, his last, mocking words stay with me. He asked me if I really thought that any man would be seriously interested in a deep and on-going relationship with a thirty six year old woman with two kids when there is so much good young stuff around. He was forty one at the time. And when it was all over, I felt real old, undesirable, and silly - like an ageing virgin left waiting at the church.

Meanwhile, I had found a job in the country town, but I fled to the country-country to live. Again, over my children's objections, I transplanted their tenuous roots, which had just begun to acclimate to small town soil, and told them that life would be better out here. And so it is, at least to my way of thinking. The house, although in a beautiful setting on ten acres with some sunny meadow and lots of redwood forest, was in terrible condition. With all the scrubbing, painting and chopping wood in my spare time (while working away from home five days a week) my body, which I had always pushed as far as possible, pushed back. I suppose Number One on the list of middle-aged aches and pains just



may be the bursitis of shoulders and arms which will now be with me the rest of my life. However, just in case anyone should think that nobody knows the troubles I've seen, there is a silver lining to all of this, and that is rule number three for living for Super-Moms. After four years of quasi-country living I have abdicated the position of Super-Amazon-Mom. I have finally learned (I think, although it is really tough to learn new tricks) that it is possible for someone else in the family to do the job - if, indeed, it needs doing at all this week. My daughter, twelve, and son, ten, and I now share all household tasks almost equally. I'm not asking that they like sharing responsibilities equally and I'm not saying that they have always taken to it willingly. However, there is a tremendous satisfaction that comes with the realization that a child who always hassled every step of the way, has become a loving and mature partner. And, as they learn to do their share most of the time, I am learning to nag less and to relax somewhat about the daily business of living. Incidentally, though, for the working mother with older children, country living means intensified childcare problems due to distances, fewer people available and no public transportation. In the country, life is reduced to the basics: food, warmth, shelter, transportation, and childcare if you're lucky.

I am learning also, now that my life is half behind me, to relate to women here in this tiny bastion of feminism. Not quickly or easily, since I never do that anyway with anyone, but I would say that many of my emotional needs for closeness are being met by women now. At the same time I am becoming much more objective about the men around me. I think it is important to remember that the women born in the depression years and growing up in the 40's and 50's grew up in an ambivalently sexist world. In this world, although women were working outside the home in ever-growing numbers, roles were not changing and the sexual mores were still pre-Pill. At least that was the atmosphere I was breathing. I was "reared" (as my mother would say) to be a man-oriented woman. I was sent to college, ostensibly to learn something worthwhile but with the unspoken goal of snatching a good husband - someone who would be, preferably, in one of the "professions". My husband would not grow bored with me if I were his intellectual and educational equal. Other women were my competitors in this race. So, I was married young to a man my family disapproved of, but who encouraged my intellectual aspirations. I did other strange things like going to night school endlessly to get a graduate degree to work in unrewarding work with crazy delinquent kids whom I loved. I divorced the husband who had diligently suffered graduate school with me, threw over everything I had worked so hard for, and through it all I still had my eye on the real goal. That goal, that brass ring, was the perfect, mystical lover who would make it all right somehow. I may have come to the country to find peace and tranquility, but I also was looking, still, for the brass ring.

We live in a society which tolerates the "older woman" only so long as she maintains a

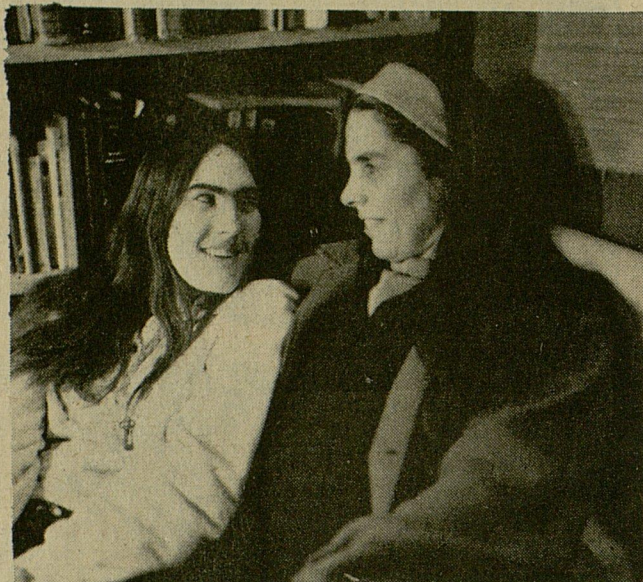


low profile (to quote the words of a friend). The dynamic, challenging young woman becomes, with ageing, a bitchy, aggressive Big-Momma. While men are considered progressively desirable (unless they completely deteriorate), women are valued primarily for their wage-earning and mothering qualities after the age of forty, in this marvelous land of ours. And it doesn't really vary here in the country - there are just fewer interesting men around to even engage one's fantasies. For the heterosexual single woman

continued



over forty, or the unbeautiful single woman over thirty, one lives in a sexual desert where there is a sense of frantically hanging on to each passing possibility (particularly if he is a little younger than you are), hoping that something - anything - will develop. I have researched my subject fairly well with my sisters and this is what they tell me too. This accounts for relationships like the incredibly talented woman and her worn-out thrice-married alcoholic lover.



But, we seldom speak of such things and when we do it is secretly and only to a very trusted friend. Mostly, the young women don't want to hear it. (Do they see their future in our eyes?) The men would ridicule our vulnerability. I know one exception to this: a man who has been my loving friend and brother for ten years, and he is eleven years younger than I. This is not to say that there is never anyone to warm the bed of the older woman. There is always something available if you are into it. But if you want someone with a capacity for sharing, closeness, a kind of warmth and sweetness, and that poignancy that catches your breath, that is something else again. Here in the country, with more quiet and less people, I think about such things.

I live on top of a ridge, overlooking a river, in sheep country. The land around me is still green from the late rains. As I drove home from work the other evening, through a light mist, I saw a rainbow with each color clearly, brilliantly standing out against a bank of dark clouds. The rainbow stretched from the river below me, over the road and into the next valley. Above it was another, much fainter one forming a double arch under which I drove, marveling at the sight. I won't say I found a pot of gold at the end of it. After all, a funky house, two kids, five cats and a baby donkey don't constitute a pot of gold or maybe even a brass ring. But the fire was going and dinner was started, my son's latest invention was whirring away and winter is over; it's time to get the garden in and anyway I'm too tired at night to cry the unshed tears of loneliness behind my eyes before I fall asleep. Besides, I am never afraid of the dark out here. My door is unlocked.

## Flowing with time

A woman's life merges with her years. It is only now she can live expressively with expansion and with great great freedom. No family now to infringe upon her time and energies and no nine to five job to chain her person.

Happiness was not nurured in youth where there was only chaos and confusion. Happiness exists in order, and age provides this relaxing discipline in abundance. Older women may cut their youth experiences into usable lengths and throw the rest away. Unlike youth they are not in a frenetic search for change; they are not setting out to conquer but to enjoy. There is no sharp break but rather continuity between their past and present. I do not want to run a race with time, but to become one with its flow.

The older woman is of course intimately linked to the past but not precisely datable in time since by experience she mistrusts the mirages of history and the illusions of the future. Let the day be clear and blue when we become the "older" woman and let us have plans, intense, creative and absorbing plans. Useful women are beautiful women with distinct personalities that radiate warmth and purpose. Their eyes too, tell you they have an appointment with the wind.

We can give ourselves a facial simply by walking in the woods studying birds, wildflowers and apprenticing ourselves to nature. Here we are alone no more and poor no more. Living close to the land we can transform ourselves, overleap ourselves beyond even our most flamboyant estimations, discovering a human potential that was layered over with social and cultural crusts. Old cares seem to die in the quiet woods that wall us in.

Our workday is not rigidly laid out by a timeclock lacking sensitivity but by a rhythm of discipline that springs from a respect for nature's weather. Our dreams are tamed and our apparitions are made responsible and reliable and we know now that there is a season on both sides of winter. ♀





# from the notebooks of an over-aged communard

Someone left the gate open and the goats are in the vegetable garden, munching winter cabbages. Note to the Burpee Seed Company: "My goats prefer Danish Ballhead to all other varieties, including your triple star All American winner Red Rock."

I shoo the goats and they amble towards the gate. That is, Artemisia ambles, udders flapping, white ears flapping. Sofonisba wears a collar and I try to pull her. I am a little handicapped: I have a game leg. I just saw a podiatrist about it; he took x-rays and told me I have neuromas between my toes, small, benign growths that form on nerve-endings and cause pain. I am sure that Sofonisba has seen the podiatrist's x-rays, or else is blessed with x-ray eyes, because she manages to put her 190 pounds of goat weight on my toes, not to mention the neuromas. Maybe I no longer need the operation as Sofonisba has surely squashed them (both toes and neuromas).

I pull the goat some more, yelling as loud as I can for help. From one of the cabins I can hear the bun-bun-bun of rock beat. Why in hell do people want to live on a farm? To play rock music, of course! Now is the time for all good communards to help round up the goats. I yell some more. No sign of life from the other cabins.

Artemisia now stands in front of the gate, but will not pass through it. She fears narrow passages and will never walk through any of them if people are near. Is she reliving a childhood trauma, when, we think, someone rammed her against a fencepost? I would gladly ram her against one myself this very minute, as she makes a complete turnabout back into the garden to browse among the Brussels sprouts. ("I started them from seed in August, and they are doing perfectly well this year." Oh yeah!) No more, dearest Artemisia. I am still holding on to Sofonisba, pulling her towards the gate and shooing Artemisia closer to it once more. What the hell is a woman my age doing on a farm anyway? What am I doing on this farm? Why don't I get a nice house in town and sit on a porch overlooking the ocean, instead of chasing goats? I recall my daughter Ann saying: "You always complain about your age! You are not old at all! Ruth Stout is 90 and she still gardens from a wheelchair, and in addition she writes articles about it for Organic Gardening." I flash on a book I could write: Herding goats for fun and frolic from a wheelchair. This could become a best seller among Whole Earth Catalogue type people, and I could flesh out my meager social security checks with royalties.

Both goats through the gate now, none of the communards in sight, and now for good old

(or rather young) Roxanne. Roxie, the ex-prom queen among goats, the darling of the farm, the over-aged flapper, is standing in my strawberry bed, a strawberry plant elegantly dangling from her lower lip. What a joyous sight! Specially as this is my third, or fourth, effort at strawberry raising. One for the deer, two for the communards who forgot to water while I was on vacation, three for the little girl who picked the fruit, green, unripened, and pulled most of the plants up too. And now it's Roxanne! Rox, the pox on you! Get the hell out of my strawberries! Roxie is a swift character and runs ahead of me to the golden delicious apple tree, eats a mouthful, waits for me to come closer, and then makes for the raspberries. I still yell for help off and on, but rather half-heartedly. I get Roxie while she is sampling the Swiss chard. She pulls me, I pull her, but somehow she grasps the idea that it might be best to join her "sisters" in the big meadow. We make slow progress: here a nibble, there a nibble, and glory. glory hallelujah: here is one of the communards, up and around already and it's only eleven in the morning! "Do you need any help?" Hell no. I am only yelling because I want to find out whether my voice can carry over 40 acres.

Roxanne has grabbed a mouthful of Danish Ballhead (or is it Early Jersey Wakefield?), and with an appreciative "hmm", she departs through the gate while I passingly slap her rump. ♀





# INSIDE OUT/OUTSIDE IN

Becoming older always meant for me that a woman became more rigid, set in her ways, fearful, anxious and closed off to new experiences. She may have gained a great deal of wisdom from her experiences of the past, but oft-times I saw that her knowledge did not keep up with changing times. I saw this among my friends and I saw it in myself.

I, like many of the young people in 1967, dropped out. The only difference between them and myself was that I was rejecting my former beliefs while they were rejecting those of their parents. I was a member of the generation which was committing genocide on an innocent population, was allowing greater and greater disparity between the haves and the have-nots, was engaged in racial and civil strife in our urban centers, was becoming more and more materialistic and was allowing its technology to destroy our living environment.

I was 46 years old at the time, owned my own home, had a professional career of 25 years standing as a social worker and was very much settled in San Francisco, a city I loved. It was not the restlessness of youth that led me to leave my "comfortable surroundings", nor did it happen overnight. My dropping out resulted from a series of disappointments and a slow process of opening myself up to a new way of thinking and being. I had to expose myself to new surroundings and to people whose concepts and life style were in many ways diametrically opposed to mine. These last seven years have been perhaps the most painful years I have ever experienced and, needless to say, the most fruitful.

In the past, I have always been able to make changes in my life. When I found I was losing my creativity or my job was becoming routine, I took off to Europe with a pack on my back or to Florida to live on a Nova Scotia schooner. I've never allowed myself to be trapped by fear of new surroundings nor feelings of anxiety over loss of professional status or income. I've always appeared like a free spirit to members of my generation; "a little gal with a lot of courage". But inside that gutsy frame of mine, I had always felt very unsure of myself, and had all my life carried with me a negative self-image born out of a deep sense of guilt and failure for not being able to "fit into society". I had always lived in three worlds; the first, that of the respectable social worker; the second, that of the slightly off-beat wanderer, biker, hiker and folk dancer; and the third, that of a lesbian, restricted to gay bars or parties with friends. I could never bring these three worlds of mine together and as a result felt quite fragmented. I had feelings of alienation, but was not conscious at the time where they came from. I now know that most of it came from being a woman in a male-dominated society and a lesbian in a non-accepting heterosexual culture. This new-found consciousness didn't come to me until I became

involved in the women's movement and more specifically in a lesbian/feminist organization, "The Other Side", based in Marin county. I thought that I had a pretty good image of myself as a woman and had gotten over my guilt feelings as a lesbian after I got into gay life at the age of 28. But looking back, I see I had deluded myself and had been suffering from a sense of self-hatred. I see that I was being oppressed as a woman and a lesbian. For the first time, now, I am open about my lesbianism with my heterosexual acquaintances, and have discovered no loss of their respect. This has been a mind blowing and liberating experience for me. I am thankful that I had not lost the key to the closet I was locked into like so many other women of my generation.

My process of radical change began in 1966 when I started to question a lot of my attitudes and techniques in my practice as a social worker. I had always managed to obtain a challenging job, in a small, struggling social agency, so that I could be as informal as possible with people and do something creatively with them. But there was always a distance between myself and those I was helping. I was fortunate in 1966 to get a job in the anti-poverty program, which supposedly was giving jobs only to the "poor". Then I saw those institutions in which I had always believed totally unresponsive to the needs of the poor and minority groups. I was one of the first to be attacked by my co-workers, for I represented to them a member of the oppressing class, and it was not until I listened and responded to them that I was able to share my know-how as a professional social worker with them.

At the same time that I was being radicalized in my political-economic beliefs, I was being turned on by marijuana and LSD by my niece and foster daughter. I was learning new ways to relate to people, the material world and my physical environment. I resisted these changes every inch of the way, trying to protect the traditions of my generation, its social institutions and the concepts of responsibility and respect in which I had always believed. I remember all too well the conversation I had with my niece, Lisa, who finally demanded of me to "just open yourself up and listen". So again I tried to open up, first to the poor and then to the long haired generation to find that most of my cherished beliefs were being shot down by very valid arguments.

During this time a personal episode happened in my life which forced me to take a deeper look at myself. I came home from work one day to discover a half empty house! The woman I had been "married" to for five years had moved out, taking her furniture and her library of over 300 books. Never had there been such empty book shelves in the world. Never had I felt such emptiness in myself. After the initial shock from this event, I became compulsively involved in organizations, committees and in every cause

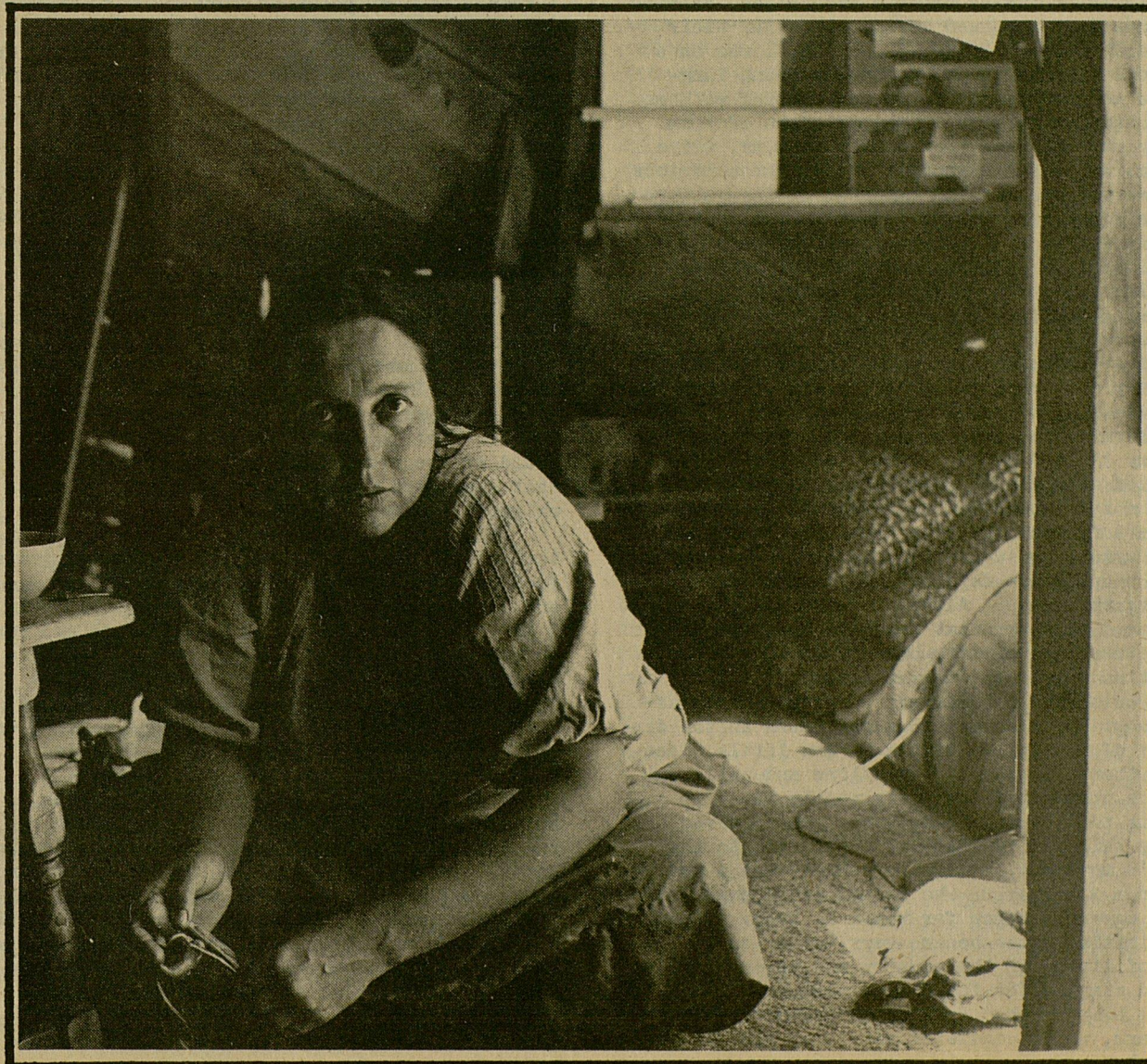


that came my way. But every night I still had to come home to that half empty house, reminding me of those feelings of emptiness inside myself.

A few months later, I quit my job in the anti-poverty program. Without a job, without a spouse, I was desperate to find ways of using my energy to ward off that gnawing sense of loneliness. The protest movement against the Vietnam war was in full swing and before long I became involved in it. I joined a group of people on a journey walking a lighted peace torch from California to the Pentagon. I survived the ordeal gallantly and after the Washington demonstration joined a pacifist group that was working full-time against the war. My experience in the anti-war movement, marching and demonstrating in N.Y., Washington and at the Chicago convention brought me in close touch with those bodies of people which controlled our so-called democratic system. Whatever idealism I had about our free and open society was quickly being destroyed as the war in Vietnam rolled on. I became more convinced of my socialistic beliefs that had always been hidden in that apolitical mind of mine.

After two years as an activist, I was still not relating to people in the way I wanted to. It was clear to me that my head changes were taking place in a very confined and limited way, and that I still had a lot of things hanging me up. I was living in New York and finding it difficult to cope with the violence and congestion. It was then that I decided to visit my niece, Lisa, who was farming in New Mexico, in the hopes that she could open me up to more changes by being exposed to her ideas and life style. Before I knew it, I had bought a farm of my own near Taos, inspired by meeting a woman near my own age who had settled in this area for about twelve years and built her own house. I decided that I would live alone, something I had never done before, and give myself the opportunity for a quiet and peaceful life, reading writing, farming and getting my head together. I also vowed that I would not get intimately involved with a woman until I had thoroughly gotten in touch with my own feelings. I felt now I wanted a relationship that would "last for life", in which I would be able to give love as well as receive it;

cont.





where there would be a real sharing of feelings and experiences but enough space allowed between us for further growth of our individual selves.

For four months I lived alone. My only friends were a few women my own age who were ex-urbanites and my neighbors who were either young Anglo-hippies or Spanish. It was the middle of winter, so I spent my time fixing up the inside of my old adobe six room farm house. I learned to mend fences by observing how the fences had been built and learned to mud walls and do minor carpentry repairs. It was an exhilarating experience for me, after spending all my life in the city and totally dependent on modern conveniences, to now be hauling my own water, taking a bath in a galvanized tub and doing my own repair work. Where growing old had begun to scare me as I saw older people becoming more anxious and dependent, I was now experiencing just the opposite.

It was an exciting time. As the ground warmed up I began to clear out my irrigation ditches, prune my apple orchard and get ready for spring. I began to see more and more the potential of this little farm with its seven acres, for producing organic vegetables, raising chickens for eggs, and having goats for their milk and cheese. Before I knew it, I was on a big work trip and ended up having young long-haired men and women living and working with me. There were an average of six or seven of them living more or less permanently with me, while many more crashed overnight or for short periods of time. I was getting immersed in the culture of the young generation, learning about openness hanging loose, the spiritual qualities in human relationships, natural foods, herbal healing, astrology, I Ching, Yoga and various philosophies and religions from the eastern part of the world.

I still hadn't learned to relax and enjoy this unpressured life in the country. I had hoped that by working hard I could make a living from farming in northern New Mexico and knew that my limited savings would soon run out. I expected everyone else to work as hard as I was since most of them had no funds of their own and were financially dependent on me. I thus found myself again in the role of "mother-boss", where people were dependent on me and I was calling the shots. Although there was a lot we shared together that was of a deep and joyous nature, the potentiality of this communal situation was never fully realized.

During the second year I became enthusiastic about building my own adobe house in the far corner of the farm. Having my own little place meant that I could now live alone and still enjoy the company of the young people who were wanting to live and work on my farm. It was during this period that I became drawn to the women's movement and just by chance met a woman from Albuquerque who helped me to organize a one day conference for women in Taos. One of the visiting women became very turned on to the idea of living in the country and began visiting me and staying for indefinite periods of time. Before long, we had decided to organize a feminist farm, which consisted mainly of radical les-

bians. It was very satisfying for me to continue living in the country and to be now a part of the women's movement, and particularly to be doing it with my lesbian sisters. My three different worlds that I had experienced all my life were now coming closer together. I did not foresee the many problems that were to arise between this group of women and myself, due to the differences in age, experience and ideology. These women were all in their twenties, completely new to a rural scene and this area, high on ideals but low on sensitivity to the conservative, Spanish-Catholic population that surrounded us. I, also an ex-urbanite, had settled quietly in this village of 200 inhabitants, maintaining as well as I could a low profile, allowing my neighbors to get to know me as a person, but not necessarily sharing with them many of my ideas or the life I had back in San Francisco. And again, there was the difference in our attitudes about work, as I felt we should be no different than our neighbors who farmed from dawn to dusk to support themselves. I took a very Spartan position on this "back to the land" ideal. In all fairness to my sisters, I realized later that I hadn't made my point of view clear to them at the beginning and also that they hadn't had the experience of going through the struggle involved in getting a farm and developing it, and therefore could not appreciate the financial and emotional investment that I had in it.

Needless to say, many problems arose as a consequence of our conflicting values. It took my having an angina heart attack while putting up the beams of my house to force me to see what I was doing and where I was going. I finally had to admit that I could no longer deal with the situation, as communication between the other women and myself had completely deteriorated. For my own physical and emotional survival, I saw the only way out was to ask them to leave. It was one of the most painful situations I have ever been in, for there was much love in that community but misunderstandings could not be reconciled. (I would like to add that I am good friends with all but two of the original ten members.)

While still recuperating from my heart attack, I was faced with the job of milking goats, feeding over a hundred chickens, ducks and geese, and tending the vegetable garden. Fortunately, I had two new tenants around my own age who were turned on by the farm and generously gave me a helping hand. After two months I discovered that these women were not intimately involved with each other and I began relating to them on an individual basis. Before long, Ruth and I became emotionally involved and she quickly moved in with me, in my new house. She was a very competent woman and assumed the major responsibility for the carpentry tasks inside the house. The vow I had made to myself to remain single was broken, as I was emotionally and physically drained and so very open to the love Ruth was showing me. The delightful prospect of sharing my life with someone my own age, who, like myself, was not tied to material comforts and was open to change, led me into the deepest relationship that I have ever had. We seemed to





have so much in common that our relationship began with a great deal of harmony and joy.

I wasn't prepared for the long, hard winter ahead where we were cooped up together in a one room house from November to April. My "farm trip" was winding down and losing its original romantic flavor what with milking the goats in sub-zero weather and hauling 25 gallons of water per day. I could not physically keep up with the work and Ruth had never really enjoyed it, but did it at first in order to share my life. Ruth and I both were going through some very intense personal changes and refused to spare each other from looking honestly and directly at our problems. Six months later, I wrote the following which came out of the pain of our final separation:

This was our rebirth.  
 This was our baptism.  
 We were led back to the time  
 When our feelings of anger, bitterness, resentment began.  
 You, with your husband and sons  
 Me, with my mother.  
 All the frustrations which had warped our lives.  
 Those specters of the past, which continued to haunt us.  
 We had to experience them once again.  
 To relive them, face them, and deal with them.  
 We had to tear down each other's defenses,  
 .....destroy each others rationalizations  
 .....point out the games we were playing  
 .....the trips we were on.  
 For us, there was no escaping.  
 I could only stay away from you so long,  
 No permanent solace could you find  
 In that holy cloud on the mountain.  
 We were not running from each other.  
 We were running from ourselves.  
 Our reunion would always come again,  
 And we would confront each other once more,  
 And another layer of our being would sluff away.  
 Each time we became more naked to the truth.  
 Until finally we could no longer hide from ourselves.  
 There was no deception left.....  
 Our old skins had long died and gone.

I left New Mexico the following July, never really recuperating from the disappointment of not being able to keep up my farm. Ruth and I found that there was nothing more we could give each other but pain. She was drawn to a Zen retreat and I went back to the San Francisco area to the women's movement and to work again in my profession.

My epilogue to the seven year journey into my head brings me now to the beginning of a new consciousness of what I am feeling, thinking and doing, still making some mistakes, having my ups and downs and my moments of being alternately tuned into and tuned out of my feelings and the feelings of others. No longer do I rush into the art of being busy to escape the opportunity for self-reflection. It is to the tremendous pain of losing the chance to experience a close love relationship with Ruth that I owe this final break through. But the ability to love that I found with her I now can express in many ways to many people and after all, that was what I was seeking.

Not only have I gone through many changes, including changing my name, but coming back to the Bay Area I find so much has changed outside myself. Our society is much more open now to what women are saying and to the lesbian and her right to be what she is. In a lesbian/feminist organization I have found strong women who believe in themselves and can be honest and open about their feelings. I do feel a difference between what country women and what city women value most for themselves and what their priorities are. Since I have been countrified, I feel somewhat like a stranger in a strange land in an urban setting. At the same time, I value the stimulation it provides, especially all the people I meet in the women's movement and the activities that are going on. Now I feel fragmented in terms of my living situation but the liberating feeling I have when I can speak to a class or group about the lesbian-feminist movement and about my own life gives me that same high I felt when I was being so self-reliant on my farm in New Mexico. I am a woman, I am lesbian and I like myself! ♀



# Dear Jennifer,

I saw your face and heard your disappointment last night at the final women's night at the "Studio" and realized that I did want to come through for you and for Country Women and this upcoming issue of "Older Women". But in my fear of writing (of failure?) I had already decided not to be vulnerable, not to write. I thought of all the things I wanted to say and decided the only way was to write a letter... the only writing I do do on an on-going basis.

And so, this letter to you, and to all the wonderful women who I love in our area, can be used or not used, edited, deleted or whatever you feel you want to do with it when you have read it.

I'm sitting at Van Damme State Park in the car now because we're having a lovely spring rain, trying to find a beginning to my story. Isn't that the hardest part of all, to begin?

And I did begin five months ago to find a whole new me, the creative me - the me that can't play music because when I was twelve, thirty years ago, a piano teacher said to my mother, "It's a waste of time and money, she plays like an elephant walking across the keys." And so, to this day, though I pine to play, though I buy instruments and play at playing, my fear of failure keeps me from that creative endeavor.

So it has been with everything I ever tried - sewing, drawing, painting, ceramics - you name it, I tried it and failed. As I view it in retrospect, I feel it has much to do with my being a woman raised in the 30's and 40's in a middle class, Jewish home, where cooking was encouraged, but all the other "stuff" was unnecessary for me as I was going to grow up to be a wife and mother. And didn't I ever. Married at eighteen, two children by age twenty-one...twice divorced, three times married. Always the responsible one, always the cook, housekeeper, mother, wife, secretary, bill payer. What time ever was left for change, for growth, for exploration of my creative possibilities? Then like some wonderful sunrise one day a couple of years ago, a group of women came together to raise our consciousness together - to be together. And we were, for many months, in love, in anger, in our changes, very much together; we grew, each and every one of us, broke the chains, expanded our perimeters. As I look around me now, I see us all in different lights!

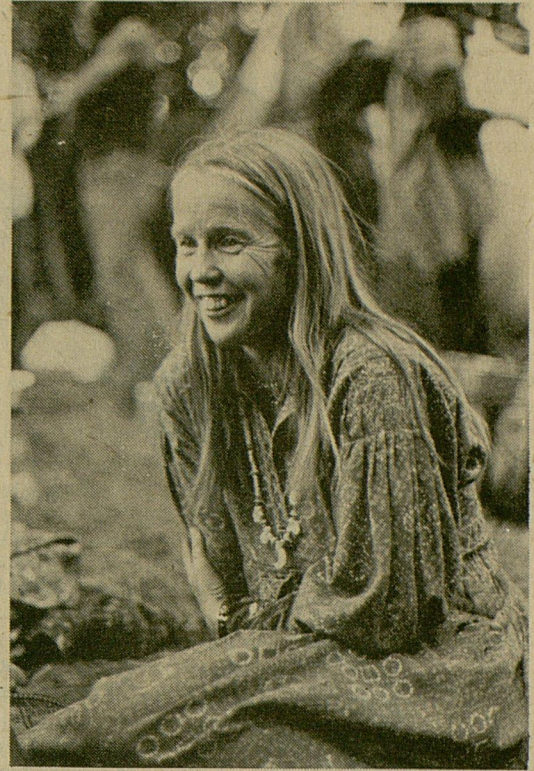
And me... an exposure to the loom. That's how it all began, a weaving cooperative. Six wonderful women, working and learning to weave and spin and dye, and I, well, I got hooked. I liked it, I was a success. After all, no one told me I couldn't weave; in fact, what do you know, everyone said I could! So, with permission granted, I did. The things I made were beautiful (I liked some myself, - not all, but some) and they sold - people actually paid money for them! There I was - forty years old - and I was able to create something that other people wanted to buy. (For the last six years I have been part of a crafts couple, but I didn't make the craft; I only sorted it, packaged it, sold it, and kept its books.) And it blew my mind.

Then came pain, - the loss of my beautiful, much loved daughter when she was just twenty-one, death by her own choice. And again my feelings of failure, this time failure as a mother, for had I done that creative act better she would have been happier, and not have taken that final step. But those months of consciousness raising with all my beloved women friends had done their job. Reality came through and I realized (most of the time I believe it) that I had indeed done my best. I had not been a failure, but that she had the right to that decision and she made it for herself.

Then one day I began to see tapestries in my mind. The loom weaving was too small and too slow and I started to work in a new media. The materials were the same, the process and tools different, and the end product - well, there are no limits. An explosion happened. Somewhere deep down inside of me a new door was opened, one I had never really looked behind before. I worked slowly, painfully, with no knowledge of where or how to begin. I sought out help from a dear friend who gave me hope and advice and moral support. I built a frame on which to work and began to make tapestries. And so I do that now...

I've almost finished my sixth piece of work, my largest piece (it's 25" x 40") and I think it will be quite lovely when I finish. It's still beginning work but that's OK as with each piece I learn. I see my mistakes and try to correct them on the next piece I do. I'm in a drawing class now too, never could draw worth a damn, but with lots of hard work and concentration I see huge improvements in my ability to draw and thus to see in a new way. I have no idea where it is all going, but I've made the decision that tapestry is my work and what I plan to do. I hope that someday it will be an economic alternative for me, making money to pay for itself as I learn and grow more proficient in the art, and maybe eventually enough to make a living. But however it turns, that huge part of myself has opened, and I'm hoping I never close the door.





The rain still falls, the sea is grey and beautiful... the seagulls fish on the shore... and I am overawed with the beauty of it. The last time I was here at the beach, Richard and I had our sweet Zefra with us, playing in the sand. I hope, yes hope, that my granddaughter will have a good life, where all her creative abilities will flower and not be damped off before they have a chance to grow. It's hard, as we all know.

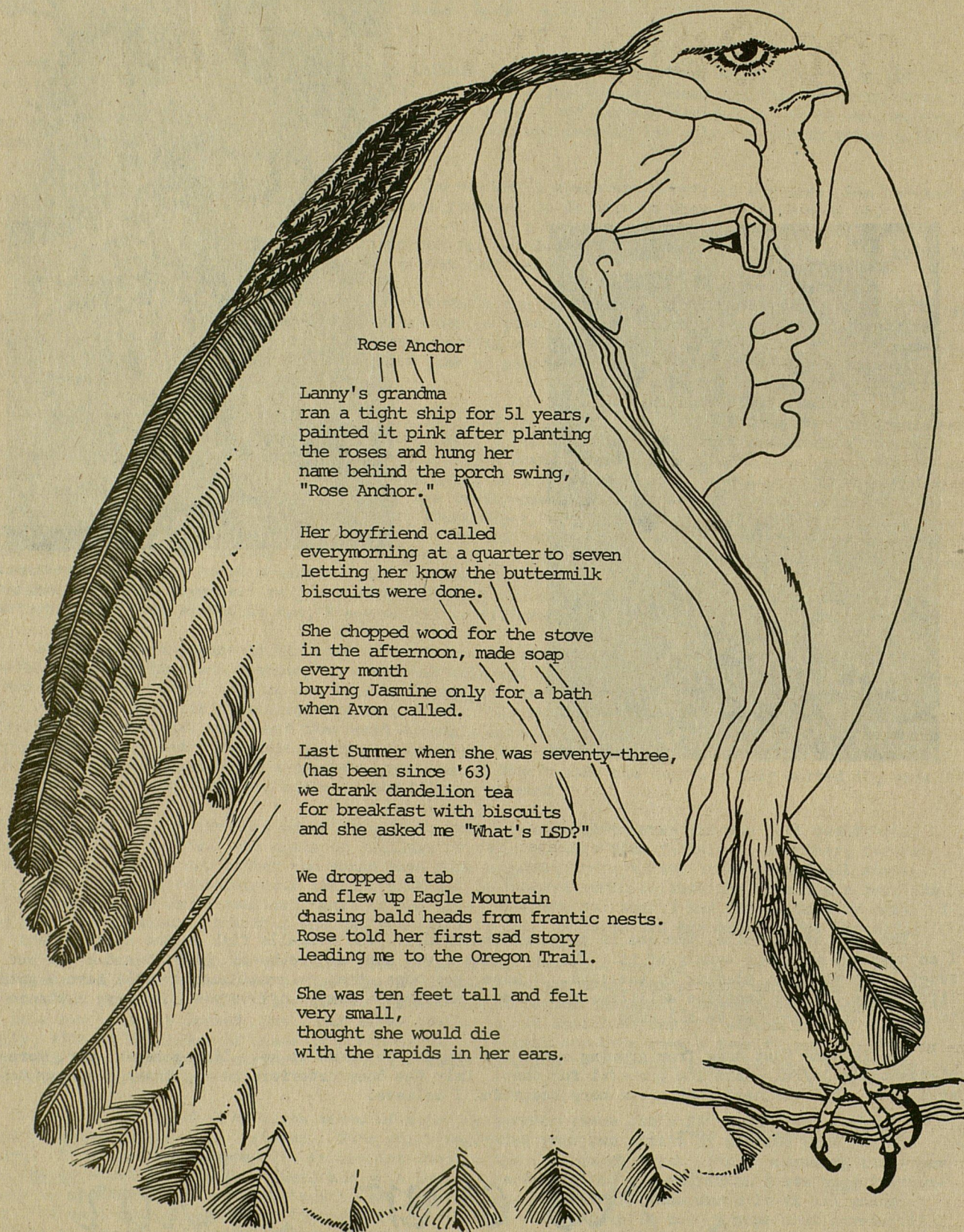
The lessons that come from growing older are simple, it seems to me. Life gets sweeter, more pleasant and joyful - and I'm grateful for that. Only the body deteriorates and there's no way to stop that. But the head - it grows more beautiful I believe.

And so I close with love....

*As ever, Joan*

♀





Rose Anchor

Lanny's grandma  
ran a tight ship for 51 years,  
painted it pink after planting  
the roses and hung her  
name behind the porch swing,  
"Rose Anchor."

Her boyfriend called  
everymorning at a quarter to seven  
letting her know the buttermilk  
biscuits were done.

She chopped wood for the stove  
in the afternoon, made soap  
every month  
buying Jasmine only for a bath  
when Avon called.

Last Summer when she was seventy-three,  
(has been since '63)  
we drank dandelion tea  
for breakfast with biscuits  
and she asked me "What's LSD?"

We dropped a tab  
and flew up Eagle Mountain  
chasing bald heads from frantic nests.  
Rose told her first sad story  
leading me to the Oregon Trail.

She was ten feet tall and felt  
very small,  
thought she would die  
with the rapids in her ears.



# THE DREAM'S THE THING

When I read about the girl (woman?) who felt put down a male who offered to help with the spading, I laughed and laughed. THIS country woman is of a generation who would feel liberated BY the offer!

What kind of protected living did these new young countrywomen come from? Those of us who have been here three or four decades are not the coddled type. I'd never put down any of the young generation who are trying to prove they can work with their hands and want to live closer to nature. I merely smile when they infer it is something they've invented.

Had you come to the Fort Bragg-Mendocino area 1946 to the early 1950's, you'd have seen building going on everywhere. Not the modern day contractor building, but young people with dreams and usually one, two, or three infants, living in tents, lean-to's, tiny cabins and garages while they struggled to build themselves a home.

We were the ones who had spent our teens in the depression years. We had never had anything, and knew the only way we would get anything was by doing it ourselves. The young men were home fresh from World War II - no Vietnam, that. No one year tours of duty. Many had been overseas three or four years straight. Not that Vietnam wasn't bad enough.

There was no affluence. There was a prolonged shortage of material goods following the war. I remember I had to wait eight months for the washing machine I ordered from Sears. Wringer type, of course. Meanwhile most of us were washing clothes on rub boards with water heated in tubs on the stove because there were no laundromats then, either. Knew only one person who had an electric mixer, and she waited two years for electricity so she could use it.

That's right. Many of us built on roads that had no power lines. P G & E said they'd get it to us as they got the material, which was mighty slow. So, few of us had any use for power tools. Besides, we'd rather have spent the money on lumber, then. (Never again! The tools come first.)

As for the roads, though they had been plotted many years before, they were often nothing but two muddy ruts in winter. You parked your car and walked from the end of the gravel to your house carrying groceries and kids.

I remember it as a period of anticipation and camaraderie. Nearly everyone we knew was building their own house. As soon as the outside got framed in, you moved in with open studing outlining the rooms. We visited a lot, each coming to see how the other was coming along

and to encourage and to dream.

When she said, "We're going to paint this room aqua blue and we'll have white ruffled curtains" that was what you saw, not the open spaces between the 2 x 4's. "My kitchen is going to be soft yellow so it will be sunny on rainy mornings." And it was.

Everything was built a little at a time, as you could afford it. You and your husband dug the well and the septic tank. If you were lucky you were the one at the bottom filling the bucket, instead of at the top pulling it up.

It was never easy, but there was satisfaction when you got each thing done.

Chances are you had a garden and chickens, even if you didn't have an electric pump. You tried to use the rain. You had flowers, all kinds that could be started from cuttings gathered from friends. You were selective about spending money on seeds. You could buy a switch plate or something for the same price. Gardening was organic, too, and composting was done before anyone heard of Rodale.

You were pretty child-oriented. When the kids reached the proper age, you worked with Camp Fire or Cub Scouts or Sunday school. There were more adults volunteering to be leaders than there were children to form packs or whatever.

All the while, we kept building our houses. We helped our husbands with the wiring and the plumbing. We sawed boards and nailed. We taped and puttied seams in sheetrock and sanded and sanded and sanded. We painted with great joy - what was painted was finished! And we used lots of color.

Maybe the kids were half grown before you got it finished. By then, you were making changes but you never called in outside help. You knew you could do it all yourselves. Maybe better, this time.

As you drive around these roads today, you would probably be surprised if you knew how many of these homes are the fruits of this period. Some are modest, some are ambitious. They are all the products of dreams, determination, self-denial, and hard work. Dreams were the most important - without the dream, nothing else would have been forthcoming.

I, for one, am happy to see so many of the younger generation working on a simpler scale, reversing the drive to opulence that is being crammed down our throats by the "trend setters" who want to sell us their expensive products. I know it isn't what you have that makes life worth living, it's what you are working toward.

The dream's the thing. The dream and elbow grease.



# Seventy plus has many plusses

If you have attained the perspective of a high place during a mountain climb you find that the rough terrain below presents a gentler scene. What seemed bridgeless canyons look like brooks; the depressions, the declivities level out and show their serene aspect. You can pick out the places of desperate crisis where all that fed body and soul gave out--so you thought--or you were robbed by death of a long-loved companion (can I make it alone?). Off there is the bog of struggle and sweat; but now you remember the iris blooming in it and the crimson and blue dragon-flies which your tear-blinded eyes barely acknowledged although your heart murmured to them thank you between its laborings. The mountain itself lowered even as it lured. Why were you climbing it, you a woman alone, when even the doctors warned: Your heart is not strong enough. (They were wrong: strength grows from need and the demand for it.)

I was climbing because from childhood the mountain's far blue mystery beckoned with its exaltation, its unknowns stirring the unknown in my depths. The mountain was poetry, the adventure of finding my own way. I knew I could not settle for domestic prose. "A husband to take care of you, Dear." I saw how my mother was taken care of with seven children and no space for herself, for the arts she loved, for spiritual exploration or development. All that for a woman was forbidden - the unscalable peak. But I would scale it. I would do it for myself because I must, but yes, also for her. That was 65 years ago. At ten the resolve was not articulated, only felt as a sort of pregnancy or excitement, an eagerness to grow up, test the hazards and be tested.

We were not country people, but poor city folk in urban England, my mother in Hull, Yorkshire, my father in Nottingham. They came together, they had me. My father dreamed of becoming what he called a "gentleman farmer" on land in New Zealand. My mother loved to sing, she was always singing. There was not enough money for the long passage to the Antipodes for two adults and three children. Eastern Canada was the compromise, then a couple of lots on the Island of Montreal, a small house built, a garden started - years of utter hardship in a cruel climate.

When the mountain you know you have to climb starts within yourself you are on the pathless path as soon as the challenge is recognized. With no formal education and only the most basic 3-R's sort of schooling, at 16 I went to work in an office at menial tasks, always fighting for leisure for poetry, for self-knowledge, for living, while studying and exploring possibilities for work that would creatively satisfy, not just marginally sustain. Jobs were sought and taken that permitted learning editing, then reporting, first in the city of Montreal, later New York, eventually San Francisco. The wages, for a woman, were \$25.00 a week, \$30.00 a week. An assistant editorship in San Francisco at \$175.00 a month

in 1926 seemed like wealth. It was possible to help a sister, two sisters, who had come to join me. One could even save a little with travel in mind: Europe, study, writing, the unknown - adventure. Not ever security. Trust the current.

Early I knew that my love and commitment were to women. "Becoming" a lesbian is a strange concept to me. One does not become what one is. Reading hungrily, haunting libraries after leaving the primitive French Canadian village, I learned there had been, were, women of temperament similar to mine. There were none among my acquaintances. Where were my people, where the "country" of my spirit? Alien and alone, with overflowing love to give, of course I fell in love unsuitably and suffered. I was eighteen before there was (transitory) erotic experience with a lovely woman still remembered; solitary years until 22 when I met and loved the woman I was to live with for the next thirteen years until her death. Later, a profound six year relationship. Then, after five years of solitude and inner exploration, coinciding with my first land and house ownership and self-apprenticeship in country living, there was a ten year love-friendship with a woman who shared my love of the earth and garden-making.

Since by this time I was free-lancing for a living, writing articles, reporting for Eastern magazines, it was necessary to be not too far from a city for research and interviewing. My more extensive country living, with two and a half acres, a house to be re-made, a garden of vegetables and flowers won from wildwood; goats, gophers, fencing, water problems, the difficulties and delights of moulding your own place, nearer, nearer to the heart's desire, - all this did not begin until 1954 when I was 55. Free-lance writing had to sustain it economically; time was one's only raw material. And always there was the struggle to reserve space for poetry, for what is set apart by the term spiritual exploration: only I have never seen these as to be set apart. Poetry is to be lived as well as written; the spiritual must permeate the fabric of daily living.

But glancing again over the letter and questionnaire that my Sisters on CW sent me in suggesting that I do a piece on what it means to be an "older woman", I see that I have not answered any of the questions. First I was startled to see age 30 as the boundary line. At 30, to my mind, a female should be coming into her full womanhood. If she is preoccupied with invented "problems of growing old" she will never enjoy her flowering. We start to grow old if you will the moment we are born. Might not one rather say, one starts to grow and continues growing and growth, inevitably, includes change.

Women who make their lives with women also have the equivalent of marriage, of "divorce"; some have children; those who do not, often have other persons to help or support, as I did. They have the hazards and pains of loss by death. But Lesbians - those who accept totally who they are and have the strength or



the cussedness to live the social disadvantages - do have some advantages. Love between women, living with a woman as partner, is an equality. We have not had to, or felt we had to, cater to men. We have known, most of us, from girlhood that we must be responsible for ourselves to the end of our days. The knowledge calls up our own strength and challenges us to find and use our gifts, whatever they may be, for our satisfaction and independence. It is borne in on us early that in any job, or work or profession we have to be better than competing men to get anywhere at all and even to hold our own. Maybe that's an advantage, too, though damned hard.

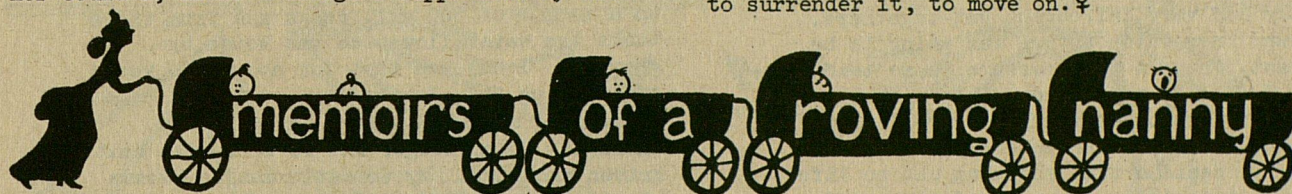
Speaking personally, I have always lived as if I had total freedom. In spite of all the chains, the proscriptions, the injustices - some of which are little by little being lifted, it seems to me women have had more freedom than they were willing to use. Of course freedom has to be paid for. That is true also for men, though women as in everything have extra hazards. I was a "suffragette" at thirteen, writing passionate political poetry on behalf of the Pankhursts and other brave women. Have been for total equality for women all my life and have always said so. How I feel today is that the "times" are catching up with where I have been all my life. But it's nice to have company.

Not diamonds, but Acres are a woman's best friend. I do not earn my living from the land nor could I, alone - though I supplement my food

supply with unpolluted nutrition which I am sure contributes to the health I enjoy at my age. Groups of women surely should be able to together with crafts or skills or arts. As the world is shaping, those of us who take this course will be the envied ones. What women are doing in this direction constitutes a political act.

Health is something women should take seriously if they hope for freedom and independence. It is hard to have a sense of inner security without it. I realized that early, having been what my mother called "delicate" as a child. But it was middle life before I began to inquire into ways of keeping a sound body and tranquil mind. I stopped smoking in my thirties. Learned all I could about commonsense nutrition without fads.

If you ask what philosophy I have lived and do live by I can only say it is closest to what the Chinese know as Taoism. To ever be aware of and responsive to fluidity and change both within and without this transitory entity known as Elsa Gidlow. To feel my oneness with the natural world and trust it as I know and trust my own being. To accept the Mystery, the Unknowable Source without needing to "fix" or name it. To act always from my center while giving and responding to others and to circumstance, not needing to force or push them around. To be cognizant of the (arbitrarily named) "male" and "female" elements of myself in their dance-like interactions, neither the one nor the other in dominance. To love life while being ready to surrender it, to move on. ♀



I have always been a woman with a powerfull ego. I always thought of myself as the famous Lily White. I never achieved any heights but I was going to be the nanny of all nannies when I left my hospital work in London. And then my goal was always to be an adventuress, a world roving adventuress. That was always going to get me into scrapes and I would always successfully manage to wiggle out of them. I had itchy feet. I inherited them from my father. So I wanted to rove as much as possible and the only way for a turn-of-the-century girl to do that would be in the capacity of nurse to wealthy people's children, or as a governess, by which means she would get around to foreign countries expenses paid. And that is what I achieved and did. My jobs were with diplomatic people, military people. It was in the era when British colonialism still had its employees all over the world. Once I very nearly got hired with an inspector on the Yangtse Kiang in China. Actually, I never got any further than Spain, France and Switzerland. My goal was always within reach and yet never achieved because the stumbling block was always that I was of marriageable age and I would "not fulfill my contract." The women were scared that I would get married and quit.

After 2 1/2 happy years on a job in Spain, the visa to the U.S. which I had applied for several years before became available for my use and I had to take advantage of it then or lose it. I was fortunate enough to land in N.Y. and promptly get employed by the upper strata of N.Y. society as a children's nurse. My credentials were such that I landed a job with the prominent Roosevelt family and the job was so lush and so suitable for my requirements that I stayed with them for 4 1/2 years.

Then I got married and had a baby of my own. I was married for 2 1/2 years, followed by nine years of widowhood, which were very heart-rending to my maternal heart because it meant parting with my child. I had to board him out. The poor little brat had to go into other people's care while I worked as a maternity nurse for new mothers and new babies. I was jumping from job to job like a flea; it was very diversified and very fast paced. I was very popular, the doctors were all behind me.

Then, when the war came I felt I wanted to do something for my country. The cry was out for women to come into the war industries. I didn't succeed in getting hired because

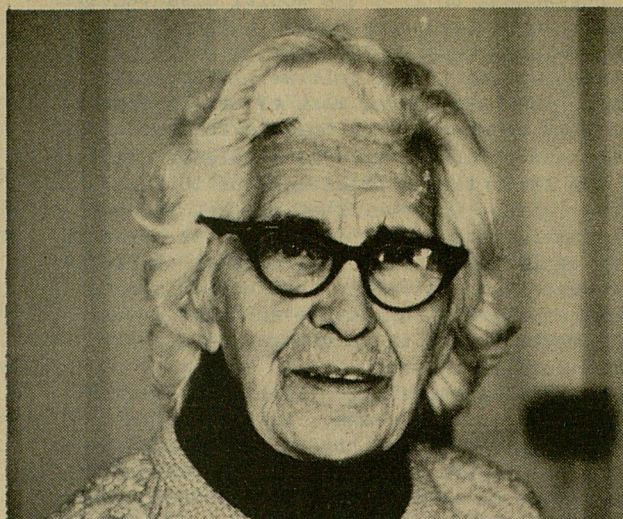


I had never taken out citizenship papers. So I wrote a very brilliant letter to Franklin D. Roosevelt who was at that time president of the United States. I said, "How come I cannot be hired to help my own country? I am known as a friendly alien. Surely I ought to get in." The letter was very potently worded. And before I knew it, I got summoned by a little factory in Elmsford, in Westchester County, N.Y. The manager eyed me with admiration and said, "You had the nerve to write to the president of the U.S.?" I said, "Yes, the Roosevelts are very human people. I worked amongst them for 4 1/2 years. And also, my mother had the boldness to give the Kaiser Wilhelm hell when we were prisoners in Germany in W.W. I, so I presumed to write to Franklin D." He said, "Well, you're hired, we'll give you a chance."

From 1942 to 44 I was in this war factory in Elmsford testing oscillators for aviators' helmets, two-way radio tubes and all manner of electrical equipment. I had had enough physics in my schooling to know a negative from a positive. And then I and a girl friend with whom I was compatible used to go to Columbia three times a week to brush up on electricity. It was very flattering to my ego to work in the scientific field, doing "man's work", instead of rolling bandages. I earned 52¢ an hour and worked up to \$1.35 an hour. In '45 I met my husband, Henry Lawrence. He was a merchant seaman who was in and out of port so we only had very infrequent get-togethers. He never knew which voyage was going to be his last. He put the pressure on me to marry him. I finally consented. Then peace came and the merchant shipping industry fell to pieces because the war materials were sent back. He decided that shipping was no life for him, especially after I had presented him with a son. He wanted to be on his own feet and in his own business. That's when we came West. He was no New Yorker and he knew he wouldn't fit back in N. Carolina amongst his own tobacco people. To me it didn't matter which part of the states I resided in with the man I loved, so we meandered westward. (I think I must have been in a sort of mental euphoria, because I took my travelling cross-country in the same mood as I had taken my other jobs. I took it as it came, I took this western adventure with the same "look-see-it-doesn't-matter-to-me" attitude. I was supremely above everything.)

Finally, we found this little place and it suited my purpose. I hadn't any high aspirations. I was placid and flaccid enough to be satisfied with whatever my man procured for me. I was never bored because I am a person of intense enthusiasm. No matter what I do I plunge into it and it is a new adventure and a source of fun. So whether it was mechanic-ing or digging ditches in the woods or trying to make the shanty a little prettier, it suited me.

I was always pretty busy being a fastidious mamma to my children. Paul was 11 when we arrived here and then I had a new baby every



second year. So it was pretty hectic and very primitive. It took a lot of physical labor and grief to make things habitable. After living in the lap of luxury, to be fighting with a wood stove that was always out...! We had a well that was really a kind of magic affair. It was run by a gasoline motor, and it had a stick with a white flag on it. When it was running, the flag would go up and down and up and down and by gazing out of the window I could tell that the pump was working. The pipes came up to the house to a couple of 500 gal. tanks and from those tanks the water flowed to the house by gravity. I enjoyed that for about two years and then we got electricity. All of a sudden everything became simpler. Even for my husband. He no longer had to work with belt driven machines. My domestic duties became simpler with the advent of a washing machine and an electric stove.

I would never say that my years spent here in the west have been my most interesting, they have not. I was able to allow myself so much in the way of aesthetic joys when I was in New York City. When I could go to the opera or the ballet for a dollar or two. But the west is so impressive that it rather overawed me because of the fantastic distances one has to travel before you can get to an environment that really touches you. And I never have had the joy of pulling a fish out of that bloomin' Pacific Ocean, nor have I ever swum in the ol' Pacific.

I have enjoyed being a house and property owner, with the ability to grub in my own garden as I feel like it, but it has some terrible drawbacks. 90% is grief and 10% is pleasure. Such a small amount. I enjoyed being able to lie in a hammock for 20 minutes, but never for any two or three hours. But I've had many soul satisfying experiences, like when my boy brings home a load of ferns from the waterfall and things like that. My husband was a bit of a dictatorial Hitler who kept us all greatly suppressed. So we weren't able to expand. (I was always dependent on him. I didn't learn to drive an



automobile until the year that he was in the Veterans' hospital down in Napa. Then I entered the driver's ed. class for older people, in Ft. Bragg, and I learned to handle a car.) He died in 1957, poor Daddy, he worked himself to death. He was a very conscientious man and a hard driver. It was a great loss, but in the years we had him, he did impart all his knowledge to the boys; how to take care of an automobile, how to castrate a calf, etc. The worst job is stringing barbed wire. These have come in useful in our years of being alone. We carried on. We never got financially pinched because there was always a source of money, as we could always sell a tree or a log, make a truckload of firewood and make 15 dollars...a fantastic sum! The boys would cut the wood and I would deliver it when they were in school. But I helped them load that wood and stack 'em and rack 'em and in between times take time off to grunt and groan with my arthritis. The more active I am the more pain I have. For some reason, my muscles don't like it.

During the year before he died I got sick with the Asiatic flu and it knocked me into a weakling for six months. I was fortunate to find a splendid German woman to work with me. She was a brick. She was a good sport who would tackle anything and everything. Everything was fun to her, even if it was washing the milk pails or building fur-

niture, that was her idea of fun. And we grubbed in the garden together. She was stimulating to me and toned me up. We encouraged each other. We had the same life philosophy, that you can't but try, and So What. We were satisfied with the results. We went over to the lakes and the boys did water skiing. We had a lot of fun. Pleasure was and always had been a dominant requisite in my life and I have therefore wanted it for my children.

My days have been full from the minute I get up to the minute I go to sleep. I've never been a bored person. I live with my intellectual thoughts. I can switch from poetry to mushroom growing and from knitting to cake baking. Disinterestedness has never been a trait of mine. I have always found something that has interested me. No matter where I am, I would adapt and adjust. I haven't missed the city, although I avidly read of the doings there and kind of yearn that I could get there. Distances being what they are I just can't go so that's that.

I wouldn't trade places with any of the bygone periods. In no way would I wish to go back again. I am well satisfied with this sphere that God has dumped me into. It has its high peaks and its lows and I'm well content all in all. I'm just a little bit sad that I haven't been able to make a more powerful mark on some of the themes closest to my heart. ♀

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GROWING OLDER, GRACEFULLY

I'm 41 - bald statement  
that used to be really hard to say  
and I always wanted people to exclaim, when I said it -  
But you look 18! or 26! or whatever.  
It's getting easier for me to tell my age  
I feel too young for responsibilities - old enough for worries  
mother of grown and growing children - who, me?  
I feel too young to stop learning new things  
I want to learn to plow,  
to build furniture,  
to do stonework - for a starter  
Also, to card, spin and weave, crochet.

My body doesn't act as young as I'd like it to -  
Though I get very strong when I work in the air and sun  
I need more sleep than I did at 16.

With farm women, age doesn't seem to matter much -  
Experience counts.

My age is young for a tree.  
If I were a maple, I'd be only a foot or so across  
Buffeted by storms, winds, shone on by sun, blanketed by snow  
Roots deep in earth, branches reaching  
Seedlings scattered round  
Many years of life and growth yet.



# ONE DAY AT A TIME

A sea of shoulder high golden corn chrysanthemum on a otherwise plain, somewhat scruffy street is the first clue that you are someplace special. Walking down the path to the old white frame house you pass lupine, johnny jump-ups, and sand verbana, all beautiful wild flowers that have been transplanted, barely tamed; but with love grow here in this well cared for garden. The house was built in the late 1800's when this village was a thriving lumber town, and the bay would be filled with schooners waiting to load their cargo. The house was once the local bordello, and the walls of the bedroom still bear the names of the women and their tallys.

It's a warm comfortable place with a large friendly kitchen, and wood stove in the corner. Books and magazines are sliding off tables, brightly colored yarns cover one wall, plants abound, and the rows of cups give credence to the fact that many people visit this house each day. The woman who lives here is Jodie Sanford, and she greets us in striped overalls and a blue sweater. She is large, or seems large, with a wide open face, full lips, and expressive eyes that seem unable to hide anything. Her oldest daughter, Sandy, and two grandchildren are visiting. Sandy, who has those same intense eyes, tells us with pride that her mother has led acourageous, fighting life and that she has always wanted to write a book about Jodie. We sit down at the round kitchen table, and Jodie begins to talk:

I really don't know how anyone becomes political. I was born into a very affluent situation. When the crash came, in 1929, my father was in the oil fields in Wyoming. They just closed the oil fields overnight. We had lived in a big company house and all of a sudden our lives changed tremendously. We moved to California. I went to 24 grammar schools. We were never any place long enough to make friends. I had two sisters who died within 4 months, mostly from malnutrition. One got the measles, but it wasn't the measles that killed her. It was that we didn't have enough food.

My father was ashamed of being a worker. He ended up doing the dirtiest jobs in the oil field. He blamed the depression on the communists. He believed all the things that the papers were saying. He didn't have any understanding of economics. I absorbed all of his beliefs, and blamed a lot of the problems that we had as a family on the terrible reds. I did very well in high school. We stayed in one place in Oakland, and I got a scholarship

to Prague in Czechoslovakia; but it was cancelled because of World War II and exchanged for a \$100 scholarship to Stanford. Now you know what that meant; it meant no school. So anyway, I was able to go to the University of California for a short time. Then I got married and had 3 children in four years. But my marriage was not a good one and I got a divorce from my husband before Sandy, my youngest, was born.

My first husband had been a dry cleaner and I had helped to organize all of the dry cleaners in Alameda county. I had done such a fine job that the National Organization of Dry Cleaners had asked me to come back east and be in charge of their public relations department. The salary would be \$15,000 a year, which was very good money in 1948 for a 25 year old woman. I thought I had the world by the tail.

At this time I had a friend who really respected my mind and said "I refuse to discuss any of the social problems of our country with you, because you don't know what you are talking about. You don't know a thing about labor history (and of course we don't because we aren't taught that) and you don't know a thing about communism. Read these two books." And he gave me *A Red Star Over China* and a book on the history of the labor movement in the United States. So I thought, "I'll fix him." So I read those books and it turned me around. I had been active in the NAACP and in the Red Cross; I was a do gooder. I cared about my community. But when I read those books, I became very angry because I realized I'd been lied to. You know, I grew up on the Oakland Tribune and the Readers Digest. And I believed it all. I believed my teachers. I believed everything I'd been taught about the history of our country.

With the new perspective I gained from reading those books, I went to Washington. I went with all sorts of doubts and questions but still feeling smug. I stayed on that job for 5 months. It meant flying all over the country, speaking to Chambers of Commerce and talking to womens groups about buttons that would not melt in the dryers. Oh, it was awful. It became intolerable. And I quit that job when my boss, who was a Swedish immigrant himself, called me down to his office for wanting to put a notice in the newsletter about the European refugee Jews who needed work. They were well trained in dry cleaning skills but couldn't immigrate without a job. When I showed the letter to my boss, he threw it across the desk at me yelling, "I might have known you'd be mixed up with the god dammed Jews." Most of the members of the organization were Jewish. It just blew my mind.



I told him to take his job and put it where the sun don't shine, and I walked out. I went eight months without work. I couldn't even get a job scrubbing floors. My children, by that time, were in a private boarding school because I had been traveling so much. I managed to keep them in school by doing free lance writing. The school was in Delaware and I lived in Washington, DC. I saw them every weekend. At that time it seemed the best thing to do.

I never would have applied for welfare then, under any circumstances. My father had worked for the WPA and was so ashamed, so ashamed. At that time there were political cartoons in the newspapers about people leaning on shovels. It all made me feel ashamed. Today I feel respect

for the women I know on welfare who are wise enough to be with their children. Sometimes I think of what I missed.

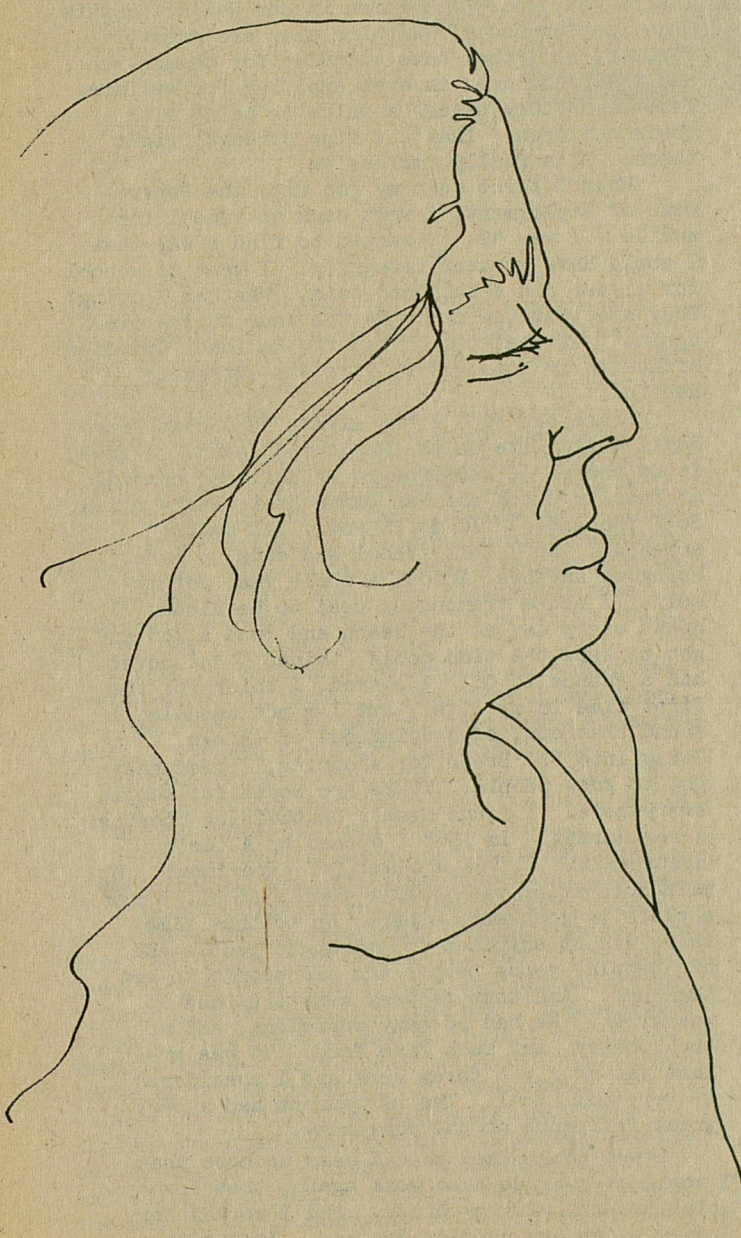
After that job I eventually went to work for a slum clearance program and then for the Helen Gahagan Douglas campaign, which was a real education. I next got a job for the CIO political action committee writing brochures. And finally I went to work organizing for a trade union in Pennsylvania.

When I think of the ways that we women find to survive. During that period of 8 months of being unemployed I lived with a man, a doctor. There was no way that I could have made it alone. But to me, I had to turn that into a love affair. It had nothing to do with a love affair. It was a means of survival, period. And I still feel really concerned about a lot of women I know who see that as their only alternative. After the CIO I married a man from the plant that I was organizing. It was like having another child. It lasted 3 months and I left him. But those months I had my children, and I was with them that whole summer. It was so fine. It was so great. The happiest time of my whole life was that summer with my children.

Then I packed up the children and came to California. I worked in advertising for a radio station, in the meantime shacking up and always trying to find a way to hold my family together. It was prostitution on a dignified level - always with my head high, always with real respect from the community. But such a coverup. And I'm really screwed up because of it. To provide a father figure for my children seemed a very important thing. I thought there would be something very basic missing from their lives if they didn't have that. Hogwash. That was really hogwash.

Eventually I had a foundation grant for 4 years organizing the community in Contra Costa County to support the children who were wards of the juvenile court. Following the McCarthy period all the newspapers were filled with headlines saying that the evils in the land were due to juvenile delinquency. And that just blew my mind. At that time I was leading my oldest daughter's girl scout troupe, and the girls wanted a project for Christmas. I went to visit the juvenile hall to see if there was some way the troupe could help. I couldn't sleep after I went through that juvenile hall, no way. I started to talk to people about how there were little children locked up, being cared for by matrons with huge dangling keys. There was an 8 year old boy locked in a cell with a small window that he couldn't reach up to. No bell, no nothing, no way to call for help. And I knew that the girl scout troupe contribution wasn't enough. It was an evil thing. So I started to talk with people and I found such response. Well it ended up being a really big program. It was written up nationally and it really provided for those children during that time. We had a budget of \$50,000 a year contributed by the community. It was really great but it didn't make any permanent change. The foundation grant ended because of the recession in 1957. I was 35 years old then.

continued





At that time I took two jobs. I went to work at the University of California all day and worked in a hospital all night. Each job paid about \$265 per month. Neither of them were enough to support myself and my children. And you think you're going to do that for just a little while, just until you find something else, but what happens is that you are so numb that there is no way to get out of it. At that time I also married. I married a jazz musician thinking that I could at least quit one job. Instead he quit his job and I supported him too. I did take a civil service exam and eventually I got hired by the Department of Employment. When my notice came through, I quit my two jobs, took my children and we piled into the car and went to Mexico. We had a wonderful summer. It was really, really good.

When I got back I went to work for the Department of Employment. Then I had a breakdown. I tried to commit suicide. It felt like a very logical and reasonable thing for me to do at that time. After about 5 months of that job everything piled up on me. Everything I was doing was not just hurting me, but was hurting my children also. While I was in the hospital, my first husband, who was a very wealthy man, took the children for the first time. I stayed in Langley Porter for 12 months. I think the greatest value to me was that I had a year of not being responsible for anybody. I had worked from the time that I was eleven without stopping. I had always had a job and had always felt responsible. My mother and father had divorced and whatever I had made had gone to the family. Even before I had my own family, I had felt responsible. I am very grateful for that year. That year was really, really important. I left the hospital and went back to my job. I soon became a supervisor for the Department of Employment. And if I had had my head in the right place, according to a lot of peoples values, I would have stayed there.

But from my days of writing for Helen Gahagan Douglas, I had done a lot of research about social security, unemployment insurance, public health and welfare, and all the programs of the 30's, which were established when people were very much on the move. Labor unions were being organized, and there was a lot of discontent. Someone had to alleviate the suffering that people were feeling. So I had read all their reasons for establishing these programs. For instance, social security was supposed to mean dignity and honor following the biblical commandment, honor thy father and mother. We would never again have to be concerned that any elderly person would live without dignity. Every elderly person would be entitled to this. You know how quickly this was twisted and distorted and became part of a pittance, except for those who were affluent. In the unemployment insurance program, and this really got through to me, the main reason for unemployment insurance was not even for the individuals themselves or their families. It was a means of keeping money flowing in the community so there wouldn't be a snowball effect of fewer

and fewer jobs. But when you work for the Department of Employment, one of the first things you learn in the training program is how to keep people from collecting. An effort is made to keep people from getting it, rather than helping them to get it. So I quit that job. I couldn't handle it. The contradiction was too great.

During all these years of working, I usually worked with men or alone, almost always having a secretary. I had little opportunity to relate to women on the job, except when I worked with middle class women who had time to volunteer. I couldn't relate very closely to them. I felt much closer to working class people. I can tell you the people with the courage. The people with courage, like in the garment factories, were women. They were really far out women. Really strong women. They could understand the long range value of standing up for what they believed in, knowing what it would mean for their children. That's why I like the women in our Welfare Rights Organization today. I think they are great. First of all, they have stood up for themselves and their children in even applying for welfare. That means they place a value on being with their children. That's a fine strength right there. It's really impressive.

When I first quit my job with the Department of Employment, I went back to school for awhile. I was 42. I wanted to find a way that I could have greater integrity. I went to school for a year and a half and said, "What am I doing? They are training me to do the same things over again." At that time I had the National Guardian office in my home and my life was extremely hectic.

Since the 40's I had always said that someday I would live on the Mendocino coast. I loved it up there. I had brought my children camping at Russian Gulch and Van Damme State Parks often. So I thought, "I'll do it now, I'll make it somehow." So I left school and came up here. Using my savings, I took a whole year for myself. I had a tremendous need to be alone. I spent every day at the beach and read a lot and got to know the tide pools, things I had never had a chance to do. I played, I think for the first time in my life. But I'm not capable, I found that out, of staying out of things. Going into Ft. Bragg for shopping, I gradually got to know people. There are beautiful people everywhere. I found myself fantasizing opening a restaurant. In 1968 I opened up Alice's Restaurant. It was a beautiful experiment. My main motivation was to give people in Ft. Bragg a place to meet each other. Up to this time there wasn't anyplace for straight people and hip people, young people and old people to get together. And that fantasy came true and it was great. We had so many musicians, and so much poetry, and such fine food. It was great. That was my first foray here and I considered it very political. The restaurant had a very great influence on the community.

I was determined when I came up here that I wouldn't ever do head work again, that I was going to work with my hands. And I worked for 2 days as an egg candler trainee. It was the





hardest work. I hated it. I was not successful, I ached at the end of the day. And then I went out and for two and a half years I cleaned houses. And it was so far out. It was the most fun work I'd ever done in my whole life. I'd always had somebody else to do my own house. I hate housework for myself. But working for others I made a lot of friends, and I was so free at the end of the day. Nobody was buying me 24 hours a day. I did more painting, potting, crocheting, and gardening, really creative fine things during the time I was cleaning houses than ever before. Then I got water on the knee and couldn't do that anymore.

Again I went to work with my mind, but the pressure was too much. I had another breakdown, and began to lose my memory. Not being able to work, I applied for aid. Although it is difficult living on this small sum, I find that I'm really having an opportunity to unfold a lot of me that never had a chance before.

I've learned about preserving foods, baking bread, fishing and gathering plants in the fields. If I didn't know how to use wild plants, there would have been several times since I've been up here that I could not have survived. I've also been repairing my house, a little bit at a time. I don't feel any kind of pressure. I'm making a lot of improvements and it doesn't matter how long it takes. It's such a good feeling. I'm learning to use power tools. The other day I climbed up and fixed my neighbors roof. Her husband is afraid of heights. An aluminum piece had blown off. I thought, "I could do that." And I did. It felt so good. Each time you try one new thing, it makes it easier to try something else.

I'm loving being in the country. I'm much more secure in important ways that have to do with my body, my sense of wholeness, my sense of self. My identity is no longer determined by my relationship with my children. I feel capable of being closer to people now than I ever have in my whole life. There are more people who I can embrace, can lie down with, can really be close to physically. I wish I had a chance to meet more people of my age who were seeking to become free.

One thing I'm trying to learn is that you don't have to be strong all the time. It's very difficult to undo a lifetime pattern of competitiveness, having to be faster or slower or stronger - to always have to be something more than those around you. To undo that feeling inside will take longer than the intellectual realization. But it's coming and it's far out.

A friend asked me the other day how I felt about getting old. It brought to mind my mother's words to me when she was 69, just before she died. She said, "You know, Jodie, I don't feel a bit different inside." And it's true. I feel much the same as I did when I was a teenager or a young mother. I'm very glad at 50 that I have a chance to start a new life, but I wouldn't want to go back. I don't think about the future. I try to live every day. I take one day at a time. If today is heavy, I know that tomorrow will be different; it might not be better but it will be different. As a young person I thought more in terms of the future. Today there is so much to do and such good feelings that come with doing.



# CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING At 62

Not long ago a friend of mine (male) announced at a dinner party that he had conducted his own private little survey amongst young women he had contacted through his work and via the social grapevine. His project, he said, was to ask young women under thirty if they hoped to be married before they turned thirty. To a woman, he said, they had all replied affirmatively. His purpose in making this announcement to the mixed company assembled seemed obviously to create a furor. It only thinly veiled his underlying chauvinist philosophy.

What he was really doing was "to put women in their place". He was implying, also, "You women really can't get along without us men."

In his lexicon apparently, if women are aged they deserve their low estate.

Out of that brief encounter with his abrasive statement about women and their alleged desire to be married by the time they are thirty was born an introspective stream of thought on my part.

Yes, I realized, most young women do indeed hope to be married by age thirty because our culture gives them very little choice if they are to survive sexually and/or financially. Getting married is usually preferable to living the stultifying life of a secretary, bookkeeper, or store clerk. It may even be better than being pigeon-holed into one of the helping professions such as nurse, teacher, or social worker where there is little mobility into the better positions (read administrators) because upward mobility is usually reserved for men.

Another male friend of mine recently contracted a second marriage. He is 68. His bride is 22. This kind of union is accepted and condoned by the general society, even applauded by male society. It is condoned precisely because the aging process is not too important when it is a man that is aging or aged, but is considered "obscene" in a woman, as Susan Sontag points out in her excellent article, "The Double Standard of Aging," in the September 20, 1972 issue of "The Saturday Review of the Society."

In the not too distant past I came across a couple of statistics regarding the earning power of men and women in our country. This occurred just before inflation started to run away, when \$10,000 a year was considered a good yearly salary. The figures also revealed that of all people earning \$10,000 or more, 96% were males, and the remaining 4% were females.

Thus, locked into an abysmally inferior position in the job market, it is not surprising that my chauvinist friend found that "all young women want to be married before they are thirty." Who can blame them? Faced by a "loser" situation, most women make their peace by opting for marriage as a career. A woman, then, trades her sexual attractiveness for marriage and for the possibility of a better material life than she would have if she remained single. She realizes she will

probably remain single if she doesn't make her marriage vows by her thirtieth birthday. After thirty, she will be regarded by a sexist society as an aging woman; therefore, no longer sexually desirable as a wife.

Despite my repressed anger and resentment toward my friend at the dinner party, I must say he helped me to clarify some of my hitherto unexplored attitudes about my sex. I knew once and for all that I had more in common with young people of my own sex than I had with most males in my own age bracket. Perhaps I should be slightly grateful to my male friend for helping to raise my consciousness on this issue.

I am 62, and now realize that though I am obviously regarded as an aging woman, my sisters of only thirty, less than half my age, are put into the same category by the male chauvinists who still build the culture in our society.

The precept chauvinists wish to perpetuate is that the woman in our society is so helpless and inept that she is forced to depend on a man to survive....and if she does not have a man to depend on by the time she is thirty, the hell with her. Let her fend for herself, they say, while we do the best we can to prevent her from obtaining a fulfilling, monetarily rewarding job.

Certainly, I have much in common with any woman who has been put down or oppressed for reasons not of her own making whether it be that she is getting old, or merely regarded as getting old; held in contempt or put down just because she is female; or locked out of a job or prevented from advancing in her work because such a move would be threatening to a man.

Although our society schools women to believe in their own helplessness and passivity, I see all about me that they possess the same potentials in the world of work as do men.

As for myself and my personal situation, I must confess I don't particularly like the idea of growing old....but I must accept it as an inevitability.

Paradoxically perhaps, in terms of what I have just written, I find that growing old alone without my husband, who died six years ago, is a life I do not relish. While I detest chauvinism, I do not discount sexuality and I know that a loving male-female relationship enriches the lives of those involved. But, oppression of any kind simply cannot nourish such a relationship.

Since both my husband and I pursued careers in journalism for most of our adult lives, we shared an egalitarian life style. That is, we really practiced egalitarianism. We both worked and also shared home chores. He was good at shopping for groceries, cooking, sewing on buttons. Conversely, I am a good gardener, can and do wash the car, add oil to the crankcase, make small electrical repairs, etc. We spelled each other in doing most of the things that need doing around the house. Also, we agreed that nobody could or should attempt to do everything....man or woman.

Because we had no children, we were able to fulfill ourselves in study, travel, writing and enjoying our friends and respective families. We shared a good life and a loving relationship





for 33 years. Now, that sharing is a thing of the past. And I truly miss it and I miss him.

In remaking my life, I have acquired a dog to whom I am affectionately devoted. I remember that shortly after my husband died a well-meaning friend suggested I might want to get a dog. I found the idea revolting, even though she assured me that she did not mean that a dog could possibly take a human's place. I agreed with that, but since I had never before owned a dog, I couldn't accept the idea of dog ownership...certainly not at that time. It was repugnant to me. However, Kiki has made a great and wonderful difference in my life. No longer is my house empty and when I come home alone, as I must, she is always there to greet me with an enthusiastic display of unadulterated love.

Since I could no longer share meaningful and delightful life experiences with Joe, I painfully returned to living much in the same fashion that we did when Joe was alive.

I am still pursuing a career in writing as a free lance trade journalist. I keep the house in repair, continue to maintain a beautiful garden because green, growing things about me are a source of pleasure and well-being.

However, I know I have lost some impetus, since I do not push myself too much in my work, and I find it vaguely disturbing. Because free lance writing is a precarious profession financially and because most editors have not yet caught up with idea that fees must be raised to

keep pace with inflation, I often tell myself I should return to a job in some area of my profession. It could be on a newspaper, with a trade journal, in public relations, TV, or in ad copywriting, in all of which I possess a good deal of expertise.

However, I find myself beset by fears. The reason? Age, of course. I know that men my age find new jobs...but, realizing the age problem with women, I hide behind my fears. I don't want to be rebuffed or rejected and so rarely apply for jobs, even those for which I am amply suited.

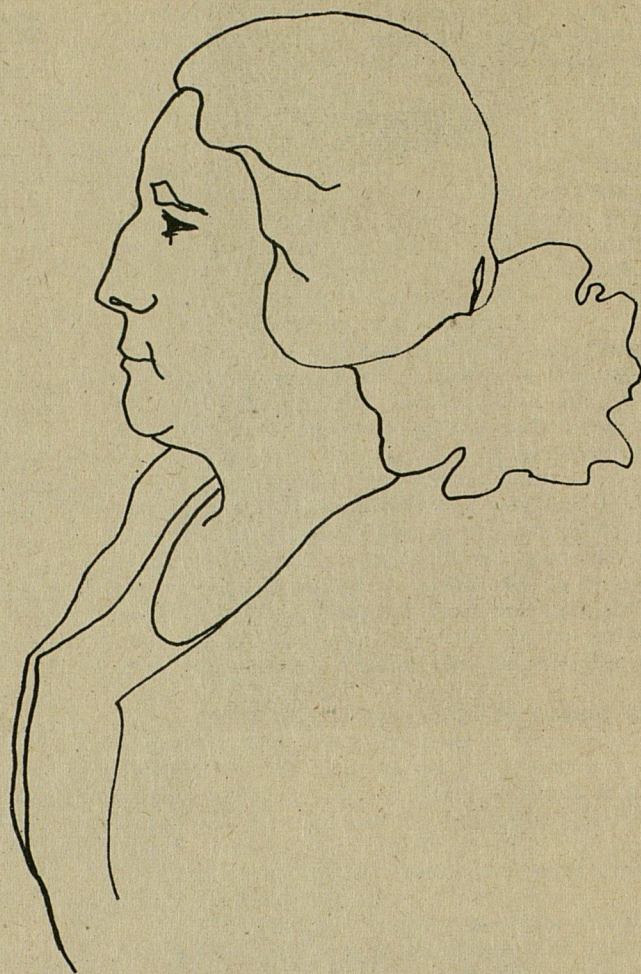
Nevertheless, being a free agent has its points. It may present some financial pressures, but has much in its favor. I am my own boss, am beholden to no one, do my own shitwork, but no one else's.

In social spheres, widowhood imposes emotional problems. While I have been able to maintain the friendships Joe and I built over the years, I have noted that several couples have cooled in their attentions, and that rankles. But, for the most part, the rest have remained steadfast. In addition, I have also acquired a number of new friends, either couples or other widows, or divorced women.

But I wish it could have been otherwise. I would have cherished the privilege of growing old with Joe. He was a rare man, not a chauvinist, and I loved him. Continuing to share with him would have been beautiful. ♀



# Do I need to cry?



I loved him so much that I wanted to be the kind of person that he would like. I knew what he liked and I admired his taste. I measured my opinions against his. I saw sweet sensitivities in his eyes in the rare flashes that he let me look at them. He was aloof.

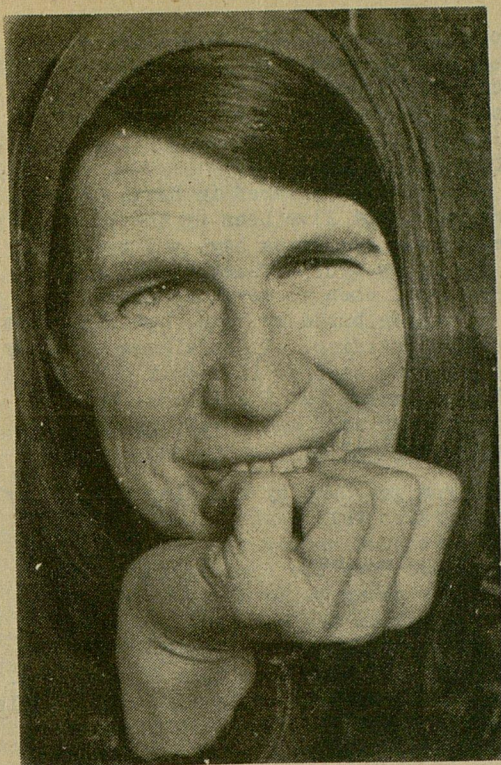
He was perfectly fair (to the extent that he understood the situation). He was totally non-authoritarian and non-demanding. He asked for no help. He would not even accept help. He never complained. He treated others the same as he would like them to treat him. He was totally non-violent and would not fight or argue. I was alone.

We loved being together sometimes - he less often than I would have liked. We felt good in each other's arms. We loved making love together - we got better and better at it all the time. We shared many jokes (mostly his) and we laughed a lot. We loved the same music. We had many memories. Now we live apart.

Now I am putting myself first. Now I realize how much I depended on him to handle the technical matters. Now I'm discovering that I can do everything I have to do, and get places on time, by myself and I am liking it more. Now my bed is surrounded by my things only - everything I need within reach. Now I'm recovering my talents, my creativity - lost for a lifetime. Now I feel younger and more alive than ever before. Now I'm peaceful. Without love.

Do I need love? Do I need a man friend who is mine all mine? Do I need frequent female companionship in order to reestablish our common struggle? Do I need to know what's going to happen in the future (near or far)? Do I need to remember the past? Do I need to cry? Freedom. ♀





## Every woman has the face she deserves

by the time she is fifty. So runs the folkism. You might even say she has the face she has earned.

Yet our culture only sees the bland face, the unlined fresh new face-lifted skin, as beautiful. The standards of twenty are put on the woman of fifty.

And suppose we meet this bland ideal creature. Has she lived? What temper has she been tried in? What does she have to offer in her youth-conforming beauty?

What grief and joy has she experienced? What ecstasy? How can I expect her to be wise? Where has she spent the intervening years? How can anyone become fifty and not show in lines and wrinkles where the hurts were, where the intelligence?

This chasing after youth, what is it all about? This business woman looks out at me from her photo, fifty, with an unlined face, but with pain in her eyes. Ah, so far we have not learned what to do about the eyes, or the hands. The hands. A wise old woman told me once, they can do what they like to their face, just look at their hands. They can't conceal their hands.

Why can't we be who we are now? We all have been twenty. That was twenty. Twenty is being afraid. Twenty is being hassled. Twenty is having energy but not knowing how to use it efficiently. Twenty is being in the agony of love.

Fifty is having lived with death, with birth. Fifty can mean new life, not twenty year old life, but fifty year old life. As long as fifty gazes back longingly, as long as fifty tries to keep on being twenty, fifty has no room to grow, to become.

Here I am at fifty starting my third life. First I lived my years up to marriage...an education, a job as a teacher. Second I got married and had four children. This lasted me into my forties. This was suburbia, and all that connotes. At fifty, with one child still not in her teens I have begun my third life, this one communal. Why should I want to be twenty?

I like to talk to twenty. I believe they like to talk to me. We have ideas to exchange. We have feelings. But I do not want to be twenty. I want to live my life, not theirs. I enjoy their music but not to the exclusion of music I enjoy. I write my own songs. They are not what twenty writes but sometimes twenty enjoys them.

By my acceptance of fifty, I can tell twenty that it's a good age to be. In my own enjoyment they can look ahead and see what it might mean for them. I was lucky to have a friend twenty years older than I. She has lived her life with zest, with deep understanding. In her late sixties she is slowing down. Perhaps that's where it will be for me. But in her fifties she started a new career.

My son said to me as I was sorting and packing a twenty-seven year accumulation of household effects, "There are few people who get a chance at a second life. You are very lucky."

But of course to have that luck you have to have the door open, you have to be willing to risk and to change, and how can you do any of that if you are busy watching twenty?

I no longer have either a house or an apartment I'm responsible for, I gave away or sold all of my furniture. I then proceeded to move from one coast to the other and there is nothing like a move of this kind to simplify your material life. I gave away most of my clothes because the climate was not at all similar. I cut my library by two-thirds. When I move on from here I will probably leave it.

I am in that time of life when there should be subtraction from, not addition to, material possessions. Nevertheless, I found that after six months I had bought two four-drawer files to house my accumulated thoughts, ideas, and reference materials. I still have my typewriter, tape recorders, cameras and my guitar. I no longer have a house full of furniture but I did keep my stereo, about a third of my records, and my car. This new life isn't so new but it has served as a contrast to my second life in suburbia. And I am learning to live in a larger family than I ever had before. Life is an adventure and a challenge.

In my new family I have people of all ages to relate to, all the way from three to sixty-four. This is not suburbia. In suburbia you can ignore the person next door if you're not compatible. Here you meet them again and again on the path, at dinner, working in the garden, at the meetings, down at the swimming hole. This family I can't ignore, or they me. I affect them negatively or positively, one way or the other, whether I want to or not, whether I like it or not.

So again I have had to learn new ways. What better way to stay alive?



# Can't Let Your Kids Run Your Life

On a cloudy day in May we forced our pickup up the rutted mountain road to a stump studded pasture near the top of a mountain in Sunny Valley, Oregon. Here lives Sue and her 60 goats, one monkey, dogs, cats, chickens, and a new calf. Near her lives Mrs. Lamarr, 80, and her goats. The two women have no near neighbors, nor do they want them. We went for a truck load of goat manure and with hopes of an interview. Sue, a strong fifty-ish looking woman, gave us both. Here is a much shortened version of our talk together. Her smallest kids were living in the house and provided us all with conversation, cuddling and nuzzling.

Country Women: How long have you been here?  
Sue: Oh, it'll be four years the 13th of June. I came from Plum Tree Lane, about five miles north of town. I lived there 42 years. I had a big row with my kids, especially my oldest daughter, she didn't want me to move up here. But I didn't tell her anything about it 'til I got all the papers and everything. Why let your kids tell you what to do?

I have 15 acres. I traded for eight down there, and he sold part of it. He got \$975.00 an acre for it. When we came up here we only paid a dollar and a half. That was 1948.

CW: I was wondering if you ever get lonely up here by yourself?

Sue: Not at all, not with all these goats. They're not spoiled at all, ha ha. And I have my television and my radio. No, I never get lonesome...I raised four kids by myself. My old man left me when Patsy was four. What happened to him? Oh, he just got tired of taking care of the kids I guess. Couldn't stand the responsibility. I worked 30 years in the drycleaning job. Plus having a farm. Raised all my own meat. Baked all my own bread, too.

My old man and I used to cut wood with one of those big old cross cut saws. During the depression, why, he worked for the Forest Service two weeks and we sawed wood two weeks. And we made more money sawing wood than he did working for the Forest Service. After the old man left we had the house full of kids all the time. He wouldn't let my kids have any company. We were glad when he left.

CW: And you never married again?

Sue: Heavens no! Once is enough for me. No, I enjoy my animals. And though it takes up money, I have everything I need. Nothing scares me. When I was raising my kids I used to worry how I was gonna get by 'cause I was only making 30¢ an hour at the laundry when the old man left. I was wondering how I

was gonna get by and how I was gonna keep off welfare but everytime I'd worry and worry and worry and lose sleep and everything'd come out just right so I quit worrying. It don't do any good to worry.

CW: Do you have any help?

Sue: This was all cleared in here, this pasture here, but I've been up there throwing fertilizer and grass hay, and then that makes the grass grow. There was no grass in here at all when we moved up here. Mr. Klink helped me build my barn, but otherwise I do my own building. I don't have no money to pay anybody, so I do it myself. My kids wanted me to move, but I said no. When I get crippled up so I can't wait on myself, then they can tell me what to do.

CW: Did you get hurt by the floods here, by the heavy rains this past winter?

Sue: Oh, it just washed the road out there and it washed down the road making a big hole. I got stuck twice down there. There was a rock across the road this way. When I went to go over that, the back of the car would jump right down into this hole so Mrs. Lamarr and I were down there with our shovels, both trying to dig it up, and a couple of Forest Service guys came, young fellows in their truck, and they took pictures of us trying to get our pickup out and four days later, why BLM sent some guys out to fix the road.

I was 72 last January. I've got arthritis in my finger and my back here and my knee but I don't stop work, I just keep on going. There's no use to set down and cry about it. If I set down and not keep a-moving, why in a month's time, I'd be so stiff I couldn't move. You just can't give up to it, that's all. Sometimes when I go to milk my hands are so stiff that I can't hardly squeeze, but I keep squeezing and it gets a little limber and by the time I'm through, why it's allright. This finger sticks, and it makes me so mad! It sticks down and I have to let go and take this hand and unlock my finger before I can let go.

Oh, I wish they'd get over that Watergate crap. I think it's a bunch of hooey. It's just like a bunch of kids. You know, you get 'em all out there playing and one says, "Well, I won't play with you anymore if you don't do what I want you to do". That's what they remind me of. All men are anyhow is kids grewed up. Ain't that right? The more I see of men, the better I like my dogs. They're so disgusting. You know the Democrats are trying to get rid of Nixon. I said, "Well, what are they gonna do when they do get rid of him?"...He's done more for us old folks than any president's done.

CW: What would you have to say if somebody was wanting to start out raising goats?

Sue: Well, I'd say to find out as much as you could about them before you got them. 'Cause there was a friend of mine who lost practically all of them 'cause they didn't know how to take care of them.

CW: Where did you learn?



Sue: Well, I just bought me a goat. I had awful bad stomach trouble, and this fellow next to me, Neily Williams, he said, "Well, you buy one of these milk goats and drink some milk whenever you're hungry and your stomach's gonna get alright." You know, I did that and my stomach straightened right out. So I paid \$10.00 for a milk goat, Old Queeny, and he gave me two billies and two little nannies, just gave them to me cause he didn't want to be bothered with them. And I raised those and that's how I got started.

CW: How many kids have you got this spring, new born?

Sue: Twelve. I've still got four more to freshen. I didn't breed all my does this year cause I just didn't want too many goats to winter over, you know.

CW: Do you have any problem with them wandering off?

Sue: No, my goats always come home. Once I thought I was gonna have to stay out all night with them. I got lost way back up there on the mountain. The sun was going down when we found our way back. Cocoa, the bell goat, well she discovered where we were and boy, she just took off, left me up there with four goats. One way heavy with kid, one was old and the other was crippled and I don't know what happened to the other one. I went to go back, it was a narrow path over this knoll. As I was walking over it the ground just gave way and I fell down the hill about thirty feet right straight down and me bumping down over those rocks on my seater end. I felt like I been riding horseback the next day. And all the debris and everything coming down on top of me and I sat there and laughed like a darn fool. Then I had to climb up over another ridge to where the four goats were and take them up over another ridge to come out where we went in. But all the rest of the goats was home already. Old Beauty was so

heavy...Oh, yeah, they all got a name, and they all know their own names.

CW: Does Missy the monkey just go off by herself?

Sue: No, she stays with the goats. There's one goat that she rides. That big white nanny goat. Oh, she gets so mad at Pearl when Pearl don't wait for her. She lays down on the ground and just screams as loud as she can scream. I had to laugh one day, it was just last week. The goats all got down there at the bottom and it started to hail and here they come, and guess she missed Pearl because here she came up the road her tail a-waggin' in the air and she was just dripping. She missed her ride.

CW: Where did you get the monkey?

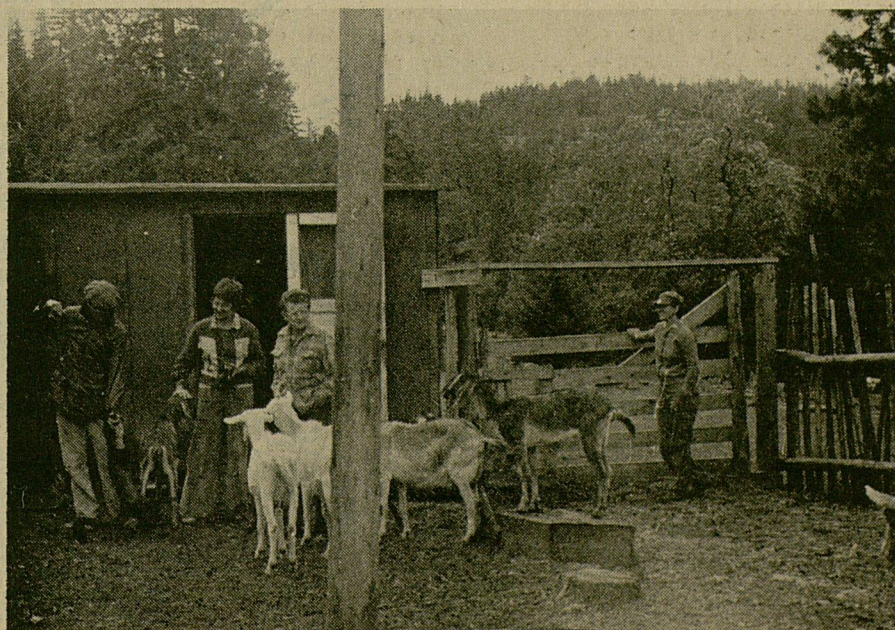
Sue: A girl gave her to me. Her husband got mad at her. She has 10 goats and he was gonna kill her goats cause he got mad at her. So when he went to work she took everything that belonged to her, put a bale of hay in her station wagon and piled her goats all in there, here she come. She stayed up here about three months with me. She had two jobs and couldn't take care of the monkey so she gave her to me. Now she's setting chokers for her brother out in the woods. He's a logger and she's setting chokers. She was

trained to be a nurse's aide but I guess she makes more money setting chokers.

(To a rooster who was after a mama hen with chicks): You leave her alone. She's a married woman, got her a family to raise.

CW: So where have you been getting all your energy all your life, to do all this stuff?

Sue: I don't know. My work don't bother me a bit. If I don't do it one day, I'll do it the next. If there's no other day, I won't have to do it. I'm my own boss, I can do just as I please. ♀





# ELEGY

Mama as you lay dying the furniture  
shuddered. Familiar veneer bore witness  
to its altered mistress from all corners.  
Your husband's chest of drawers its pulls  
worn to your touch fingering warm underwear  
and ironed initialed handkerchieves.  
The photographed children caught in lighthaired past  
peek at the wedding photograph: he in straight attendance  
to your ivory shimmered majesty.  
Delicate smile of one betrothed legendary  
pale bouquet stephanotis carved rosebuds  
snowy baby's breath tiny belling valley lilies  
one white winged trumpeting orchid:  
a song of fragrance to your loveliness.

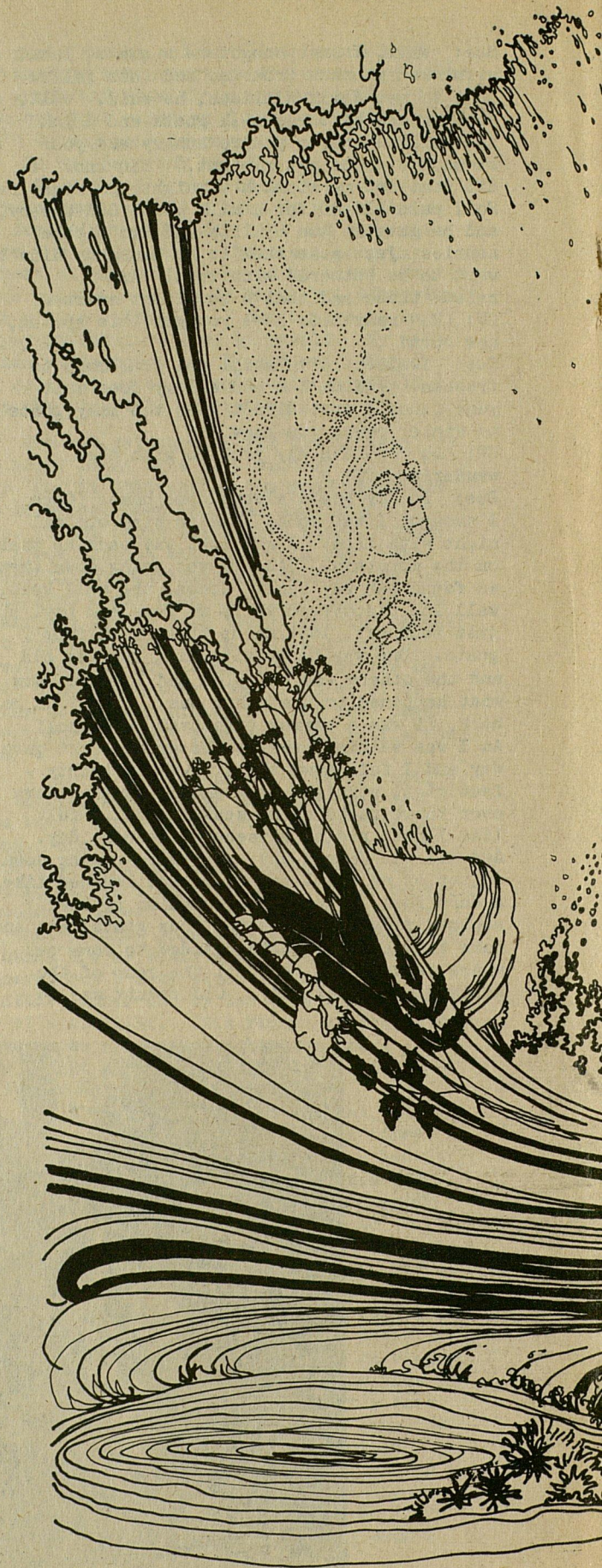
Again: impossible blossoms fairylanded  
in your lap and grasp unfolding  
massed foliage tenderest ferns  
a sepia growth steadfast as the man  
dark as your brow and hair.

Shaven the stubborn skull mocks all marriage.  
Mocks your unbridled daughters your sons  
their wives. Your husband is steadfast still.

It is my mother who smiles from the refrigerator  
she who startles in the mirror  
twincrested hair show'ring wrinkled pins  
whose feathered hats I harbour  
I wear her ring.

It is my maternal ancestor who brought me  
ice cream melting in a cup  
who gathered peonies and daffodils  
perfumed our house in vasesful  
soft petals in pianodust.

I bathed in November Leah Malke your thinness.  
Surgically-drawn centipedes and railroad tracks  
outrage your Vietnam body warring home ground  
ground my teeth to breathe the smell  
of inoperable decay.  
I held you in a towel.





It is Elizabeth who smiles on a beach fullboscmed  
fullthighed a maiden and her beau.  
A young wife tumbles blackberries plump  
and wild growth of tangling thorns  
forever on film wound in its tin.

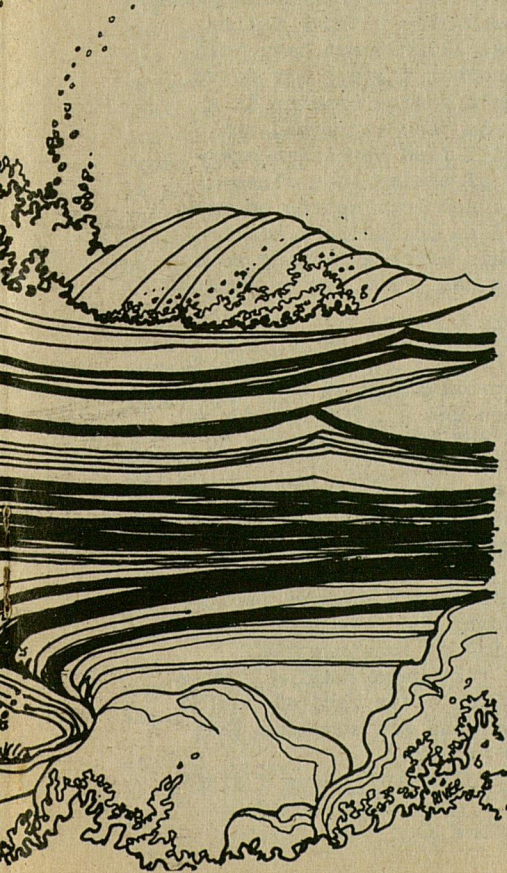
Stung and strangled we choke for mercy  
the pulse is indistinguishable  
the rattle: playtoying of Death  
fing'ring your throat:  
The game is over.

And this is me Mum who saved all my crayoned valentines  
who listened to soap operas  
who played Chopin and Beethoven  
and played double solitaire to woo me from woe  
Little Mother you were dealt a handful of dust.

Father kisses quick the hem of your mothgreen dress  
which we chose for your shroud  
for its high neck and long sleeves  
trimmed in tiny handsewn pearls  
cast below I swinishly fearing  
it is not warm enough for winter.  
How do you dress for Eternity, Mama?

She who promised moles were beauty-spots.  
Her long braids uncoiling in an envelope.

Spring: in a tidepool on the strand  
of Jughandle Creek in Mendocino  
soft-lipped anenomes undulate  
'cross coral clung to rocks.  
The colors of your earthly bedroom  
white and pink and seafoam green  
seen through a reducing-glass  
in infinitely watered grave  
interminably busy  
mothering Nature  
transfigured  
a flower  
on a further shore.





# MENOPAUSE WILL CHANGE YOUR LIFE

With true folk wisdom, women have called the cessation of the menses "The Change". I remember as a child hearing my mother ask a neighbor "Are you going through The Change, dear?" In spite of that friendly tone, I grew up with negative ideas of menopause based on innuendoes in movies and books, dreary medical writings, and gossip about hot flashes (how embarrassing), weepiness, depression, and irrational irritability.

When I first began to consider myself "pre-menopausal" -several years after doctors began to refer to me with that term- I sought information from a physician's nurse. I was given a slick medical pamphlet. The tone was condescending and alienating. I can summarize its 40 pages like this: "Your doctor is your best friend during this trying period. There are vast hormonal changes and you should just take them in your stride. Keep busy, keep up your appearance, and your sex life needn't suffer. Confide your problems in your doctor and he will give you drugs to keep you going."

Having been in the Women's Movement for two years, that approach made me angry. Not having any gynecological problems I just let it slide until Our Bodies, Our Selves\* appeared. The first edition spoke exclusively to the concerns of young women, giving information about venereal disease, birth control, and pregnancy. But the hard cover 3rd printing contains the best written material on menopause that I have seen. It is warm, practical, and supportive, and it indicates that there is more for us to learn.

Menopausal symptoms are NOT all in our heads, just as cramps are NOT because we don't accept our "femininity". Our inner chemical (hormonal) balance is intricate and is far from being well understood. Besides the monthly fluctuations, and the changes during pregnancy and lactation, the hormonal system makes natural changes over our whole lifespan too. At 45-50 the hormonal changes have reached the stage where they don't trigger the other body functions in the ways they used to. Mechanisms for controlling body temperature, blood pressure, blood sugar levels, and many other things are having to shift to other cues, and the changeover isn't always smooth. So women sometimes feel dizzy, hot, cold, tired, etc., seemingly without sufficient reason. There IS a reason, relating to her hormone balance. She is not ill or neurotic. These changes have been being prepared for during the previous 20 years, as the peak of hormone production (at around 28-30) drops off slowly. Usually women's bodies adapt to the lowered level of estrogen with only mild symptoms during a period of two years or so. Then ovulation and menstruation



cease, and all the physiological energy invested in the changeover is available for women's outer lives again.

Because of my respect for hormonal complexity, I have chosen not to use birth control pills and hope to complete menopause without taking added estrogen. Several older women have told me that estrogen replacement therapy has saved their sanity. I wouldn't advise someone in a severe disturbance not to take estrogen, but I am hoping that women will find herbs and exercises and natural ways of easing this stress.

I found statistics and information on menopause reassuring, so I am including a bibliography at the end of this article listing women-originated material you can write for or find at your library.

From the March 1974 "Special Issue on Aging" of the Eugene Women's Press \* I gathered the following statistics: approximately 4% of women go through menopause before age 40; 20% between 40 and 44; 45% between 45 and 49; 30% between 50 and 54; and less than 2% after 55.

I learned that there are four general patterns for menopause, with allowance for variation:

1. general diminishing flow, without irregularity

2. irregular timing with skipped periods
3. irregular timing and irregular flow
4. sudden stopping of menstruation.

The article warns that hemorrhaging, irregular spotting, or bleeding after several months cessation are not normal and are symptoms that should be checked into promptly.

Until I read Our Bodies Our Selves I didn't know that tiredness is a symptom of menopause. Other outstanding symptoms are: hot flashes,



chilling, sweating; dizziness, numbness, heart palpitation, faintness, headaches; loss of appetite, nausea, mild indigestion; aches and pains in joints, bones, muscles; insomnia; nervousness and upsets in mood.

One group of older women describe menopausal stress as like prolonged pre-menstrual tension. But for many, many women The Change is another change, not any more stressful than the ones they have experienced already, like developing breasts, beginning periods, being pregnant, delivering and nursing a child. Our bodies are complex, but adaptable to these normal processes which women have experienced for thousands of years.

If you live in a big city you may find a Menopausal Self Help Group. In Oakland, Calif. the Women's Action Training Center sponsors such groups. Women meet for support and information. They discuss their health problems and help each other evaluate the drugs and medical procedures their doctors suggest. You may want to start one in your area. In Seattle, the YWCA sponsors a lay group which has added action to their discussion of menopause. They are trying to get research done on problems identified through a questionnaire sent to one thousand women. They have developed a bibliography of positive articles, reports, films and novels of interest to women about menopause. The Older Women's Liberation Movement (OWL) has joined with NOW's National Task Force on Older Women. There are groups in most large cities.

While the Women's Movement has expanded rapidly, it has just begun to appreciate the unique place of older women in our women's culture. Feminists are now facing the ageism of the Women's Movement, along with the ageism of the man's culture. And older women are hearing the Feminist message that our lives can 'begin' whenever we take conscious charge of them, and that can be at any age; that we can go on growing and become more beautiful persons as long as we women are true to our inner selves; that there is much work we can do in the world besides raise children; and that women of all ages have powerful interests in common --are indeed more Sisters than mothers and daughters.

From the Women's Movement Self-Help Clinics I have learned how to use a speculum and do a breast examination. These skills, and the attitude of seeking information about how the body functions, are a great help in preparing women to interpret their body signals as they change during their lifetimes. A young friend told me she expects her experience of menopause will be different from her mother's, "Since the rest of my life is being so different," she added. I think she is right. The Women's Movement is giving women the skills and the strengths to make The Change be a freeing change. It will not be dreaded because we are growing useless in men's terms, but will be anticipated, understood, and prepared for as the doorway to a new and important phase of our woman's life.

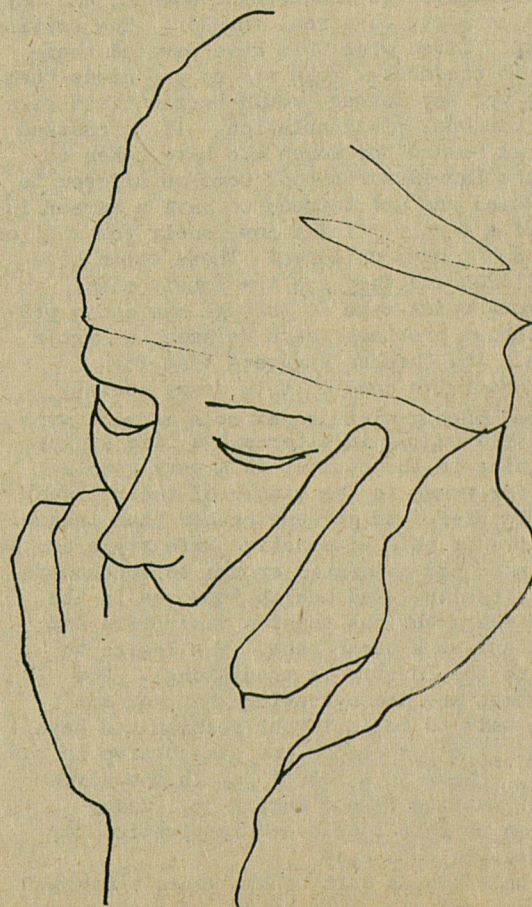
Everything I read about menopause emphasizes the importance of psychological attitudes in determining what kind of experience a woman will have. So I was alert to what feminists had to say about crying, depression and insanity.

Crying is something women traditionally do a lot of... Charlotte Krause, the author of an article in the April '74 issue of Marin Women's News Journal advises women to yell and swear more when they would usually cry, and then to go on to change their lives. She believes that a dependent woman is a fearful person. When she represses her anger at her own helplessness, she becomes depressed and tearful. The author is not specifically describing menopausal women, is not attributing the behavior to hormonal imbalance or mood swings. She says that the cure for crying and depression--at any age-- is anger directed to changing the conditions of her life!

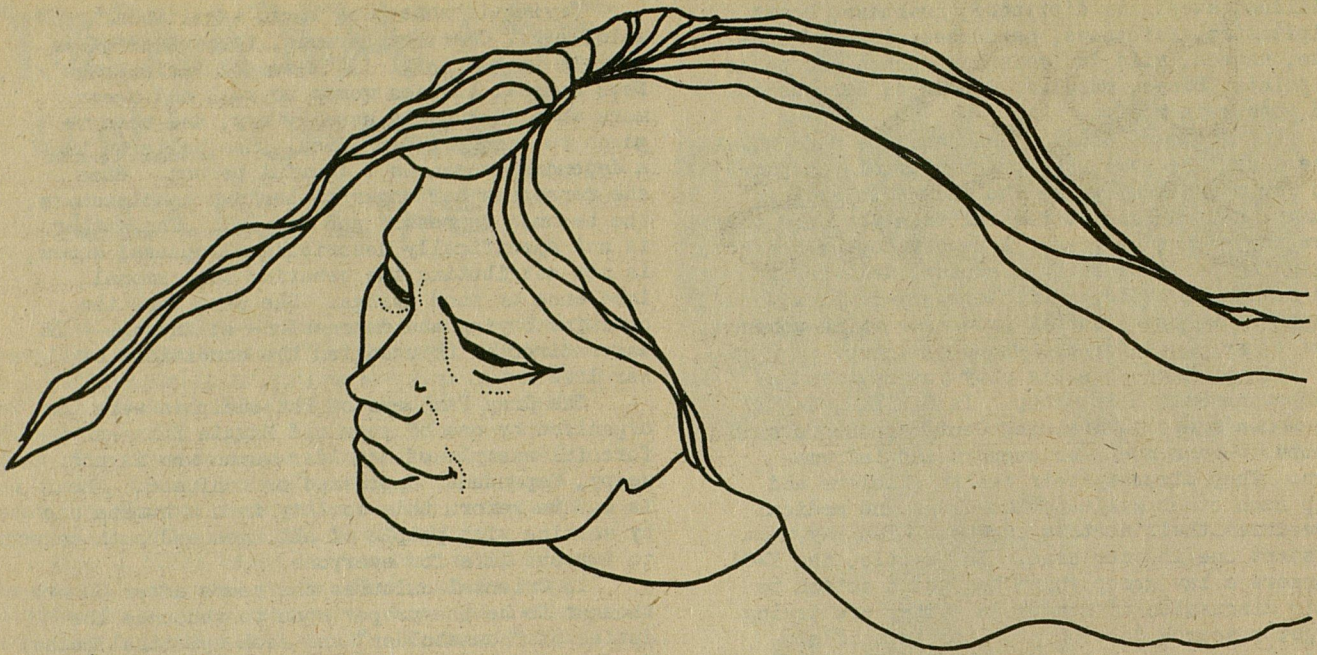
The Gray Panthers of Philadelphia were organized by one 65 year old Maggie Kuhn--a forceful example of an older woman who is not weepy, dependent, depressed or confused. She is out to reform this society into a humane one by working with people of all ages and both sexes to improve life for everyone.

In Oriental cultures the years after 50 are thought to be the proper span to renounce the duties of "householder" and seek spiritual paths. Phyllis Chesler agrees in Women and Madness. After the age of 40 women need their own time, their own space and their own expression in creative work. How many households cooperate when the 40 year old woman feels the restless stirrings of new interests seeking her consciousness? She must be going crazy, not to be happy! Doesn't she have everything she could

continued







want? Women go crazy because their lives are spent in a losing game like Catch 22 -- damned if you do and damned if you don't; and if you comment on it, you must be mad. By the mid-forties the hopelessness of winning at the game of femininity is becoming obvious. It is not her hormones which are driving her insane, it is the vision she is getting of her options.

"Depression in Middle-Aged Women", a study by Pauline Bart, is a real shocker. The emptiness of women's lives when they have devoted themselves to the mother role and no one needs them in that way any longer, would be sad if it were only a personal miscalculation. It is instead the usual reward for women who have taken to heart the Sacred Motherhood Come-on offered to young women who are tempted to have a career instead of a family. Think how lonely you will be if you don't have children! These women have had children and they are the lonely ones. Autonomous women make it through the aging process without problems, says Reisman in Bart's article. And Chesler suggests that for women to survive sane in this crazy society, they need highly visible new role models, with some viable options in alternative life styles.

Living in the country is a very viable option for women in the middle of their lives who would prefer to go sane rather than insane. The rigors of this alternative life style can be eased into, and moderated enough to accommodate anyone's health. And health improves in the country where nervous tension disappears and rhythms are at a human pace. The desire to retire to the country is traditional. Now young women are demonstrating that you don't need to wait to collect your pension and have the land paid for before you can survive in the country. There is a lot of joy in the adventures of getting by and making do. Young women can be role models and inspiration for older ones in this case.

I have been a part of the women's movement four years and will soon be 49. I have a strong

sense of life opening out ahead of me. I am interested in meeting and learning about women in their 60-70-80s who have been vigorous and adventuresome. I want to feel that I too will have the energy to continue to be a part of the changes in society which we women are going to create together. For me, feminism has been better than estrogen to relieve the stresses of menopause, and best of all it has united me with women who are Sisters to share my life and work.

As I finish this article I am struck with the insight that the euphemism for menopause, "The Change", points us to the key for coping with it, and the guess that old wives' tales may often hold some wisdom for young feminists.

Our Bodies, Our Selves, New England Free Press,  
791 Tremont St., Boston, Massachusetts 02118

"Women's Press", Box 562, Eugene, Oregon 97401

Women's Action Training Center, 434-66th St.,  
Oakland, California 94609 Ms. Tish Sommers

Seattle YWCA, University, 4224 University Way NE,  
Seattle, Wash. 98105 Ms. Irma Levine

NOW National Task Force for Older Women  
Contact a local NOW chapter

"Marin Women's News Journal" Box 1412,  
San Rafael, California 94902

Women and Madness, Phyllis Chesler, Doubleday 1972

Woman in Sexist Society, A Mentor Book, Edited  
by Gornick and Moran. (See Pauline Bart,  
"Depression in Middle-Aged Women")

The Gray Panthers, c/o Tabernacle Church,  
3700 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, Pa 19104

"Prime Time", feminist monthly newsletter for  
women in "the prime of life",  
232 East 6th #50, New York, NY 10003

Women's Health Forum (Workshop on Menopause)  
156 Fifth Ave. Suite 1228 New York, NY 10010



# book reviews

Margaret Drabble, The Needle's Eye (Alfred Knopf, 1972; in paperback: Popular Library, \$1.25 and Aragorn Books, 95¢)

Doris Lessing, The Summer Before The Dark (Alfred Knopf, 1973; in paperback July 1974, Bantam Books, \$1.25)



Margaret Drabble's The Needle's Eye and Doris Lessing's The Summer Before The Dark are books in which two marvelously sensitive and sophisticated British women writers deal with one of today's increasingly common phenomena: WOMAN - over thirty - IN SEARCH OF HER SELF. Both authors speak out of the general swelling chorus of feminist writers who raise the battle cry of "Sisters Arise! Choose your own particular brand of individual freedom! Deny society's too-long imposed role of faceless wife and mother!"

Having myself met the over-thirty wife and mother crisis, I can identify with both protagonists. And I highly recommend both books, but with several reservations that I want to talk about.

In the first place, though various friends consider that I have departed the "proper" paths of middle-aged behavior, I am neither a radical nor a true-blue feminist. I still genuinely like men, and I thoroughly enjoyed birthing and raising the four children that sprang from my ex-husband's loins and my womb. I don't regret my past life but rather consider it to have been pleasant, and even rewarding in that it contributed toward filling the necessary gaps between my "Innocent-Then" and my increasingly "Aware-Now".

I feel that both Drabble and Lessing, with great warmth, appreciate the male of the species and the joys and miseries inherent in nurturing children. Both deal positively with these aspects of WOMAN in the generic sense. They differ radically in their explorations of the means by which their protagonists go about claiming individual selfhood. Lessing chooses the glamorous, the bizarre, the slightly shocking even psychotic break with the old ways; Drabble chooses less dramatic, and at least for me, more believable ways. Lessing seems to suggest that making a conscious choice necessitates that it be an either-or one; that there is somehow an immutable duality of things which dictates polarity rather than integrated wholeness. Drabble seems to feel that the world is somehow better served by recognizing certain inescapable facts of ambivalence and compromise in order to bring about a more important order and balance in things.

Margaret Drabble's protagonist, Rose Vassiliou, is by most of her London contemporaries considered quite mad since she had chosen to give up her rights to an enormous inheritance by marrying a poor immigrant and, more unforgivable, seems entirely content to live in an unfashionable section of London in comfortable squalor even after her husband has left her and become the protege of her business tycoon father. There is a tender love affair with Simon, her barrister, and the ending is, for me at any rate, one of the few recent ones that I could really believe.

Doris Lessing's heroine Kate Brown, a London physician's wife, meets her middle years identity crisis by first accepting a challenge to serve at an international conference where her competence and charm are beautifully appropriate, and later by having a somewhat uninspired affair with one of the young gallants she meets at the conference, and finally by returning to her London homebase as a sick and confused shadow of her self having found in neither of the jet-set roles sufficient reason either to go back to her original suburban wife-mother role or to break away from it.

Drabble's writing I stumbled upon quite by accident less than a year ago through a London Times reprint. In it she somewhat sheepishly discusses (since she is considered to be a champion of women's rights) her hopelessly out-of-date delight in her children. At the bottom of the article was a brief mention that Drabble's most recent book was The Needle's Eye, which I immediately looked up.

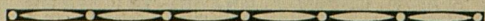
I had never read Lessing until last Christmas when a favorite and far-out older brother gave me The Summer Before The Dark. His handwritten dedication indicated he had read and understood the author's message - "To my sister, with love and holiday cheer, and may your summer be long and your dark as happy as a seal". Though I was intrigued by his words and thought, even after reading (and thoroughly enjoying) the book, I was unable to unravel Lessing's metaphoric seal. And I'm not sure that my brother did either, but perhaps that's unimportant.

What is important about both books is that their authors are both speaking as women and making comments about how women in increasing numbers today have begun to assert their unique inner persons rather than to settle for an empty role whatever it may be.

The two titles - The Summer Before The Dark and The Needle's Eye illustrate the authors' different points of view: Lessing juxtaposes the implied warmth of summer against the opposite cold of an unknown darkness; Drabble, with her reference to a Biblical parable, suggests a religious matrix. The two endings affected me as (Lessing's) unclear and unresolved and unrelated really to the first part of the book, and (Drabble's) as eminently the way it should, could and would be, given the characters and the situation. Though I know nothing beyond the bookjacket blurbs regarding the lives of the two authors, I feel that they must be here reflecting their own unique and very personal world outlooks and view of their own personal place in it. ♀



Rural Free: A Farmwife's Almanac of Country Living by Rachel Peden N.Y. Knopf, \$4.95  
(Get it from the library!)



Ms. Peden really is a farmwife; she's not a feminist and centers most of her farmwork in the home. But this is still a lovely book. It is her journal, month by month of a year on an Indiana farm - small personal incidents, experiences and revelations, the continuing cycle of plant and animal life. Most of the details of farming she reports through her husband, the farmer's eyes: but both share deep feelings for their animals, their land, the process that is farm life. The book is rich in tiny details, not the how-to but the feeling of farming, and any incipient homesteader can read and share them. She writes with the eye for detail, the taking seriously each living thing, that comes from long years in the country - watching a beetle affects her as deeply as herding the cows. It is a slow paced book, not one to be read through, but one to be picked up again and again. If read too quickly, you miss the beauty of Ms. Peden's style - her ability to intensify your experience of the land.

Her journal varies from specific daily incidents, to more philosophical considerations:

"Today we picked the first rose. Roses are symbolic of summer. Probably nothing represents the idyllic conception of summer tranquility more completely than the old fashioned pink rose, fully opened, sun-warmed. Summer is never actually as tranquil, eternal, and changeless as the rose believes. Summer is a wind-driven, rain-shaken season, with lines of conflicting activity blown crisscross and into each other: summer vacations shuffled like a deck of cards... trips to be made to cooler places and rested up from, gardens...picked, frozen, eaten, canned: crops to be fought for and protected; sudden heavy thunderstorms to be got out of; life to be lived wholly.

The serene philosophy of the pink rose is steadying. Its fragrant, delicate petals open fully and are ready to fall, without regret or disillusion, after only a day in the sun. One can almost hear their pink, fragrant murmur... 'Summer, summer, it will always be summer.'" (page 279)

"The last day of this month is a day of personal inquiry and thoughtfulness for me. It is the anniversary of the day we moved to this farm.

The farm, being in the center of the community...is a landmark, which gives the neighbors, to some extent, the right of dictation over it.

The soil, perishable Hagerstown silt loam, is hilly and erodable. It is fertile now, but when we came here the farm was a discouraging

run-down place. Now it has the modern blessings of electricity,...a bathroom, hot and cold water...a new barn and corncrib,...inlaid linoleum on its uncorrectably unlevel floors, fences, deep fertility, terraced fields...

Whatever it is worth per acre, the neighbors are worth more; and this is one of the things I think of on the last day of this month.

Shortly before we moved here from a much larger farm 50 miles north, we received a letter from one of our neighbors-to-be...She was 63 years old then. She had gone only as far as third grade in school. Writing was harder for her than a day's hoeing in the garden, or putting out her snowy, boiled washing, or getting a threshing dinner. She wrote:

'Dear friends, Writing a word of welcome to our neighborhood. A lot of work but hope you will like and prosper. I feel like you will be a help to us and we will try to be to you. Let us know when you are coming and we will go down and build a fire for you. Excuse this misspelled letter. Goodbye and God Bless You, Rena J. Dutton'

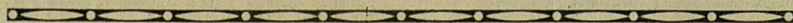
The day we moved was a snowy, sunless day. The rest of the furniture, stock and equipment had gone, I watched the big old piano being carried out and put into a truck, with snowflakes sifting down into its shiny walnut heart. Then I went back into the empty house and sat down on the bare floor, holding our two-year-old boy asleep on my lap. In the room nothing was left of our life there, except the unspent calendar on the wall and my reluctant thoughts...

When we arrived there, it was late at night; there was no electric light to turn on, the piano was too long to go in through the front door and turn in the narrow hall, so we had to take a whole window out of the living room and bring bales of straw to slide the piano on. Nine of the neighbors, including Rennie's husband, Emerson, came to help us get our stuff into the house by lantern light. When the truck of horses arrived, one of the young mares had been so discouraged she laid down in the truck and never got up again. I resented it, because I thought she had no right to indulge herself in what all of us would have liked to do.

We have lived here for a long time now. Carol was born here. She has never known any other home, nor any other neighbors, and now I cannot imagine any others, either. I cannot imagine how we would get along without them.

Mankind needs neighbors more than other farm animals do. He needs them more, and needs them longer. And he owes them more." (page 187)

Reading the book I continually replaced the "he's" with "the farmer, she..." but even so, it was worth reading. Rachel Peden, a middle-aged "farmwife", is typical of most American country women and she speaks movingly of country life.







Beekeeping is easy. Like so many other interesting, pleasurable and rewarding endeavors, a mystique exists which defines it as adventurous and thus open only to experts and men. Naturally this is not true. In fact with a few pieces of protective equipment, some knowledge about bee habits and a heroine fantasy, you can begin immediately.

A few hives can be kept in a back yard. Bees will usually not harass any creatures unless they are within a few feet of the hive. If you have more than a back yard's worth of land so much the better, for the bees will not only supply you with honey - up to 60 pounds per colony every year - and wax (and admiration) but will also be the matchmakers who will pollinate your trees and other plants.

Laws about where or if bees can be kept vary from place to place but tend to favor the beekeeper. In California you are required to register your hives with the county agricultural commissioner, presumably for disease control.

Your opening act is self defense. You want to start out with every part of your body protected. To that end, acquire a pair of heavy denim jeans, or 2 pair of light pants. Get a pair of socks into which you can stuff your pant legs and a pair of unbiteable shoes which fit snugly. To outfit the upper part, put on 2 heavy cotton long-sleeved shirts. Don't wear a sweater on the outside since the fibers will be like quicksand, trapping the bees on you. The overshirt should be long enough to tuck deeply into your pants so when you bend over no skin is exposed. It should also have a collar so your face veil can slip under it. You can buy your veil for around \$2.50 or if you have some small mesh screen around you can concoct your own. The veil has an elasticized top which fits tightly around a brimmed - pardon the expression - hard hat. The veil's lower edge is drawstrung such that you put it under your collar in back and draw it tightly but comfortable in front. Then cross the strings, bring them around back and to the front again, tying them firmly at your waist. Now you finish off this hilarious costume with a pair of elbow length gloves. These you can buy for about \$2.25. (Walter P. Kelley Co. has all sizes.) With this outfit you may feel awkward but you should feel safe.

All this paraphernalia will protect you but it is no absolute guarantee that a bee will not try to sting you. You have sealed up all possible entrances to direct contact with your body but sometimes a stinger manages to pierce the clothing. If so, try to remove it by scraping it off with your thumb nail or the like to avoid breaking the poison sack. If you grab the stinger to pull it out you will likely break the sack, injecting yourself with the stuff. A rare few people are truly allergic to bee stings. They immediately suffer symptoms of difficult breathing and explosions of hive blotches over their bodies. If this happens to you get a shot of adrenaline or epinephrine at once. Theoretically only 1 in 10,000 react so severely. However a myth is rampant that anyone who feels the pain of the sting followed by swelling is allergic unto death. If that is true then everyone is allergic. In any case, it is comforting to know that one can develop immunity after the first few punctures. I no longer have any swelling and pain only slightly greater than that delivered by a nibbling mosquito. If you have arthritis you will be glad to know that bee stings are rumored to be helpful.

If you do get stung, take the apparently ridiculous advice of every bureaucrat faced with a crisis - try to remain calm. Walk away from the bee bunch slowly since the smell of a stung human seems to incite them. You may return as soon as you feel okay and you see they are going about their business. Bees are generally reluctant to sting unless provoked as they suffer fatal internal damage. Their poison sac is attached to the stinger which gets pulled out when they sting you. If you are calm and gentle with them so that you do not emit the smell of fear, they will respond in kind. Many beekeepers work their hives with no protective clothing at all.

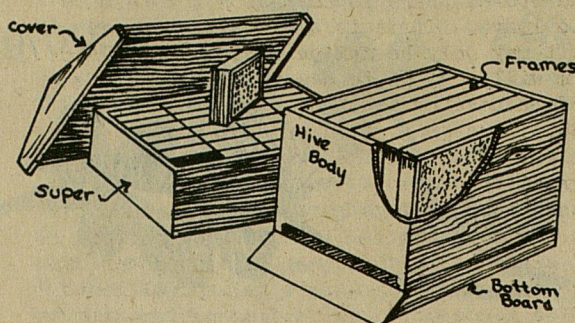
You are now ready to decide where your hives will go. You can set them up like little town houses in a row with only a couple of feet between colonies. They will be especially happy with the shade of a tree. Face the entrances south for the sun or at least in such a way that commuting bees won't bother you or your animals. Some kind of box for a stand is a good idea so the hive won't sink below the horizon in the winter mud.

With your protective ensemble now complete



you no doubt feel all dressed up with no place to go, so you will want to know where to get some bees. The simplest method is to find a local beekeeper and see if she or he will sell or trade you an already established hive. If you can't find such a person you may buy all the individual elements necessary from Sears, Montgomery Ward, or Diamond International Corporation, which has the best prices. Walter T. Kelley Company, in Leitchfield, Kentucky, has been in the bee business for years. They make available a free catalogue and give excellent mail service. The following seemingly endless list contains the essentials you will need:

1. Bees - They are sold in 2 1/2 pound packages, like so much hamburger, between April 1 and July 1 for about \$18.
2. Deep Frame Hive Body - This is the basic box into which you will put your bees. About \$5.00.
3. Frames - Into each hive body 10 wooden frames must hang. \$3.70 per set.
4. Foundation - This is what is framed. The most economical is the plastic or Permanent. It is a thin sheet of plastic coated on both sides with beeswax. The wax is stamped into the hexagonal cell pattern of the comb which the bees will complete. It is a kind of bee incentive. The plastic core gives the comb solidity and durability enabling you to extract the honey and return it to the bees for many years. \$4.50 a set.
5. Bottom Board - This is obviously the board at the bottom upon which the hive rests. This simple item costs \$5.39 so you can tell immediately that you will want to make your own.
6. Hive Cover - Also self-explanatory. Also \$5.39. Also very easy to make. However you will probably find it easier to buy the first round of many of these items to use as models. A paperback called "Cloudburst" published by Cloudburst Press, Box 79, Brackendale, British Columbia, Canada has excellent drawings and specifications for building a complete hive.
7. Inner Cover - This is just a piece of framed fiber board that fits between the hive and the cover. It's aim is to help control the climate of the hive, but you and the bees can live without it. But it is very helpful when you want to clear the bees out of the upper levels of the hive in order to extract the honey frames, since it has an oval opening in the middle into which you place a metal device called a bee escape. You place the inner cover between 2 levels. The bees can only pass through the escape to leave the hive but can not return. Voila! You can now remove the upper box with no bees to bother you. About \$2.75 for cover and escape.
8. Smoker - A covered can with attached bellows. This is an essential piece of equipment. You put some leaves or old burlap strips in the can and keep it smouldering with the bellows. This cool smoke is gently puffed into the entrance of the hive a few minutes before you lift the cover. This causes the bees to think there's a forest fire. Naturally, like the rest of us, the first thing they do in the face of this catastrophe is eat. They run inside and stuff them-



- selves, which accomplishes two things: 1) bees loaded with honey are less likely to sting - either they are fat and happy or they can't bend over, and 2) wherever you apply a puff of smoke you will be driving the bees from that spot so that you have less bees to contend with. \$5.00.
9. Hive Tool - This is useful in lifting sticky frames and scraping extra comb and gunk from your equipment. But you can use a screwdriver. The tool is \$1.89.
  10. Soft Brush - \$1.20. Good for brushing bees off or on to things, but you can use any soft brush as in a dustpan and brush.
  11. At least two more sets of numbers 2, 3, and 4. You will then have three complete boxes to allow your colony to grow and produce honey for itself and surplus for you. Although these two new wings are exactly like the hive body, they are now called supers. You will see that supers come in several heights but it is most economical to buy the deep frame equipment as it is all interchangeable.

The supers and frames arrive as a wood pile and must be assembled. But this is quite simple. The supers need a coat of weather-proof paint, preferably white, to reflect heat.

A third method of getting started is to catch a swarm. Bees usually start to swarm on the first warm spring day and continue for about six weeks. This year I saw my first swarm in mid-March. This is the least costly way to begin. Although you will have to buy the same equipment, the bees are free and there's probably pounds more of them than in the packages.

Here's where the value lies in registering with the county agricultural commissioner. Since most people who are the beneficiaries of swarms are afraid of bees, they call the commissioner who calls me to remove them. When I call the swarmee, I want to know a few things over the phone: 1) exactly where the swarm is hanging. If they have gone through a crack in a building into an attic or such, it will be a difficult and complicated process to get them out. A good description of this saga can be found in the May 1973 Mother Earth News. If they are on a tree branch you want to know how high. You can only safely go as high as the ladder you can commandeer. If they're on a fence post or a low branch you know you can reach them easily; 2) how long have they been there. Many people confuse a newly issued swarm and an established



hive. It is difficult to remove the latter intact plus since the bees already have a dwelling and stores there is no reason for them to want to leave. If it is a recently arrived swarm it may only be making a pit stop. Often a swarm will move on to a more suitable neighborhood, according to their standards.

Some straightforward hunters get a burlap sack, lift it around the swarm which is hanging in a great cone shaped cluster from a branch, clip the branch and go home, later to dump the bag in the hive body. I am not good at this method since it is difficult to scoop bees off a fence or fat branch and it is impossible to saw off a fence or spend half an hour sawing a tree branch while the bees treat you like a pin cushion.

I find it easier to bring a hive body with prepared framed foundation to the scene, thereby eliminating two transfers. I attach the bottom board to the hive with hive staples which are about two inches long. You can get them from Diamond International. I get a piece of wood that exactly fits the hive entrance so I can seal in the swarm for transport. You could seal it with cloth or paper as long as it's tight fitting. And of course I bring a cover. Besides my full dress suit I have a little black emergency swarm bag into which I put my smoker, several extra strips of burlap, matches, brush and small pruning shears. Whenever possible I include among my frames, one frame from an already existing hive which has some honey and some brood cells in it as bait. The bees are not only attracted to the honey but also the nest seems to ignite their nursing instinct - an all too familiar situation. If you do remove a frame from a going hive, replace it immediately with a new one because the bees very quickly will build comb in the free space.

Next check the hour. Between sunrise and sunset the worker bees are foraging in the field. On a warm sunny day, during the middle hours especially, most of the workers will be away. If it's windy, rainy or cloudy fewer will be out. In any case whoever is out returns by sundown. In order to capture most of the colony you will want to wait until about an hour before dark. This way you not only get a larger number of bees but you don't leave a big bunch behind to petrify whomever called you. You can never get all the bees but you can reassure the people that there will be a few around only for a day or so. They are such social beings that they will soon join other colonies.

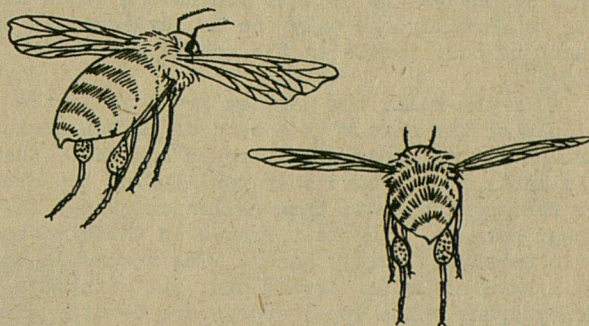
Once you arrive at the scene, light your smoker and take six or seven frames out of the hive so the clump has a space to fall into. You will want to place the hive as close under the swarm as possible, whether on top of a ladder, chair, whatever. If you have been working calmly and gently you should not have disturbed the cluster as yet. But if they are stirred up just walk away at a normal pace and they will probably recluster in a few minutes.

By now you have seen whether they are on a thin branch which can be clipped. If so, do just that and let the swarm and branch fall in

the hive. If you can not clip the branch scoop as many bees as possible into the hive, brushing the rest in. Sometimes with a fat limb you can manage to give it one stiff shake which will cause the bunch to fall in almost as a unit. Often a beautiful shake has a bit of English on it and the bees regroup on the branch after falling into your hive. Just start over.

Once the bunch is inside put the cover on 3/4 of the way. By now quite a few will be flying around madly. Mostly they are trying to get their bearings on the new location. Even without a frame of honey and brood they will tend to want to stay in your hive since western bee species prefer a dark hideaway and the smell of wax is appealing. If you don't have a comb of honey and brood or a nice smelly old hive body try spreading some honey in your new equipment.

Statistically speaking you probably got the queen. She would be in the middle of the clump and is one among thousands, so if you got the bunch in without killing too many you probably got her. The others being loyal will want to stick with her and the information of her whereabouts travels quickly.



You should leave the entrance open and let them alone for a while. Amazingly and endearingly they will begin to go inside voluntarily. Gentle cool smoke will induce the stragglers on the branch to leave and soon they too will go into the hive. Within a half hour most of them should be inside and somewhat settled down. Replace as many frames as you can and close the cover immediately. If the branch is in the hive you may remove it next day and complete the ten frames then. When most of them are inside stuff up the entrances and carry the whole business off. If you wish you can do the main work earlier in the day and return to pick up the hive at sunset, leaving just the entrance open through the afternoon.

As long as you live a mile or so away from the source of the swarm there should be no problem about the bees returning to the old spot. If there's some question you might stuff the entrance with leaves so it takes the bees longer to get out next morning as they will have to remove the debris. The more time they spend in their new quarters the more attached they will become. Otherwise, just open the entrance for business as usual. continued



FINALLY some bees are living with you. Now you can begin to know them personally. However you got them, let them settle down for a day or two. Then on the next warm day dress up and go out there with your smoker and hive tool. First a few puffs at the entrance, wait a few minutes and gently lift the cover. It may be stuck down with a tan taffy-like substance. This is propolis which comes from certain tree saps and is collected by the bees for use as glue. The hive tool will pry it open. Now a little smoke on top of the frames. Put the cover on the ground with the inside facing up. Use your hive tool to pry up the edges of the middle frame. Grab the frame with thumbs and forefingers along the outer edges of the wood and lift out. Keep the frame in its original vertical position so nothing will fall out. You may see the queen on this frame. She is the largest bee in the hive and like the workers has a pointed bottom. She will be surrounded by a gaggle of workers facing her.

You will see that the proletariat has been drawing out the comb and if you lift the frame toward the sun and tilt the bottom up slightly you may see eggs which the queen has laid. They will look like drops of dandruff in each cell. This is one way to tell if you have a queen since she is normally the only one to lay eggs and in fact the only female in the colony with a sex life.

In the wild, the nest or brood is in the middle of the hive with a band of pollen arcing around it and honey cells around and above that. Similarly in the hive body you'll find the center frames with nest, then pollen and honey in the upper corners. The last frames in the hive body will be almost purely honey. The second super will have a similar arrangement but with more honey space while upper supers are devoted almost entirely to honey.

Besides the queen there are workers and drones. Here is where bee and human politics really mesh. All the workers are female. Both the queen and the workers develop from the same type of egg. The difference is that the workers build the queen cell much larger and feed the potential queen larva more elegantly. While the queen is alive and actively laying eggs the workers are inhibited from either laying eggs themselves or from developing new queen cells which they may do by expanding an already existing worker cell. In some cases where a queen is absent, the workers may start laying eggs but they'll all be drones.

Anyway, the workers never mate and do all the housework and fieldwork of gathering pollen nectar and honeydew, build the wax comb, feed and care for all the babies and the queen, clean up the hive, including carrying out dead bodies, shit and debris. They fan the hive in summer, warm it up in winter. They set up guards at the entrance to prevent gangster bees from other colonies from ripping off their honey.

Though many drones are called, only a few fuck the queen. Once. They do it in the air on the only day she ever gets to leave the house. She loads herself up with a lifetime sperm supply and after that its nothing but staying home

and laying eggs till menopause. Meanwhile all the drones just hang around and eat. You can recognize them as being larger than the workers and having square bottoms.

Later on, in a few weeks, you will be able to differentiate the type of cells. All the cells in which work has been completed will be capped over. Worker cells will be flush with the frame and an opaque tan color. Drone cells will extend beyond the normal cell level and be a slightly lighter color. Pollen will be brown and dusty looking. If you have queen cells they will be noticeably large and curve downwards. Finished honey will be pale golden with a translucent waxy surface.

Now you can gently lay that frame down on the upturned cover so if the queen falls off the frame she'll be on the cover. You can now go through the rest of the frames to see what you can see. If you do not see evidence of new eggs or see the queen, you need one. You can buy one or join a queenless colony to a queened one by simply placing the former on top of the latter with a few sheets of newspaper in between. By the time the bees eat through the newspaper they will have begun to love each other's smells and so not fight.

When you see that the bees are working all the frames it is time for another super. If you put one on too early the bees get depressed, feeling overwhelmed by so much to do and work more slowly. But if you wait too long, they may swarm due to overcrowding.

If you have hived your bees with an old frame you will have some honey for a starter. If not you will want to sprinkle some honey or 1:1 sugar-water on top of the frames so they'll have some immediate nourishment.

Bees like to gather their goodies within a mile of the hive. They will travel further - up to two miles if necessary. Unless you have a particular honey-producing crop you will have a delightful mish-mash honey.

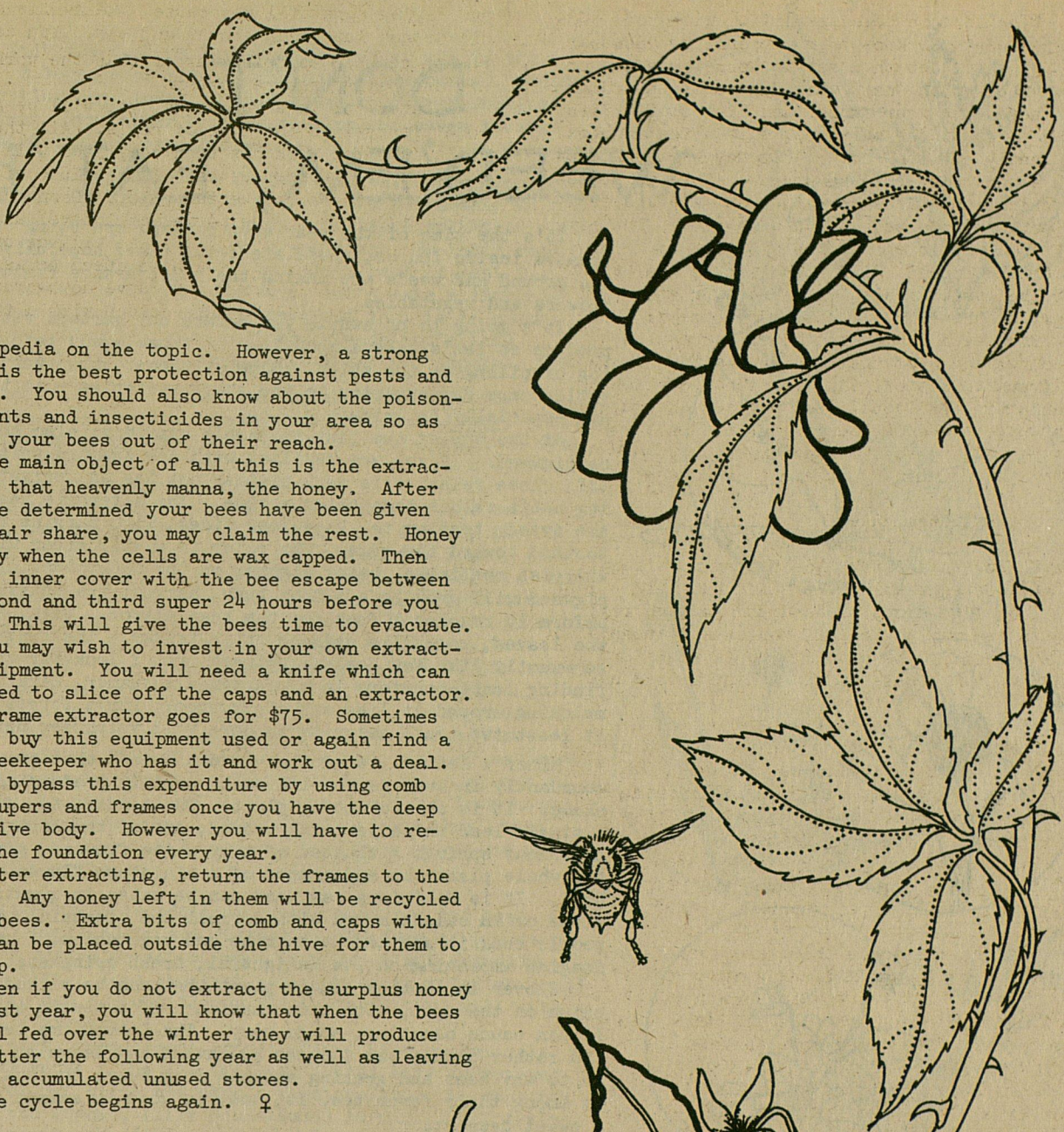
If for some reason you want to move the hive you should move it more than a mile or else you must move it gradually, one food per day. Otherwise the bees will return to the old place.

Honey making speeds up in June and July and may continue into the fall as long as there are blossoms. As you pass the hives you can smell the intoxicating aroma. By this time you will have probably added a third super. In thinking ahead to how much honey you should leave for the bees plan on allotting them the bottom 2 supers.

As winter comes on the workers do in many drones so there's fewer mouths to feed. Of course many workers die too, leaving the queen and a small band of retainers to make it through hard times. You should reduce the supers to two for temperature and moisture control. Egg laying begins again in early January so you must check the colony for overcrowding sometime during that month to avoid swarming.

There are a few common pests and diseases which you can read up on in one of the texts. "The Hive and the Honey Bee" edited by Roy Grout is enlightening and not too pedantic on this and many other aspects of beekeeping. "The ABC and XYZ of Bee Culture" by A.I. Root is a gorgeous





encyclopedia on the topic. However, a strong colony is the best protection against pests and viruses. You should also know about the poisonous plants and insecticides in your area so as to keep your bees out of their reach.

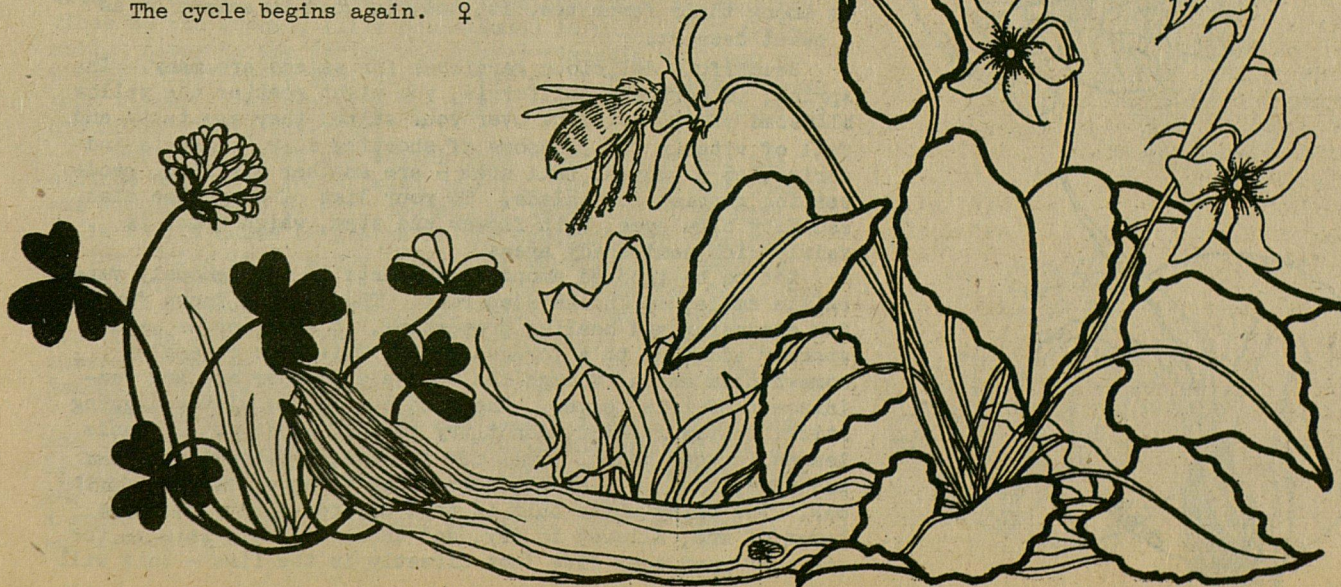
The main object of all this is the extraction of that heavenly manna, the honey. After you have determined your bees have been given their fair share, you may claim the rest. Honey is ready when the cells are wax capped. Then put the inner cover with the bee escape between the second and third super 24 hours before you begin. This will give the bees time to evacuate.

You may wish to invest in your own extracting equipment. You will need a knife which can be heated to slice off the caps and an extractor. A two frame extractor goes for \$75. Sometimes you can buy this equipment used or again find a local beekeeper who has it and work out a deal. You can bypass this expenditure by using comb honey supers and frames once you have the deep frame hive body. However you will have to replace the foundation every year.

After extracting, return the frames to the colony. Any honey left in them will be recycled by the bees. Extra bits of comb and caps with honey can be placed outside the hive for them to clean up.

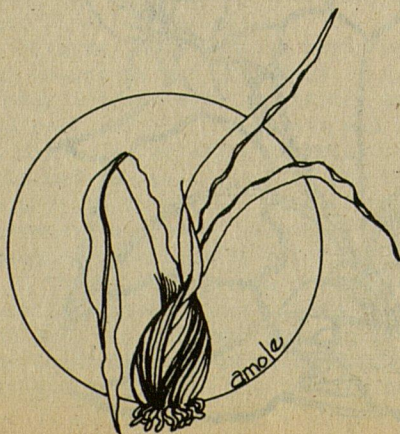
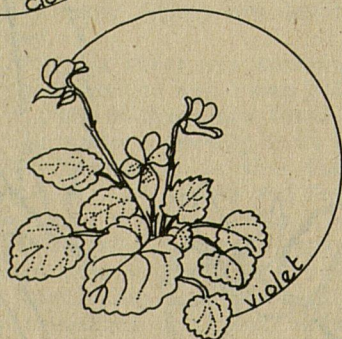
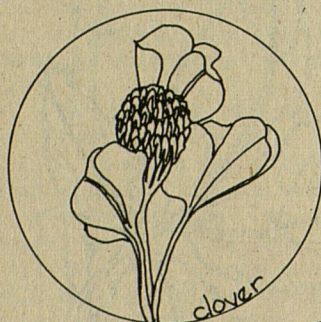
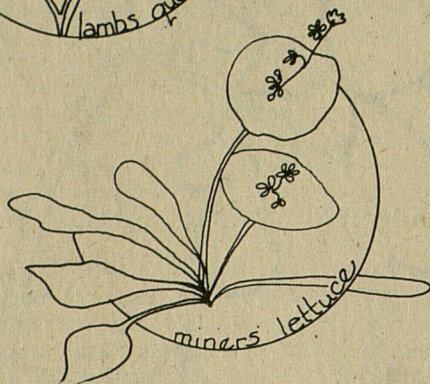
Even if you do not extract the surplus honey the first year, you will know that when the bees are well fed over the winter they will produce even better the following year as well as leaving you the accumulated unused stores.

The cycle begins again. ♀





# DON'T WEED'EM, EAT'EM



It's the time of the year when gardens are being re-created inside fences, seeds are being poked hopefully into the ground and weeds are making their appearance faster than flowers and vegetables.

It's going to be awhile yet before our gardens really produce so let's take a good look at those weeds before hoeing or piling on the mulch. Some of those "volunteer vegetables" are far superior to the store varieties - in taste and especially in price.

At the top of the list is lamb's quarters, also known as pigweed. If you are familiar with New Zealand spinach, this close relative is very similar but has an upright growing habit rather than being a vine. The alternate leaves are ovoid, tending to have four sides, with margins roughly toothed toward the edge. The color is a dull green with a whiteish mealiness, being lighter on the underside. Although pigweed will grow to a 5 foot bush, harvest the entire plant before it reaches 1 foot for the best flavor. Wash, strip the leaves, cook like spinach until tender. The flavor is so exactly like New Zealand spinach that I look forward to finding lambs-quarters in my garden all summer, carefully mulching around it like any other crop. Don't forget to let at least two reach maturity so more will volunteer next year.

Miner's lettuce is another common "weed" that grows abundantly in average-to-rich soil, usually preferring semi-shade. It is an enchanting plant. The tender stem sports a single leaf which is nearly round; out of the center of that leaf springs a cluster of tiny white flowers, giving the whole plant the appearance of a miniature flower-filled bowl. It is delicious raw, and can be eaten in quantity alone or in salads mixed with sorrell and plantain. Some people cook it and add it to rice and vegetables; I can't imagine improving on its delightful, fresh crispness.

Clover is another common plant that can be picked and eaten on the spot, with this caution: if eaten in quantity it can cause bloating, so go easy. The leaves are tender and rather bland; the flowers are sweet and leave no doubt as to why bees and grazing animals from bears to cows list it among their favorites. It, too, is good in salads or as a sweet dessert.

Beautiful, delicious garnishes for salads are many. In spring, in northern California, you might scatter the yellow blossoms of wild violets over your salad; they are tasty and full of vitamin C. Blossoms of shooting star - magenta and cerise, on a smooth, tall stem - are another striking, good-tasting garnish for salads. To your list of garnishes also add baby blue eyes, both flower and stem, which grows in fairly rich semi-shady areas.

Not to be ignored among wild plants is the famously versatile amole, or Indian soap root. Though best known for its cleansing and healing properties, it also serves as a starchy addition to a foraged meal. This bulb resembles somewhat an onion, though the tops are tougher and are reminiscent of iris leaves. The bulb can be dug with a digging stick, Indian fashion (don't try to pull a bouquet of amole leaves in your hand). Pull off the tough, fibrous covering and save; tied in a bunch, this makes an excellent pot scrubber. The shiny white bulb is then covered with a generous layer of mud, allowed to dry, and then carefully laid in the coals of your cook fire (not directly in the fire - this will



cook the bulb too fast on the outside, not at all in the center). A long, slow bake in the coals (1-2 hours), yields an interesting compliment to wild greens. Proper cooking is important here; under or over cooking can cause strange and unwanted stomach sensations.

Then of course there are dandelions, which are much more popular in Europe than in this country and not nearly as popular as they should be. This very nutritious volunteer shows up in any good soil in spite of everything. So let's make the best of the situation. If you can't beat it, eat it.

Just in case you have acid soil, let's make a distinction between dandelions and the hawkweed that is to common here. The flowers are very similar. Dandelion's long deeply toothed leaves are dark, dark green and smooth. The

flower stem is tender, hollow and unbranched. Hawkweed's leaves are a grayer green, smooth margined, and hairy. The flower stem is tough and often branched. This unedible facsimile of a dandelion is indicative of a poor acid soil. Make sure you are using dandelions.

Select only the tender young leaves that appear before the flower bud is one inch tall. Yours are already flowering? Start them over by cutting off all of the leaves at ground level. They'll be back; light green and tender. For a milder flavor but fewer vitamins, cover the plants with upended flower pots to blanch the leaves. Use dandelions in salads; the white crown between the root and leaves is especially good. For cooked greens simmer in a little water changing the water if the flavor is too bitter for you. They are especially good with bits of bacon, or mayonnaise.

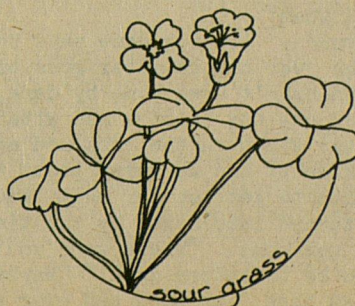
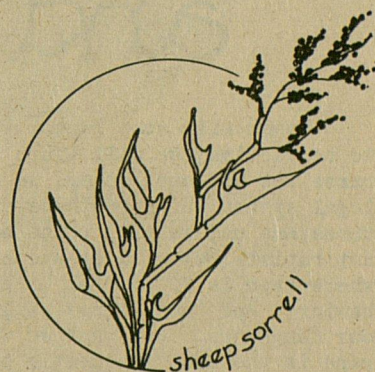
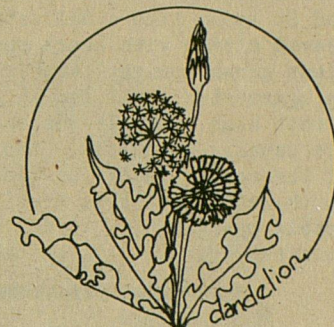
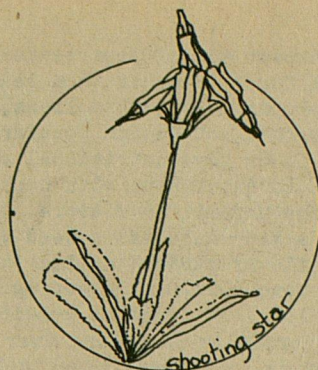
The roots also furnish a truly fine hot beverage somewhat like coffee. Dig up the entire plant, cut off and wash the roots, removing the fine feeder roots. Roast slowly in the oven or on top of a hot wood stove for about four hours, turning from time to time. They are done when they break with a snap and are dark brown inside. Then grind and use exactly like coffee.

Another valuable addition to the soup pot has been abundantly supplied by our creator in the form of plantain. If you are trying to establish a lawn you might actually want it a little less abundant. Very rich in vitamins A and C, plantain has a bland flavor which blends very well with practically anything.

The dark green, lance shaped leaves have predominate lengthwise veins. The two local varieties have narrow and wide leaves but taste the same. Plantain grows in rosettes close to the ground, (like dandelions) in rich, well drained soil. Later in the spring and summer plantain will put up a tall, distinctive seed stalk after which the leaves become more bitter. Try starting the plant over by cutting back to ground level and watering.

Wash the leaves and sliver them crosswise to cut the strings much like you do with celery. The leaves are coarse and should always be well cooked, at least for 10 minutes. It is easily added to grains at the beginning of cooking. Or try adding it to soups with other vegetables. Because of the bland flavor we like it best as an addition to dishes which have their own distinctive flavor. Young tender leaves are good raw, too. In the wilderness, friends discovered wrapping tiny cubes of cheddar cheese in plantain leaves; a simple hors d'oeuvre.

As I'm writing this last line, it's almost dinner time, and I'm having a salad tonight. The lettuce in the garden is only a few inches high, but the lambs-quarters and a few new dandelion tops are ready, so I think I'll toss them with a green onion, some cheese and dressing. Try it yourself and enjoy! ♀





Now don't expect all of your weeds to taste like supermarket fare. Many of them really are common foods in Europe, like dandelions, mustard, and sorrel, but have not become popular here. All edible wild foods have nutritional value, but you may have to experiment with cooking them to get used to the unfamiliar flavors.

When I was a kid there was a weed growing in abundance in flower gardens called "sweet grass" which we were continually eating all day, all summer long. I found it growing in Mendocino so it probably is taking over gardens all over California. Its real name is lady sorrel (though here it's called redwood sorrel) and it looks like a delicate, light green, three leaved clover with heart shaped leaflets. The plant grows upright, with some branching, and an aggressive well fed lady sorrel will reach a foot high. The leaves and lavender flowers are usually eaten raw. You'll know any member of the sorrel family by the taste. The rich mouth-watering leaves aren't something you gobble by handfuls. I don't know why we called it sweet grass. It's actually rather sour. But

we liked it. You might too. It's especially good when you're thirsty.

Another kind of sorrel, field or sheep sorrel, I'm constantly pulling out of the gardens by the house. The soil here is mostly very acid, which field sorrel loves. The olive green lance shaped leaves grow close to the ground in rosettes, like dandelions. There are two lobes near the base of the mature leaves which tend to curve around together, making it a little like a throne. The whole leaf somewhat resembles an arrowhead. Use your imagination a little. The flowers and seeds are like reddish grains borne in clumps along a slender stalk. This sorrel is very rich and should be used in moderation, to liven up a salad, like macaroni salad, or in soups.

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# SELF DEFENSE: Between Mothers and Daughters

Women will stop rape. We will refuse to be victims; we will learn to protect ourselves and each other; we will create a legal system which protects us rather than threatens us; we will raise sons who are not rapists; we will create a society where rape is NOT normal or acceptable behavior. And then things will be safe for our daughters. But what do we do now, when rape is the most frequently occurring violent crime in this country? How can we protect our children and still raise them to be women who are not victims? What are we going to tell them?

At the womens' meeting Jane says that when her nine year old daughter goes out bikeriding and hasn't come home by dark, the first fear she has is of a man attacking her. The other women in the room nod agreement and talk about how we worry about them, don't like them to get too far away, and how the fear is turned into anger by the time they finally get home. "Where were you? I told you to be in before dark!" Maybe we punish them then, but none had ever ex-

plained why they were so worried. It's really a complex problem and becomes a great conflict for us: how do you tell your daughter about the real danger confronting her--a fact of her existence for which she carries no responsibility--based solely on her body--and not instill terror in her? We don't want to scare them, yet we're afraid all the time we can't SEE them. So much of this grows from our own fears--we can't face the real danger of attack and rape for ourselves because in our fear we have no confidence in our ability to deal with threatening situations. So we keep on telling them to be in before dark without telling them why and another generation of women will grow up afraid of the dark instead of afraid of the man in the dark. (A woman in my self-defense class pointed out that the darkness is your ally in fighting an attacker: he can't see what you're going to do and since he didn't expect you to retaliate anyway your chances of a successful move are increased. Also, he will have more difficulty following you when you run off into the



darkness. This is precisely the kind of attitude we need to develop for ourselves and communicate to our children. Right now we are only communicating our fear.)

All the changes we're looking for begin with us as individuals. If we can change and adopt new attitudes then we can tell our daughters about the real dangers present without turning them into paranoid, timid victims. If you tell your daughter she has to be careful and explain the possibilities, you are going to scare her. But if you can see her from a position of strength and training then you can tell her this is the situation and this is what you do. If A happens, you do B. The attitude must be that she is too valuable to be mistreated and a means of coping with the situation offered.

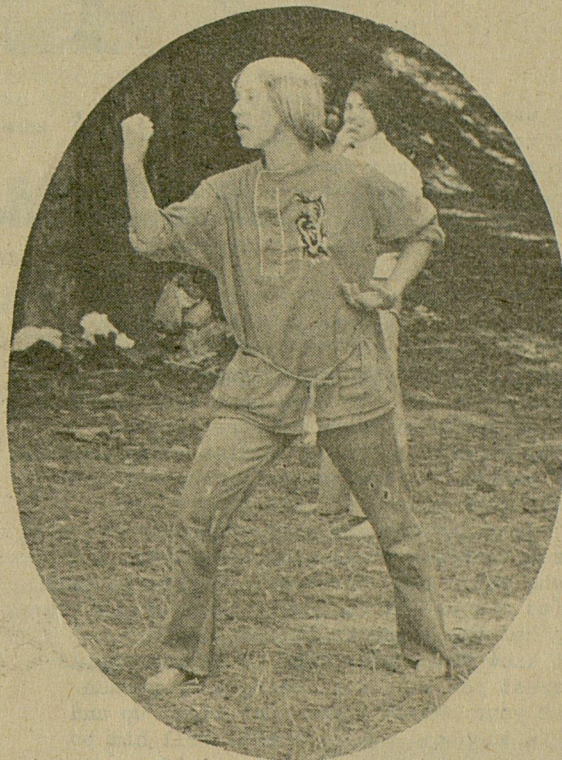
It is a sense of self-worth that makes self-defense possible. If we don't develop it and practice acting it out, we can't give it to our children and they will be victims of fear as we are, no matter how many women doctors there are.

We have been brought up to believe that we are helpless and unable to fight. This is nonsense. WE ARE NOT HELPLESS, WE ARE UNTRAINED. If we are weak, it is because we have been bred and socialized to weakness and we can reverse this by training our bodies to be strong and fast. Even if you are not interested in studying martial arts, I cannot encourage you enough to take a course in womens' self defense to experience the power and capability hidden and unused in your body. Women are so surprised to feel themselves being strong--"I don't know my own strength!" you say in awe. Strength comes in all forms: It takes muscle to carry a three year old, to lift grocery bags. Your body is limber from bending over to pick up messes and from gardening. The patience, endurance and pain tolerance we are capable of is evident in the years of menstrual cycles and childbearing. Let's not underestimate ourselves.

How to become trained and more, how to train our daughters? Take self-defense and take your daughter with you. Share getting strong together. Encourage her to participate in sports; recognize the positive aspects of competition as well as the negative. Study a martial art together--at least encourage her to do so. Try to study with a woman or at least try to find a dojo (karate school) where women are treated as equals. See the necessity of learning to protect yourself and demand it from your community as your right and your child's right. Legislation is now in the California State Assembly which requests the governing board of each school district maintaining a high school to offer self defense, if needed, (Bill #221, introduced by the Council for Criminal Justice, Sieroty, Maddy, Dixon, Waxman.) Should it pass (hearings begin May 21, write letters) it will be up to us to demonstrate the need in our communities and to pressure local boards to provide for our needs. As we experience ourselves being strong and ca-

pable we can begin to see women as strong and capable people. This means we will begin to see our children this way and can encourage them to be independent, recognizing they can take care of themselves.

We all have fears about our girls - we've had too many frightening experiences ourselves not to worry for them. Once we begin to see that women are able to handle themselves we can begin to share these experiences with our daughters so that they can be prepared to deal with them. It's not that I think that thousands of ten year olds are going to be attacked and raped in the streets. I don't. But I do think that



they are going to have a sufficient number of negative sexual and emotional experiences with men that they are going to grow up being the same kind of victims that we are unless we stop it. We need to identify for ourselves what these situations are and remember the pain and guilt they caused us so that we can warn them and save them some of the hurt.

When I listen and talk with women who are afraid for their daughters I hear the fear they feel for themselves. And when they talk about their childhood experiences it is with guilt, shame, discomfort--and then I understand why they can't share it. A woman tells about an experience she had as a child. She had gone to the movies with her older sister who left her to sit alone while she went off with friends. Sitting by herself at 8 or 9 years old, a man came and sat down beside her and began putting his hands all over her body. Intimidated by an adult, not understanding what was happening or why, she sat frightened and humiliated until the





lights went on and she could get away. She hasn't told her daughters about it, "we're not that close," she says, as if sharing a guilt-filled shameful memory instead of horror and outrage, and I can visualize nights spent lying awake and trying to figure out what has happened, finally trying to forget it in its mystery.

How many of us have felt the crawling horror of hands on our bottoms as we moved through the aisles in the theatre? Did even one of us yell or even push that hand away? As small children we were already passive, submitting to our bodies being invaded.

I wanted to hear her being furious when she told that story. I felt that if she could recognize the violation that had occurred that she would have been angry and then she could tell her kids. She could tell them (as can we), this happened to me and nobody had the right to do that but I didn't know that then. And if anyone should ever treat you this way, using your person without your consent, you just stand up and tell him to stop! Yell at him, tell him to get his hands off of you, hit him if you want to, call for help, blow your whistle--he has no right to touch you or bother you!

Imagine if you will, being ten years old and trying to squeeze out the aisle without touching anyone and a man grabs your ass. You thrust an elbow back into his face and shout, "Get your hands off me!" This is a dark, QUIET theatre. I am sure he will let go. I am sure that men who come into dark movie houses to fondle little girls do so because they are afraid to be seen and are looking for the smallest, weakest victim they can find. Given a screaming, indignant woman instead of a victimized child, they're going to run as fast as they can go. If we can get angry, we can share our anger with our daughters and protect them from this victim status--and keep them from getting hurt, physically and emotionally.

In our women's group, 6 out of 8 of us first saw an erect penis when a man exposed himself to us on the street. Only one had ever told anyone and when she did her father and his friends all laughed and laughed at her. All

of us felt guilty, ashamed, unclean. No one had ever told any of us that this might happen and we hadn't the slightest idea what we had done to make it occur. While this is not a violent attack, it is certainly a sexual violation and a common one in this society. Tell your daughter, before it happens that it might, that it's not her fault, that it might happen to any female and she is not responsible. Advise her to keep her face impassive, to blow her whistle if she wants to, and to keep on walking. Explain that what this man wants to do is terrorize and freak her out. Also, tell her that these men don't follow their victims usually and she probably doesn't have to worry about this. (But she can start running if that will make her feel better.) Tell her to come right home and tell you so that you can reassure her and help her. Prepare her so that she doesn't spend nights wondering what this bizarre thing was that happened to her.

I was talking with some friends about this article and they reminded me of the victimization that goes on with older brothers. I remembered the girl who lived downstairs from me when I was in high school who had an older brother terrorized both of us with his strength, which was considerable. (I can see him swaggering around and showing off his chest.) Judy was really afraid of him and didn't dare oppose him on very many things, even though she knew that he was mostly a fool. Usually, though, she just went furiously to her room or came upstairs to be angry. If she fought back verbally her parents would stop her and tell her she wasn't acting ladylike, to behave and leave him alone. And if they fought physically, which was rare, not only was she hurt and subdued each time, but she would be further punished by her parents for fighting. Once, when the parents were gone, an argument started and they fought. Later she came up and told me how he'd thrown her down and lying on top of her had peed on her. I still remember the horror in her voice. It was years later that I realized that he'd had an orgasm and that this might have been the first rape I knew about.

So, can you stop your children from fight-



ing? Probably not, nor would you always want to. But support who's really right instead of having an unconscious "girls shouldn't fight" attitude towards your daughter which inadvertently protects and supports your son. Encourage your daughter to be athletic and agile and she will hold her own in those fights and he'll not think women are victims and she'll know she can protect herself. I think of a few simple techniques and wish I could run downstairs and show Judy how to set her feet and turn her hips to throw him off of her. Think again and bring your daughter to self-defense. (Night after night women come, bringing their sons who want to try out karate and sit with their daughters, watching. Sometimes we talk with them about joining themselves and they are astonished - me? Why would she need it? And their daughters sit and watch their brother get stronger and faster.)

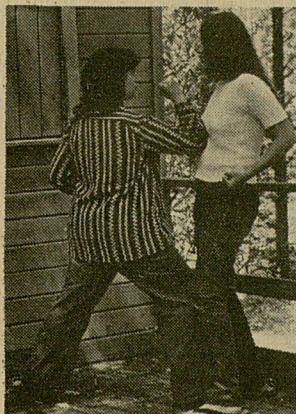
This is part of the training that teaches us to submit to men because they are phys-

ically stronger than we are. It is this same fear and training that keeps us from resisting an attacker. Jerrold Offstein reports that, "According to our research in 100% of the cases in which the woman successfully repelled or escaped from the assault, there was one common element: resistance by the attacked woman; whether it was the making of noise or physical resistance or a combination of the two. No one that we could find got free by compliance with the attacker."<sup>1</sup> (This may include verbal resistance--it is a matter of refusing.)

As woman, we are exposed to innumerable instances of humiliation and degradation. Not long ago I had occasion to walk half a mile in suburban Sacramento (third highest rape rate in California), where almost everyone drives everywhere and I found myself the only person on the street in that whole walk. I received more verbal harrassment that day than I have  
continued

# TECHNIQUES

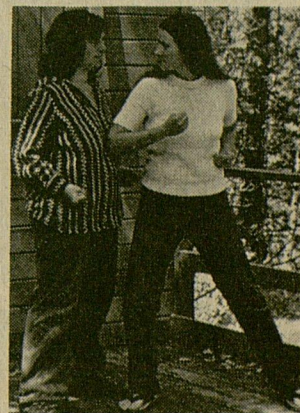
**THE BLOW:** The elbow offers a sharp, hard effective surface to strike in three directions. This is something you naturally know how to do and with a little practice you can become very proficient.



Start by making a fist and holding your arm at your waist, palm up. Then, taking a step forward and bending at the knees to get low (try to keep your back straight), thrust the elbow forward into the solar plexus of the attacker. Be sure you don't aim for the stomach as he may be able to tighten it against your blow (go ahead, hit me, as hard as you want). This is also very effective to the chin.



Again, start with your hand in a fist, palm upwards, this time in front of you. Take a small step to the side and slam you elbow into his solar plexus or throat. (Or face, or lower abdomen, or groin, it's impossible to know how tall he will be in relation to you.)



Start with the hand in a fist, palm up at your side as with the front blow. This time strike behind you at whatever you can connect with.

Hit hard and fast, using all the power you can muster. Try to keep your eyes on your attacker at all times and keep your own balance by keeping your knees flexed, with a little "spring" in them and your back straight. KIAII every time you hit.



ever before; it was the longest, most anger-producing walk I've ever taken and it reminded me of the days when I would walk home from school, alone or with girlfriends, and the high school boys would drive by yelling at us and making obscene comments and gestures until I wanted to sink into the ground. Then I had no anger and just wanted to disappear. This is something I never talked to anyone about, never questioned its legitimacy. A year ago I learned that if you're being followed by a car, you can turn and walk the other way. They can't follow you without turning around and this gives you time to get away. It's all so simple. If we acknowledge that this does happen and follow the acknowledgment with a positive possible action, we can talk about these things to our girls and save them some of the feeling of humiliation. I don't know what to do about all the verbal rape that goes on in this society. It's built in that construction workers whistle and comment to women; it's built in that men can drive by you and yell out "let's fuck", at you; it's built in that when you walk by them, men lounging

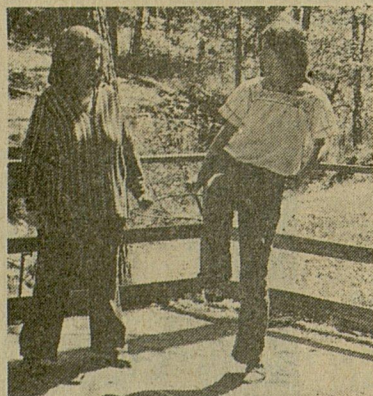
against walls can talk about your body and verbally harass and intimidate you. I feel totally invaded by these experiences and don't know how to fight them. They always come from men in pairs or groups and I feel overwhelmed and outnumbered. But now I am angry. As a child I was embarrassed and slightly sickened; uncomfortable and not knowing why, I felt that I was somehow in the wrong and had no right to be on the street. I walked long blocks out of my way to avoid new buildings going up and places where men hung out. I think these things have to be talked about between us and our daughters so that the non-specific fears and feelings are legitimized, recognized, called what they are which is unfair and oppressive, and perhaps we will find a way to deal with it together. At least we can support each other.

#### Footnotes:

1. Offstein, Jerrold N., Self-Defense for Women, National Press Books, 1972. Page 2
2. Ibid., page 16

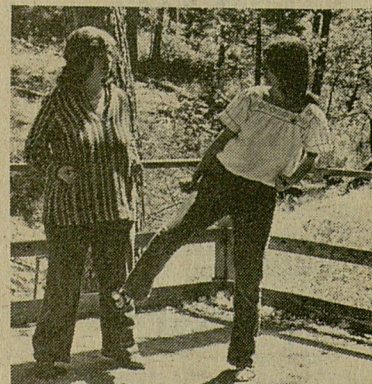
## TECHNIQUES

**THE KICK:** You can kick someone from farther away than you can hit them and this is an especially effective kick you can do with a minimum of technique.



Bring the knee up, the higher the better but don't lose your balance. Bend the other knee slightly to keep yourself standing firmly.

Stomp down hard. In this case the side of the foot (shoe) is used to scrape down the shin and stomp on the instep. If you are closer and in a hurry, just bring the knee up and stomp the instep hard. Use all of your body to stomp down. This is a very painful blow to the body, may break small bones in the foot but even if it doesn't it will almost paralyze the foot for a few minutes and make it impossible for him to step on it, giving you time to RUN AWAY.



If he is behind you, you can kick his knee, pushing it backward and hurting, dislocating, or breaking it - all of which will give you time to go. (See pictures of rear release.)



# A FEW PRACTICAL THINGS

1. How girls dress is their own choice but we can influence it with some common sense. All women, no matter their age, should wear clothes they can run in. In some neighborhoods it's in to be ten and wear long skirts and clogs. I think these are dangerous clothes no matter what your age, but at ten you can't do anything dressed this way. You can't play baseball or climb trees or bars; you can't take your turn on the rings or do anything else physical. It is so important to encourage girls to experience the joy of their bodies being active and healthy and to join in all the opportunities to train muscles, strength, and reflexes.

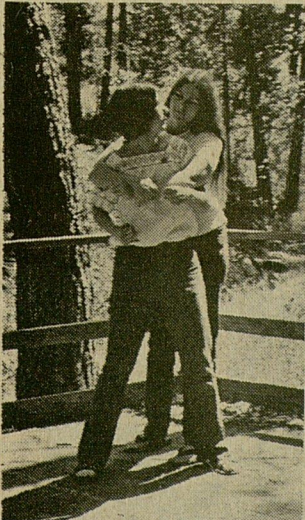
2. Let's give her a tangible weapon as well. Every girl (and woman) can have a loud strong whistle with her at all times to blow when she needs help. Teach her to blow it whenever she feels threatened and then to run for the nearest house, going right in if no one responds

immediately. Most men won't follow her if she looks like she is running home. Offstein says "In a threatening situation, the defensive tool most likely to allow you to escape unharmed is a loud yell. We know how effective a yell can be from statistical studies: in one study, 60% of all assaults on women that were successfully repelled were repelled all or in part by a loud, clear, sharp, YELL!"<sup>2</sup> Because when you are afraid your throat becomes tight and dry, you need to practice this battle cry (kiaii,) Small girls can't make such a loud noise but they can carry police whistles and blow them. THIS IS A REAL WEAPON.

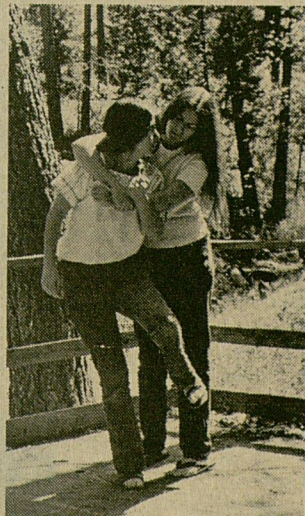
3. Just as adults should keep their cars in good repair and with plenty of gas to try and avoid being stranded alone, be sure also that your daughter's bike is in good working order, that she has a light on it, and that the tires are safe.

## TECHNIQUES

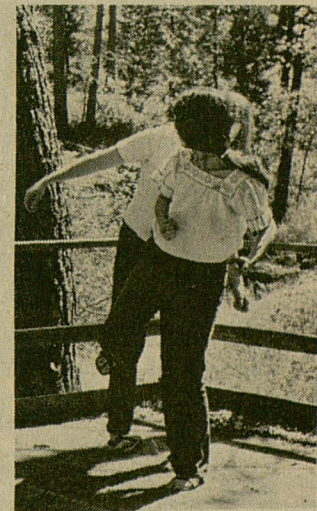
First, no one can rape you while he is holding you like this. So do not waste your energy fighting him until he makes some move to turn you in his grasp or let you go. Then you make your moves, hard and fast.



This is the hold (same if it is under the arms.) If you are having trouble breaking, grab his little finger and pull it back until a) he lets go b) he loosens his grip c) you break his finger and then he lets go.



Bend lightly on the knees, lowering yourself and the grip will loosen. Deliver a sharp elbow blow behind you and a stomp to the instep, **HARD !** He will probably fall forward as he loses his breath with the elbow blow so be ready to move.

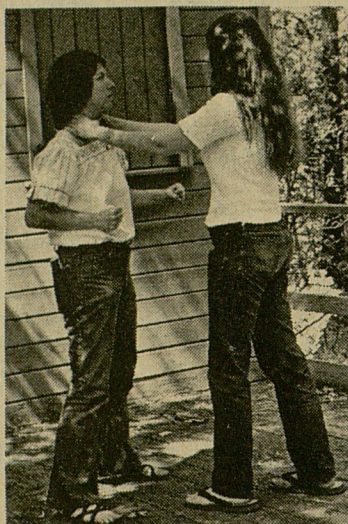


If you have time and/or the opening to do so, deliver a parting kick to the knee.

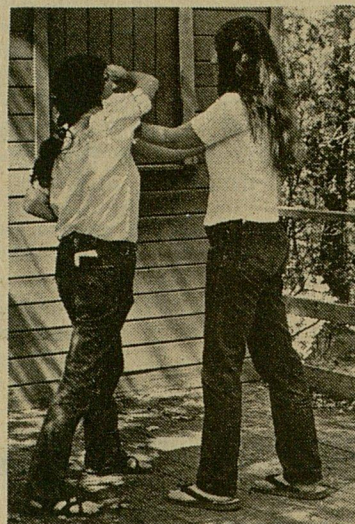


# TECHNIQUES

The theory of the choke release is that if someone is holding you with two hands around the neck you should be able to turn around and walk out of it. Try it. Using this principle we add some momentum and a kick to injure the attacker and give you time to RUN.



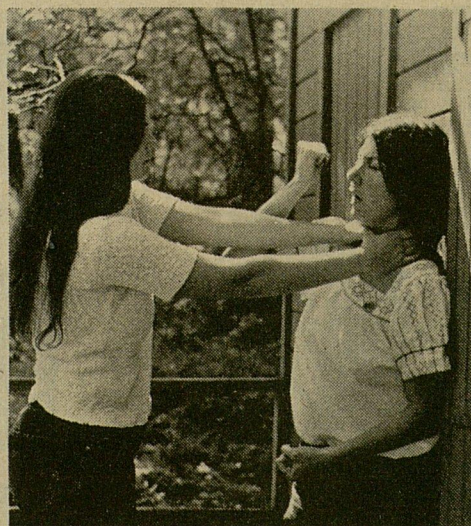
Here is the choke.



Twisting the whole body, swing the arms around like a windmill over his arms, breaking the hold and turning your head out of the choke.



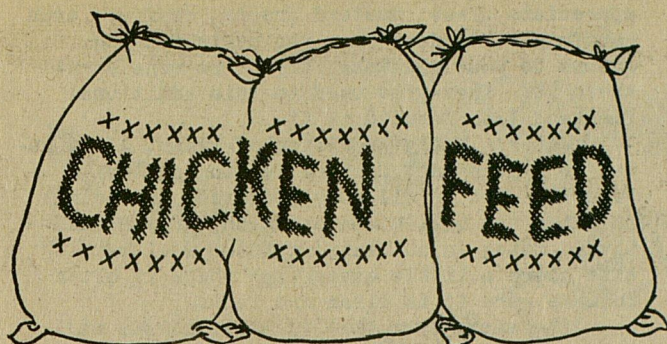
Pull your knee up and deliver a kick to the knee or shin and RUN.



If you are against a wall and can't swing the body, pull your arm up like this, in a fist to increase the strength and tension of the arm muscles and push the arms away turning your head out of the choke. Get away from that wall !

Practice everything and try to figure out some moves you can do to injure him as you get out of a hold or are leaving. Review the hammer blow and palm heel. Next issue, some releases from different hand grabs.



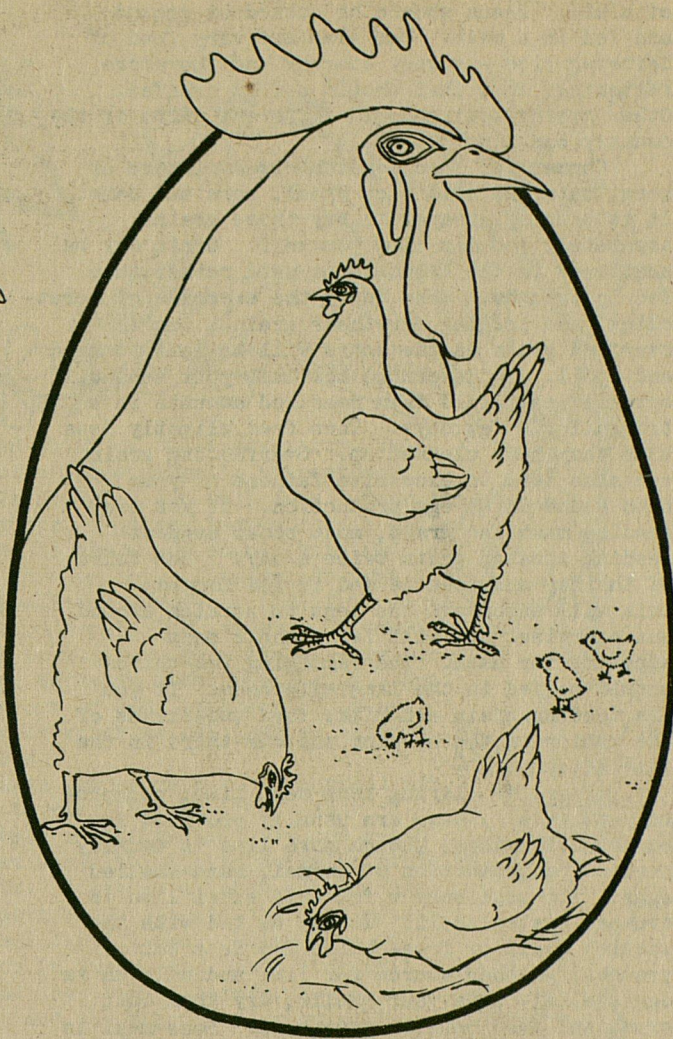


Laying hens must be fed a diet which is adequate for their particular needs as egg producers. Their basic ration will go to maintain their bodies, providing the nutrients for replacing tissue cells as well as the energy necessary to keep up body functions. The balance of their feed will then go to producing eggs. There is an art to feeding a flock for maximum egg production and healthy, active hens.

Hens need a diet fairly high in protein, with carbohydrates and fats in lower proportions. Fiber is needed to keep the digestive system well toned. Ash or mineral matter (lime, salt) is also necessary. Green foods are added as a source of vitamins and to keep the digestive system stimulated and healthy. Grit may be needed if the hens are confined without access to sand or soil.

Around these basic needs, three systems of feeding can be developed. One is the all-mash system; the second is the grain-mash system; the third is the grain-milk system. The first provides an adequate diet. There are feeds available as pellets or crumbles which, following the mash idea, contain all necessary nutrients in a conveniently fed form. The second and third systems are probably better suited to the natural needs and instincts of poultry - they provide for exercise in scratching and seeking out feed and a more varied diet. On our farm, we've found that hens do best on a home mixture of grains and the addition of either mash or a high-protein mix of milk, linseed meal and alfalfa leaves. There are many systems of poultry feeding, suggested grain and mash mixes, and so on. The following paragraphs are intended to give some basic information that you can adapt to your own flock. Available feeds, the productivity of your garden and preferences of your hens will all affect what you actually feed.

**Mash:** Mash is a mixture of finely-ground feeds, usually made largely of mill and slaughter house by-products. It is easily digested by poultry because it is so finely ground. Mash provides a high percentage of protein readily eaten and used by laying hens - its digestibility and concentration stimulates heavy egg production. It may contain alfalfa meal, wheat bran, wheat middlings, corn meal and/or soybean meal. In addition it will usually have animal protein of some sort. Animal protein is considered absolutely necessary in egg-laying rations. Tankage (the by-product of soap-making and packing houses) and fish meal are common ingredients of commercial mashes. You can substitute dry milk as your animal protein source.



Dry mash should always be fed in troughs or boxes. If it is thrown on the floor or ground, a good deal of it will be lost. Usually it is fed "free choice" (kept before the birds at all times). If your hens don't seem to like mash, try mixing some with milk - this will increase its palatability and should increase consumption.

**Milk:** Milk and milk products are an excellent source of protein for poultry. Liquid milk can be fed in pans or troughs; most hens will drink it readily. Sour, clabbered or skim milk is all equally palatable. Dry milk should be mixed with mash or fed in troughs. Milk and milk products provide vitamins which other forms of animal protein lack. The lactose (milk sugar) is also considered beneficial to the growth of healthy intestinal bacteria.

**Grains:** Most grains are rich in carbohydrates and fats which supply heat and energy for the hen's body. Grains vary in palatability and food value and should be fed in mixtures. Yellow corn is one of the most popular poultry feeds, being high in food value and well liked. Wheat and milo are similarly desirable. Oats are commonly fed in combination with any of these three - the oats providing fiber which the others lack.

continued



Peas are a good protein source when fed as part of a mix. Beans should be cooked or ground and fed in a mash. Our hens are very fond of leftover rice - a very starchy and therefore fattening feed that should not be overfed. Other grains available in different parts of the country can also be fed.

Commercial "hen scratch" is a mixture of corn, oats and milo - or wheat, corn and oats. It is usually cheaper to buy these grains separately and mix them yourself. Grain may be scattered in the henhouse or yard rather than fed in troughs. Hens enjoy the exercise of scratching and pecking for their grain. Don't overfeed grain as the extra will be left to mold and spoil. To determine how much your hens will actually eat, feed them measured amounts in a trough for a few days. Then feed slightly less than they have cleaned up. Overfeeding grain can also lead to excessive fatness of your hens - and lower egg production. If you are feeding mash and grain, most books suggest feeding scratch grain twice a day. One third of the day's ration is fed in the morning - this will encourage the hens to scratch around and exercise, but will leave their main appetite for mash. The remaining two-thirds should be fed in the late afternoon. If you are feeding grain and milk, feed two-thirds of the ration in the morning and one-third in the late afternoon.

**Minerals:** Laying hens need lime, phosphorus and salt. These are usually provided in commercial mashes, though more lime is usually needed for production of normal, hard-shelled eggs. The best source for this extra lime is crushed oyster shell. It may be fed with the scratch grain or free-choice fed in a box or trough. Another source for lime and calcium is egg shells - save your shells, dry them out, crush and feed back to your hens. Bone-meal is commonly fed as a source of lime and phosphorus. If you are feeding milk or meat scraps as a main source of animal protein, bone-meal is unnecessary. Salt helps in digestive processes. It is usually part of a mash mix - or can be added in (eight ounces of salt per hundred pounds of mash).

Hens digest their food by grinding it in their crops. Some type of grit or sand is necessary to this grinding process. If your hens run free part of the day or have earth floored runs, they will pick up the sand particles they need. Otherwise, they should be given grit (about a pound per hen per year is estimated) free-choice. If you are feeding oyster shell, you may not need to feed grit as well.

Seaweed is a rich source of natural salt, iodine and other minerals. If available, it can be dried and powdered, then mixed in mash or fed in milk (a pinch per hen).

**Grain Feeds:** Ideally, your hens should range freely part of the day and be able to pick bits of grass and herbs and weeds. Fresh greens are tonic, furnish vitamins and succulence, and stimulate the appetite. You can grow special crops for your hens - kale, chard, lettuce, rape - or feed garden excesses and kitchen scraps. Any pasture crop (alfalfa, clover, rye) can be cut, chopped fine and fed to confined poultry. Ours

appreciate grass, mustard greens, comfrey, even handfuls of weeds. Once you begin feeding greens to your chickens, try to be consistent about it. They grow used to this additional feed and look forward to it.

**Water:** Daily provision of fresh, clean water is a necessary part of feeding poultry. Water is used in all body processes and a lack of water can make a hen unhealthy and unproductive. Using an automatic waterer will make this chore a little easier but check it often to make sure it is clean and full.

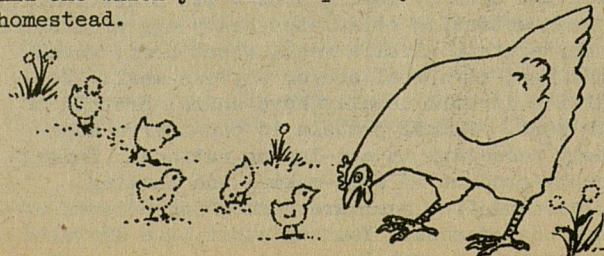
The amount you should feed your hens will vary according to their breed, their housing, their ages, and the season. It is hard to suggest an exact ratio or formula. For instance, very active breeds, such as Leghorns, need proportionately more feed per bird. A flock that is let out to range will pick up a lot of live animal protein in the form of insects and thus need slightly less protein in their mash. In winter, flocks need more grain to provide extra body heat. Different poultry books suggest different amounts and balances. One formula we found that can be adapted to a smaller flock is this: one hundred laying hens (Leghorn breed) need twenty four pounds of grain and mash daily to maintain fifty to sixty per cent egg production. In winter, twelve to sixteen pounds of this should be grain; in summer, eight to ten pounds should be grain. You can juggle this around and experiment with your flock until you reach what seems like the proper feeding. Then try to be consistent - always make changes gradually as radical changes will immediately lower egg production.

If you want to get really scientific, the Poultry Nutrition section of the Merck Manual includes a table of "estimates of the total feed required per chicken per year for maintenance and the production of the indicated number of eggs". This table tells you, for example, that a five pound hen (average size) laying very well (300 eggs) will need 92.9 pounds of feed. A hen of the same size laying poorly (100 eggs) will need 75.2 pounds. This same hen needs 66.3 pounds just for maintenance (0 eggs).

If you want to make up your own feed, use the following table in balancing your feed:

Grain (at least two kinds)	40%
Ground Feeds (at least four kinds)	30%
Animal feeds (at least four kinds)	10%
Green feeds (large variety)	15%
Mineral feed, grit and shell	5%

Your ration should contain 15 to 16% protein (5 - 6% of this should be animal protein). This should be as varied and well-balanced a feed as any commercially available, and one which you can adapt to your own farm or homestead.





# GARDEN PESTS

The small patch of ground on which we cultivate tasty, succulent, and attractive morsels of edibles seems to attract more than just our satisfied contemplation of a job well done. Over the meadow and through the woods, by air, land and burrow come a whole variety of subhuman species eager to share our bounty with us. We may have already contended with hardpan soil, disease, drought and personal inertia, but our next challenge manifests itself to us in the form of an ailing and oftentimes disappearing garden. It takes some ingenuity, if not downright cruelty, to keep the quantity consumed by our guests modest enough to leave something for us. But even before they begin eating us out of house and garden, there are a number of preventive measures which we can take as an integral part of good garden practices.

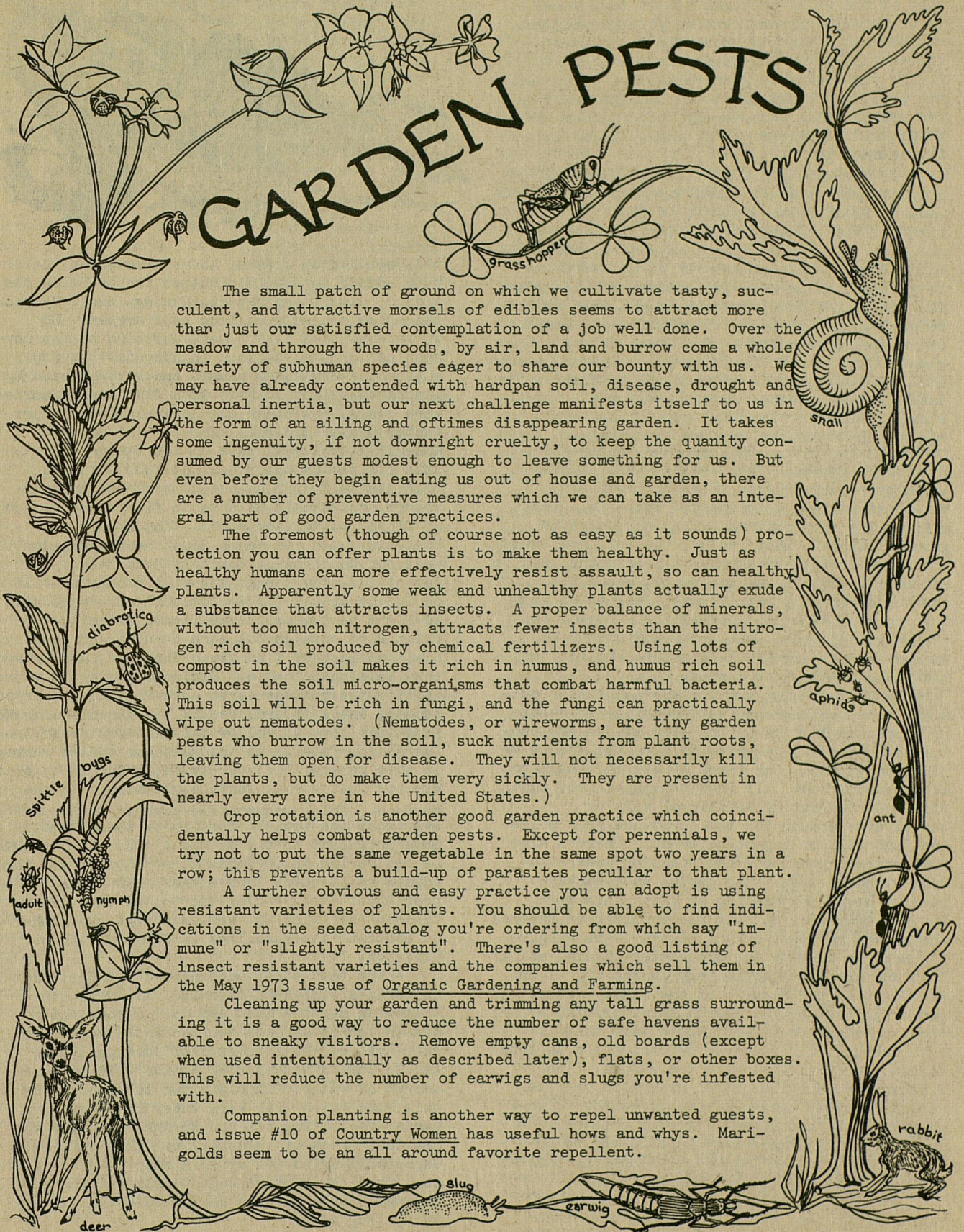
The foremost (though of course not as easy as it sounds) protection you can offer plants is to make them healthy. Just as healthy humans can more effectively resist assault, so can healthy plants. Apparently some weak and unhealthy plants actually exude a substance that attracts insects. A proper balance of minerals, without too much nitrogen, attracts fewer insects than the nitrogen rich soil produced by chemical fertilizers. Using lots of compost in the soil makes it rich in humus, and humus rich soil produces the soil micro-organisms that combat harmful bacteria. This soil will be rich in fungi, and the fungi can practically wipe out nematodes. (Nematodes, or wireworms, are tiny garden pests who burrow in the soil, suck nutrients from plant roots, leaving them open for disease. They will not necessarily kill the plants, but do make them very sickly. They are present in nearly every acre in the United States.)

Crop rotation is another good garden practice which coincidentally helps combat garden pests. Except for perennials, we try not to put the same vegetable in the same spot two years in a row; this prevents a build-up of parasites peculiar to that plant.

A further obvious and easy practice you can adopt is using resistant varieties of plants. You should be able to find indications in the seed catalog you're ordering from which say "immune" or "slightly resistant". There's also a good listing of insect resistant varieties and the companies which sell them in the May 1973 issue of Organic Gardening and Farming.

Cleaning up your garden and trimming any tall grass surrounding it is a good way to reduce the number of safe havens available to sneaky visitors. Remove empty cans, old boards (except when used intentionally as described later), flats, or other boxes. This will reduce the number of earwigs and slugs you're infested with.

Companion planting is another way to repel unwanted guests, and issue #10 of Country Women has useful hows and whys. Marigolds seem to be an all around favorite repellent.





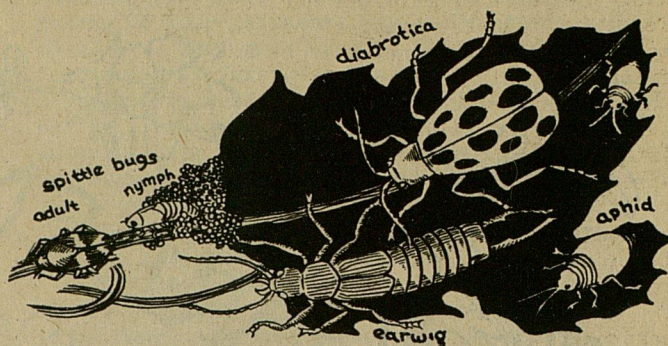
Insects in your compost may be a natural part of the whole process, but if they seem to be threatening or invading your garden, you may want to attend to your pile as follows: direct sunlight tends to dry up the eggs of flies; dry leaves or grass clippings on top of the pile discourage flies and beetles; and you can pour boiling (not merely hot) water on it to get rid of beetle grubs, ants, slugs, and flying maggots.

If and when you notice damage being inflicted upon your otherwise healthy garden, you will want to identify the culprit to fight it effectively. Plants attacked by gophers simply top-ple over, after the gophers have eaten the roots. Moles leave trails of freshly plowed earth as they burrow along near the surface of the ground. The damage inflicted by rabbits and deer should be obvious in origin by its magnitude. Snails and slugs leave a trail of silvery slime on the plants they've been feasting on. Various insects inflict various kinds of damage. Sucking insects attack tender buds, leaves and stems. Telltale signs are small black mold specks which grow on droplets of honeydew exuded by the bugs. Suckers cause stunted leaf and flower growth. They include ants, aphids, leafhoppers, mealybugs, mites, red spiders, scale, spittlebugs, thrips and whitefly. Leaf chewers are most obvious. They eat holes in growing things. They include caterpillars, diabrotica, earwigs, grasshoppers, oak moths, snails and slugs. Soil pests are seldom seen, but can be detected by your plants' failure to grow despite much water and fertilizer. Common soil pests are cutworms, lawn moths and wireworms. Amongst borers are the leaf miners who eat just the inside tissues of leaves.

We don't really want to assault these "enemies" on a battleground that's trying to double as a spinach leaf if we can help it, so our protective urges find expression from the moment we plot the garden. Our fence is six feet high to keep the deer out. If your fencing is not that high, you can string additional wire or barbed wire around the top, provided your poles are that tall or can be extended. There's also some evidence that one can reach an understanding with the deer. Our garden gate has frequently been left sagging or just plain open. Yet the only time in four years deer have entered the garden was last spring when we were wondering what to do with the old winter plants, still lush and green but definitely in the way. But woe be it to the flowers by the house - these are definitely in the deer's territory and we doubt an eight foot fence would save them!

Rabbits will probably be obstructed as long as the fence is flush with the ground. The fencing should either be of graduated or fine mesh to prevent their slipping through. Either graduated chicken/garden fence or chicken wire will work. If some sneaky rabbits try to go under this, you can lay boards along the base of the fence and attach the fencing to them.

We suffered artichoke heart aches three times in the last week, as gophers decimated three of our year old plants. The chicken wire we had sunk two feet into the ground, hoping



this would stop them as they burrowed at their usual depth of six to eighteen inches below the ground, simply was not fine enough mesh, though the holes are only an inch in diameter. So we've concluded it's a waste of time to use any mesh as large as an inch in diameter to stop gophers. Very young plants can be protected by lining the planting hole with fine meshed hardware cloth, but older and less elaborately protected plants are fair game for the gophers. Generally, you will have to let the gopher attack first in order to spot it. When your plant keels over because the root has been devoured, you should be able to find a small mound of finely pulverized earth. You should act instantly when you see a plant destroyed; don't wait for tomorrow or the next dead plant. If you act quickly the gopher will probably still be in the area. (If we followed our own advice we might be two artichoke plants richer.)

Friends of ours go out each morning and set traps where they find fresh diggings, and by noon they have their catch. Dig down where the mound is (it's just loose earth covering the gopher's tunnel) until it branches in two directions. We sometimes have to follow this sidetrack several feet before coming to the main horizontal runway. In this runway, set your traps, attached by chain, wire or just strong strings, to stakes on the surface. This prevents the gophers from running away with the traps. Parsley or peanut butter make good bait to put in the traps. They should be set facing in opposite directions to get the gopher as it comes from either end. Some people put a board over the top of this set-up to keep the light out and encourage the gopher to continue its ramblings in sweet but short oblivion.

For that other underground visitor, the children's storybook favorite, Mr. Mole, the following mixture has been used successfully. Add one ounce of detergent to two ounces of oil, whip this to the thickness of shaving cream, and in turn mix this combination with an equal amount of water. Then mix two tablespoons of this concoction with warm water in a regular garden sprinkling can and sprinkle it over the heaviest areas of infestation. This will be especially effective after a rain or good watering, when the mixture best penetrates the soil. Runways should also be destroyed by collapsing or filling them.

Since your fence and gopher traps will stop only a few of your unwanted visitors, you may



wish to use other physical barriers inside the fence. Since the youngest plants seem to be most susceptible to herbivorous predators, one friend actually built small "cages" around hers this spring, with walls consisting of boards turned on their sides and sunk a couple inches into the ground, and ceilings made of chicken wire. This takes care at least of birds, rabbits (her fence has an obscure hole or two), and cutworms. As the plants get larger and lose some of their appeal, these cages can be removed.

Another barrier against cutworms is tin cans opened at both ends and sunk into the soil as a "collar" around the young plants. Cutworms attack nearly all garden plants, chewing more than they eat or wrapping themselves around the stem of the plant and strangling it.

One friend whose garden is not surrounded by the fortress-like fences we find indispensable uses this method for keeping dogs out: so soak absorbent twine in a strong-smelling brew of lemon grass tea, and stretch a couple lengths in front of the plants you wish to protect. The dog will avoid the area for the two or three weeks it takes the stench to subside, at the end of which time you can repeat the operation.

We consider netting over the strawberries the best way to best the birds, who would otherwise feast on almost the entire garden crop. Although birds are said to prefer tangy wild fruits to our bland, domesticated garden varieties, our nearly adjacent wild huckleberries and blackberries don't seem to satisfy our birds' voracious appetites. While the berries are still green we spread the netting (ballerina tulle!) over them and stake the sides. You may also use rocks to weigh the sides down. The netting we use has a mesh as fine as a regular window screen. Commercial bird netting, with its larger mesh, won't protect fruit near the surface. Nylon net can be bought cheaply in a fabric store, and is preferable to cheese cloth as it lets in more light. It can be used to protect other kinds of fruit and young shoots as well.

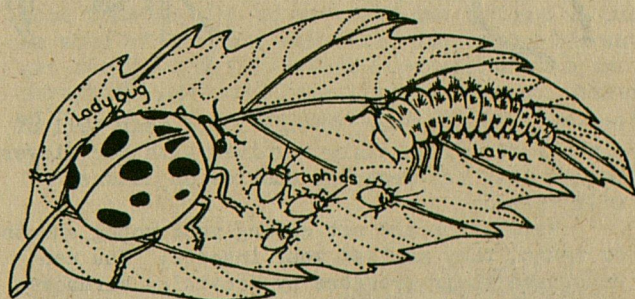
If you can't block out your competitors for your garden goodies, you may want to lure them in - to their doom. While borders of sand, lime or wood ashes keep slugs out, they tend to wash or blow away, so you might as well invite the slugs in. Wet boards or wet cardboard laid out in the garden will provide an irresistible hiding place for slugs and snails when they have finished their nightlife and decide to settle down for the day. (And these boards can double as mulch!) In the morning you can go out and scrape the congregation into a bucket filled with water with a little soap or kerosene film on the top. This water can remain standing until it becomes too thoroughly unappetizing to maintain, and then you should have plenty of corpses to bury before starting over. One friend told me she collected two or three hundred slugs a day every morning for about two months last winter. "The slugs were so thick they covered the ground like a spring rain." Now when she goes out and turns over the boards, five is a big bounty. This same woman catches snails, each of which eats far more than

slug, in covered boxes and flats, which the snails love to crawl into.

Another way to insure plenty of handy victims when you embark on your slug patrol is to put shallow dishes (mayonnaise jar lids work well) filled with beer out in the garden. (It is often suggested these be sunk to ground level, but actually the slugs and snails can make it up over the sides if you set them on top of the ground. This will keep you from drowning such beneficial predators as ground beetles.) Slugs in a drunken stupor, which is the condition these (loathsome) beings seek, make easy victims. Gather them up, nighttime's the right time.

Earwigs humbly consider a crumpled newspaper left in the garden adequate for their housing and hiding needs and you can go out in the morning to find it full of these terrors to all garden vegetables. They can join the slugs in the water bucket. A trap even more effective than the newspaper is a piece of plastic, two or three feet square, folded twice and placed under artichokes, tomato vines or other good cover. The bugs and slugs which collect inside it in great numbers are easy to shake or flick off (into the water bucket). If you can bear to wait two or three days between each harvest, you'll find many newcomers have been attracted by the scent of those already present.

Once the hungry bellies have crossed your barriers and ignored your lures, you may wish to embark on hand to hand combat, perhaps assisted by a few allies. Sometimes, as seems to be the case with diabrotica, the small green and black beetle that is often mistaken for the friendly and beneficial ladybug, there seems to be no more effective way to get rid of them than to venture out with your tweezers or bare fingers and capture your victims one at a time by hand. If this seems a bit tedious, you could pay the neighbors' children a penny a piece for as many as they can bring you.



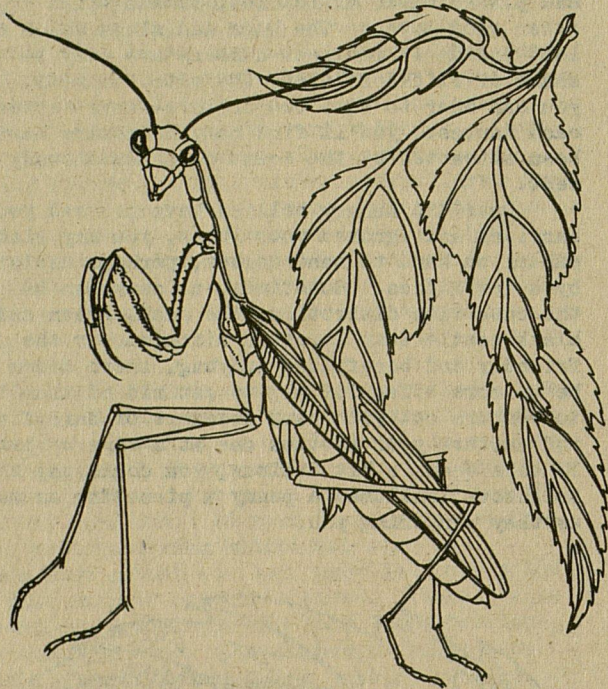
The real ladybugs (bright red with black spots or black with red spots or just plain black and tiny) can assist you more untiringly than the children as they feed on aphids, scales and other soft-bodied plant feeding insects. If you want to establish them in your garden, you should have enough food to last them two or three days and the larvae for several weeks. So you may want to calculate how

continued



many you want if you are ordering them. They lay their oval and yellow or orange eggs in small masses on the undersides of leaves. (Lest you destroy these). The larvae have six long legs and tubercle covered bodies. If you receive ladybugs, keep them in their container until sunset. Dampen the ground around your plants and set them down gently by the handful, leaving them clinging to the straw, excelsior or dry twigs they were shipped with.

It's difficult to find disadvantages to praying mantids. They're harmless to plants and eat solely and voraciously of harmful insects, especially the sucking and chewing kinds that do most damage. They are easy to introduce: just tie a few egg cases to plants where they're needed. Each case (which can be sent through the mail from November to May), contains about 50 to 400 mantids. You need about one case per tree or four cases per quarter acre without trees. The cases can survive sub-freezing temperatures. Once introduced to an area, the mantids will stay, laying their eggs in the fall and hatching in



spring. So they say, though I did hear tell of a woman so meticulously involved with her flower garden that she kept her mantids on leashes of silk thread.

When birds are not eating your young shoots or fruit, they may eat your insects. You can encourage their presence by providing birdboxes or materials for housing, along with feeding supplements, water and certain plants. A few strings, rags, hairs and feathers near where you want nests can be helpful in encouraging them to settle down. Bird houses invite some birds. It's very important to provide water in a safe, high place, especially around nesting time, and birds like to splash in about one or two inches of water. Wild berries (mulberry, chokeberry, elder and wild black cherry and Virginia creepers) are attractive to many species. Sunflowers, cosmos, marigold, asters and California poppies

also bring them flying. Birds can be encouraged to arrive early and stay a long time if you supplement their diet during the off season with bread crumbs and kitchen bits, beef suet, orange or apple peelings, raisins or sunflower seeds.



Around here, suet set out in the wintertime attracts flickers, the only natural predators of snails. Bear in mind that birds may very well do more harm than good in your garden, unless the insects are already doing tremendous damage, or you've managed to identify and protect the most bird-vulnerable plants.

Coming back down to earth in our search for friendly predators, we find the toad eating several thousand insects a month, as well as cutworms, slugs, mole crickets, yellow jackets, wasps, rose beetles, spiders, ants, moths, caterpillars, squash bugs and more. They can be collected after spring rains in swampy, marshy areas or around shallow pools. You should keep them penned up the first few days they come into your garden so they can get use to it and resist their strong homing instinct. Toad houses can be made by overturning clay pots and burying them several inches in the ground. Break small holes in the sides for doors and put them under some shrubbery. Keep a shallow pan of water in the garden, as toads must sit in the water to drink through their skins. In our garden we forego toads, lest the cat that gets the gophers get them. But given a safe haven, toads can make a substantial dent in your garden pest population.



If all your barriers, lures and guards have been foiled, the pests have probably reached their target. This eventuality calls for protecting the plant directly by spraying it and/or the ground around it with a liquid or powder. One of the most popular sprays for home gardens is a garlic solution. Some people add cayenne, hot peppers, or various other ingredients, but it seems to work well by itself. A simple recipe is to soak three ounces of chopped garlic bulbs (organically grown garlic does work best) in two teaspoons of mineral oil for twenty-four hours. Add a pint of water in which just a few drops of oil based soap (such as Palmolive) have been dissolved. (The soap makes the solution stick to the leaves.) Strain this through a fine gauze and store in a glass, not metal, container. For use, dilute this with water to one part in twenty. Spray it on the plants under attack (especially leafy plants) and around the bases of the plants. Some pests are killed by the solutions, other are simply deterred or confused by the odor. Often one application in spring will discourage the pests



in question and keep them away for the remainder of the season. If you notice further damage, repeat the application. Garlic is not only desirable because any traces you might ingest can only improve your health, but also because it kills many bacteria that damage plants. Another popular "bug spray" is made thusly: In a large pot mix .... 1 lb. tobacco

with .... 5 garlic cloves (whizzed to pulp in blender)  
& liquified hot pepper

Fill the pot 2/3 full and boil it outside (it smells) or leave it sitting covered in the sun for a week. Strain this mixture.

add .... 1/2 C. dishwashing liquid and use it full strength from flit gun.

If the odor of garlic offends you, you can grind up certain plants with equal amounts of water in the blender to throw insects off the track. Asparagus leaves in sufficient number to produce an odor can replace garlic. Tomato leaves will protect roses. You may find plants, usually weeds, which are not affected by the pest you're after and if you use these they will make an effective repellent. Elderberry leaves seem to work well in this respect.

You can get most any insect you want with diatomaceous earth. It's a fine, powdery substance that consists of the fossil remains of microscopic one-celled marine algae called diatoms. Milling cracks the particles open, exposing razor sharp silica needles which scratch the bodies of insects coming in contact with them. Without their protective shell, the insects dehydrate and die. Diatomaceous earth is non-toxic and inert, and kills insects mechanically, not with poison. It's harmless to humans and other warm-blooded animals, so it's often fed to farm animals in small quantities to keep the flies out of their feces and control worms and other internal parasites. If you apply it in late evening or at night, you'll spare the predators, who are also protected from its damage by the fact they don't cling as closely to plants as the suckers and chewers who are doing the plant damage. It is commonly used on fruit trees, but in gardens it can kill a number of pests, including the ever-present earwig. It can be bought at Pool and Building Supply Stores, or from Perma-Guard Corp., 1701 E. Elwood St., Phoenix, Arizona 85050.

If you sprinkle lots of wood ashes around the stems of cabbages, it will stem the tide of destruction wrought by root maggots, disease and cutworms. If you notice plant damage, which would probably happen around midsummer, you can dust the plants with a mixture of one cup of flour (rye works best) to two cups wood ashes. This mixture makes the cabbage worms dry up.

Tobacco ashes at the base of squash plants protect them in two ways. They take away enough oils to deter squash vine bores. And they balance out an excess of nitrogen with phosphorous and potash. This reduces the abundance of free amino acids that attract insects to members of the cucurbit family.

Here's a hot tip: cayenne sprinkled on your corn when it tassles will definitely discourage earworms from returning. It also displeases raccoons and insects and can be used on any plant under attack, even young shoots.

If you want to use a substance that will approximate the good effects of a chemical insecticide without repeating the bad ones, you might try Rotenone. It's derived from certain tropical plants and is of very low toxicity to humans and animals. You can get it in a pure state only from veterinarians and pet shops, which is a good way to buy it since when sold commercially it's often mixed with more toxic compounds. Rotenone is safe and kills many types of insects, but it offers only short term protection.

If you feel covered by the number of possible enemies to which your garden might succumb, if you feel outnumbered and outwitted, take heart. A healthy organic companion-planted garden is far less likely to be attacked than an "artificial" one, and you may need to do very little by way of battling the monsters. There's no way to get rid of them all, though, without creating an unnatural environment. If you poison them you're likely to make your food less edible and you will also most probably wipe out their predators, leaving your plants wide open for attack when new troops swarm in. So we just try to plant a little more food than we plan to harvest, and try not to wince as some of our most cherished shoots and blooms get swept in to their next incarnation with an abruptness we would have liked to temper. Nature will give just as abundantly as she has taken. ♀





# LIFTING HEAVY TIMBERS

\*\*\*\*This article was excerpted from the original of the longer barn article (#9: On the Larger Scale) and saved for this issue's building column.\*\*\*\*\*

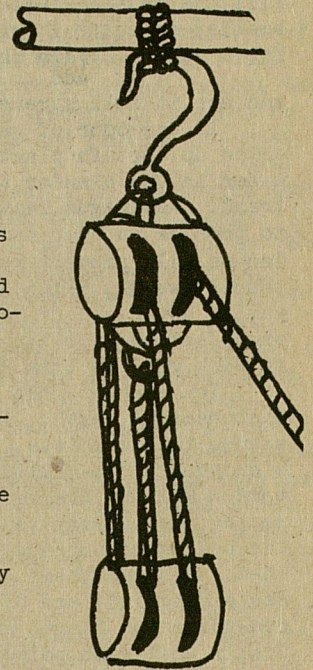
One of our most valuable experiences in building the barn was learning more about how to deal with large dimensions in construction. Post and beam, the method of construction used on the barn, presents different problems in lifting up heavy members than does conventional platform framing (2x4 studs, 16" spacing). The posts and beams are fewer in number and further apart. Consequently, to be structurally adequate, they are heavy and huge. The plans listed a myriad of heavy timbers: 4x12 floor joists, 4x12's even in the roof system (20 ft. up!). 8x8's on the second story as well as the first, 4x10's twenty feet long, etc. Timbers this size (douglas fir) weigh 200-300 lbs.

The second story joists represented our first big challenge. You can't hand a 4x12 beam, weighing at least 200 lbs., up to your partner while she stands on a ladder. The 12 to 16 foot beams with which we were working were manageable on the ground, being carried by two strong women, but lifting them up 11 ft. was quite out of the question.

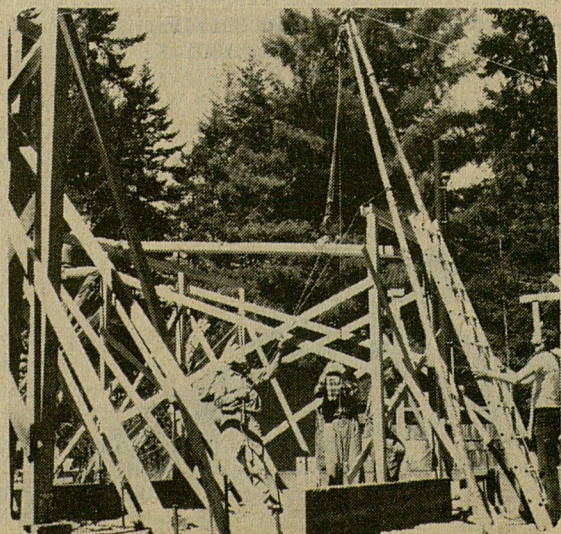
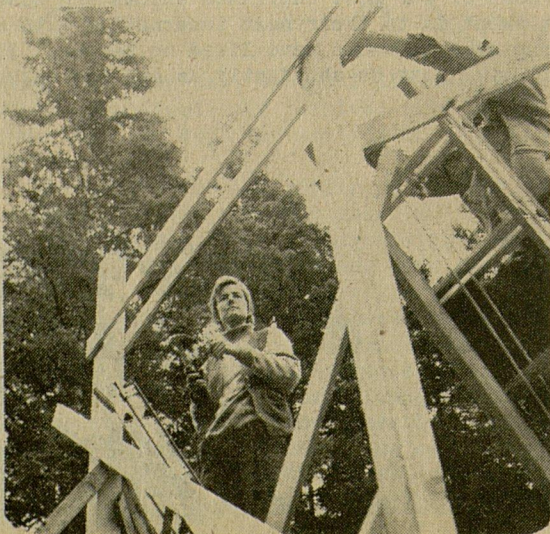
We made preparations for our 4x4 and 8x8 posts to receive the beams. To sturdy the posts, we put up a maze of temporary bracing, often in as many as four directions. This made these lone posts sturdy enough to support a ladder or the weight of a 4x12 being pushed into place. We also connected the posts with horizontal ledgers at the top. First these ledgers were used as a guide for cutting off the tops of the posts at the proper height. Later the ledgers proved indispensable for sliding the 4x12's into place as they were lifted up.

## THE SHEAR POLES

About the time we were beginning to deal with the lifting of beams we heard from two women farmer friends about Fred and Jake, 80 year old brothers who had done some lifting of beams and who might be able to give us some tips about using pulley systems. One day all our work crew descended upon Fred and Jake with all our questions and copies of the barn plans in hand. Yes, they had an old wooden block and tackle.



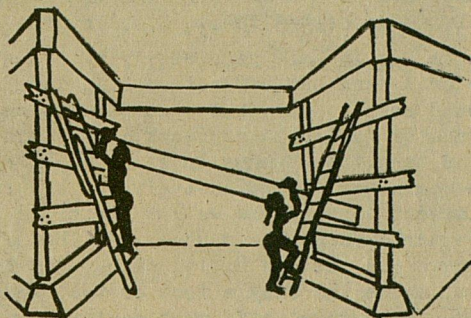
Within a few minutes of trying to explain and talk, everyone decided the best thing would be to go and have a look at the construction site. Fred and Jake got into their pickup. Next I knew we were off in the woods, cutting down some saplings to make two poles. When trimmed the poles were about 19 ft. high and 3" in diameter. We roped them together at the top





and hung the "take-el" as Fred pronounced it, from our new shear poles.

We had debated a little whether to use shear poles or to first try to "walk" the beams up by constructing temporary ladders. Then the beam would be lifted up one rung on one side, one rung on the other side, etc.



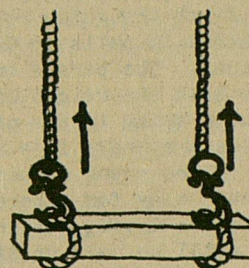
This seemed remotely feasible (it is a usable method) but not too efficient in this particular case. Besides, we wanted very much to get some experience with the tackle. By the end of the morning we had lifted up two beams, with the supervision of our two friends. By the next weekend we lifted up a beam or two in a matter of minutes, just for the pleasure of doing a demonstration for city friends here on a visit!

But back to the practical details. Once the two poles and tackle were together, there were ropes to be added, and some experience to get the feel of what was possible and safe to do with shear poles. One rope is the guide rope, which serves almost as a third leg. It stretches out in the other direction from the two poles, forming sort of a tripod, and is attached to some very stationary point, a post in our case, or perhaps a tree. A second rope is tied at a point in the opposite direction from the guide rope. This is the safety rope. Where and how the guide rope is attached

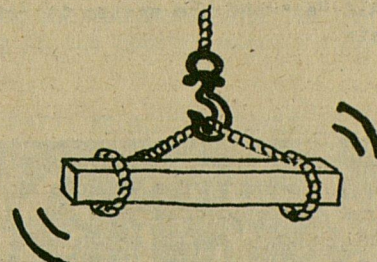
is most important because virtually all the strain of the poles lies on this rope. The poles lean somewhat toward the spot where the tackle hangs down; the poles are not really vertical. Should the poles, by accident or accidental stress, reverse their direction, the safety rope takes over the function of guide rope, and visa versa.

It's a good idea to have extra long ropes for the tackle itself and for the guide and safety ropes. This insures versatility in how high you can raise the tackle and in how far away the ropes can be attached.

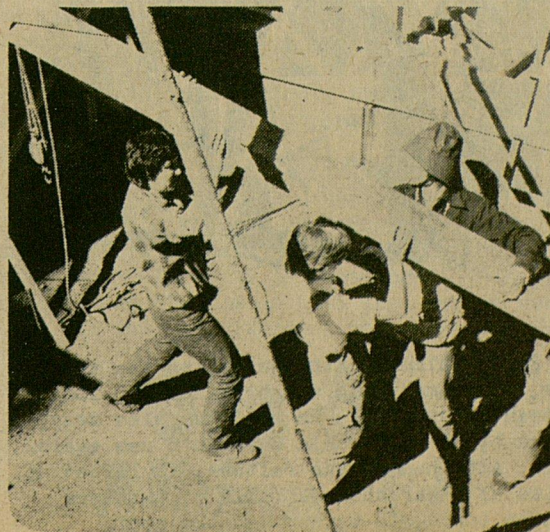
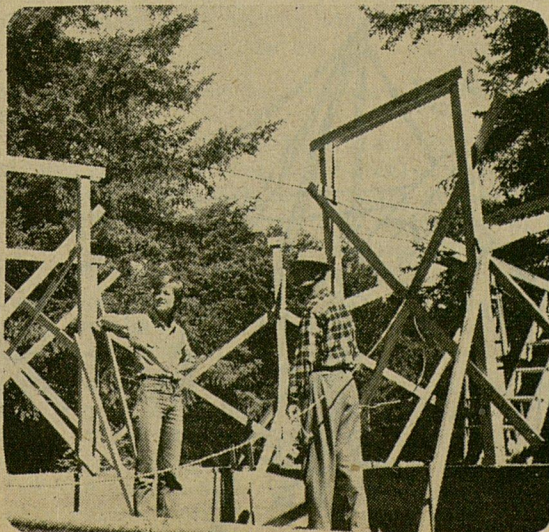
When our tackle was ready to go we had yet another question. Our beam was 14 ft. long and to lift it up horizontally with one tackle is a problem. With two tackles it might be lifted straight up.



But with one it would be hard to balance:



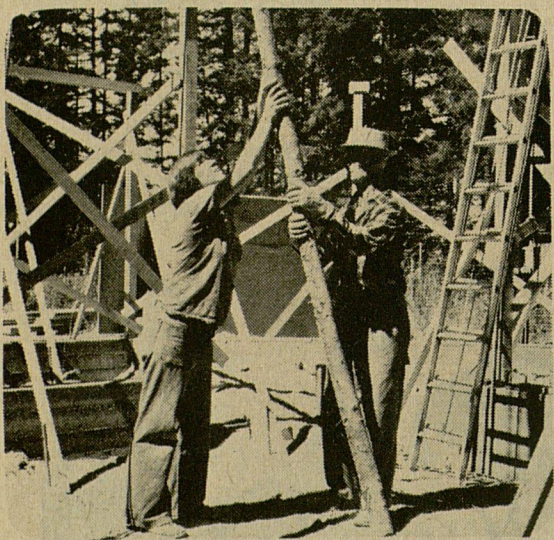
We solved this problem by walking up one end first. This meant that about three women lifted up one end and pushed it forward at the same time.





Thus one end of the 4x12 rested on the ledgers and post. Onto the other end, which was still resting on the ground, we tied a short rope. The hook of the tackle was then inserted under the rope, and one woman pulled on the rope of the tackle. A crucial operation at this stage is for one or two women to be down at the bottom end of the beam, to guide it as the tackle first begins to lift it. This prevents the beam from slipping off the ledger, which is likely since the beam rests at such a sharp angle from the ground. Also for this reason one woman is on a ladder ready to receive the end of the beam which is being lifted up, to slip the rope and tackle off and slide the beam into place.

Moving the shear poles and getting them into a new position was another thing we had to learn about. It takes four people to move the poles safely; two for the two ropes and two for the two poles. First the guide rope is untied. The person who holds it pulls up until the poles are almost vertical. The person on the safety rope prepares to hold the weight of the poles in case they should swing in the other direction. If the poles are heavy it's a good idea to wrap the end of the ropes around something, thus leaving enough play for a person to hold the rope as poles are moved, but insuring that the poles would still be held up if the person should lose control of the rope. Each pole person takes turns moving her pole a foot or several feet at a time, thus the shear poles are "walked" into a new position. When the ropes are all fastened the system is ready to operate again.



By the time we finished using the shear poles, 30 beams, each weighing 200-300 lbs. had been hoisted up. We put the poles away, but the block and tackle came into use again later. Attached to the rafters, it lifted up bundles of cedar shakes, rolls of tarpaper, and even tools, to workers on the roof.

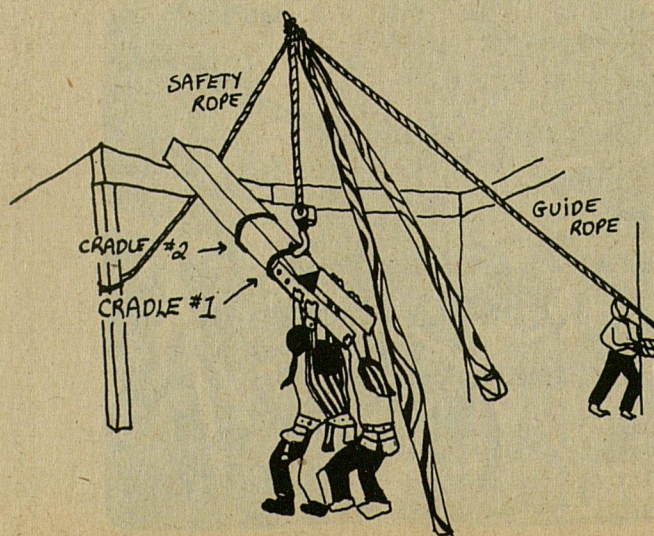
## 8x8 POSTS

After the decking was completed, our next main challenge was lifting up 12 ft. long 8x8's on to the second floor. First of all, they came in 24 ft. lengths, 500 lbs. apiece, and were lying on the ground in our lumberyard area near where the truck from the mill had deposited them. Such lengths could not be cut in half very easily with a skill saw or a hand saw. First of all, lugging them around even so far as to put them up on sawhorses or tables in our work area would be a major task. What came in handy here was the two-woman saw. It didn't give us a straight squarecut but anyhow we got the 8x8's down into more manageable pieces (250 lbs.). When we did cut the 8x8's, with power and hand saws, there was only a foot or two, sometimes less, to be sawed off; much easier to work with.

Lifting 8x8's was much the same as lifting other beams, with a few exceptions. They were shorter (11'-12') but heavier. This made them harder to deal with, not only because they were more to lift and carry: the short length meant that the 8x8 could not be walked up and made to lean against the deck. To temporarily lengthen them we nailed sections of 2x6 "handles" on the bottom end of the post. Then we proceeded as usual. This time, however, there were two rope cradles attached to the beam instead of one. The first was near the middle of the 8x8, the second nearer the bottom end. The tackle was attached to the first cradle and the beam lifted. Several women on the deck stood ready to receive the beam once it got out of control of those on the ground. Next:

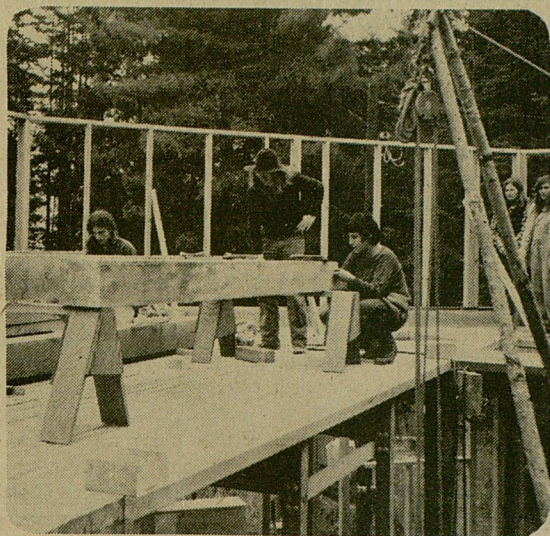
- deck crew pulls in beam, sits on it
- one person changes tackle from cradle #1 to #2
- tackle rope is pulled (giving leverage from a new position).
- deck crew pulls in 8x8 until most of its weight is on deck.

All this is done in a matter of minutes, with the 8x8 and its 250 lbs. swinging in the air above the ground crew!





The story of the second floor 8x8's continued. They were to be stood upright on the edge of the second floor deck, which opens down to the ground.



Simply tilting them upright seemed scary, with no means of support on one or in some cases two sides. Our procedure was this. We attached a rope at the top end of the 8x8, with some 16 penny nails to hold the rope from slipping. The 8x8 was placed with its bottom right near or on the spot where it was to go so that as it got tilted up it would virtually already be in place. While two women carefully raised the beam up, a third woman, standing on the opposite side, held onto the rope attached to the top. This rope acted as a guide rope, and in this way the procedure was similar to that of moving shear poles. The rope was left attached and used later in plumbing the 8x8 post and getting its temporary bracing attached.

The day we set out to try this procedure for the first time, there was only a crew of three. Anxious to see the first 8x8 go up, we decided that it might be a workable three-woman task. Soon we were on the second floor, tilting up an 8x8 double our own height. It would

reach up 20 ft., the tallest part of the barn thus far.

We began easing it into place with our arms and bodies, trying not to allow any sudden pushes or shoves which might shift its great weight and send it flying down to the ground. At this precarious moment, tilting 300 lb. beam in hand, a huge explosion came- shaking the ground, the deck, and us. Catastrophes flashed through our heads- war, bombs, earthquakes, the end of the world. Lately the Arab-Israeli war had been a topic of news. The U.S. military had had been on alert. In the wake of those melodramatic first thoughts came the recognition of the familiar sonic boom. Recovering our senses, we let the 8x8 up into its vertical position and finally relaxed our grips. ♀

# Future Issues

Children: an issue for, by, and about children.

We want children's writing, graphics, poetry. Articles on education, living with children. Interview your child. This is an issue on children, not one on motherhood. Deadline: July 15.

Natural Cycles: of all kinds. Write about experiences of earth cycles, life cycles, astrological cycles, menstrual cycles, biorhythm cycles. Keep a journal of dreams, moods, energy, color and food preferences, health, sexuality, physical and intellectual activity. Deadline: September 10.

Foremothers: We have part of an issue of fine material already. This one will be published when we have enough material. We are looking for interviews with old women about early days, remembrances of grandmothers and great grandmothers, old letters, diaries, photographs.

Women Working: what we do to support ourselves; what the experience of working feels like; what it means to be a woman working in mainstream and counterculture institutions; what being in the country means to working women.

As always, we need photographs (black and white, good contrast) of country scenes, women working, building, gardening, plumbing, playing music, dancing, repairing cars, working with animals....just living. Any nude photographs must accompanied by a signed release from the model.

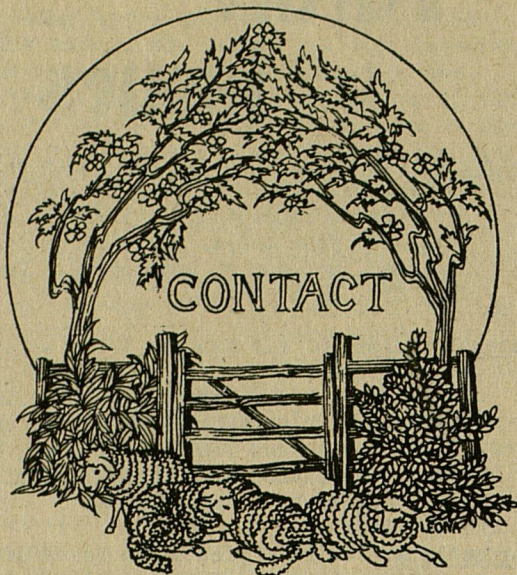
We also need graphics. We would like to diversify our style and are looking for wood and linoleum cuts, silk screen prints, sumi brush drawings, etc. in addition to pen and ink. We need clean, clear reproducible material in black and white.

Send us self-addressed, stamped envelopes when possible. And please let us know when you change your address.

Please help us with distribution. Write and give us the address of stores near you. Encourage stores to sell Country Women. Review Country Women in local publications. (Many of you have been helping us this way, and we really appreciate it! Our stores list has really increased!)

**Box 51  
Albion, CA**





We have been getting many requests from women who would like to work on a country farm or commune for several weeks or several months. If you would like some exchange labor on your place, work for room and board, please send a notice to our contact column. There are many women who could help you out!

Looking for help with building, natural dyeing, spinning, gardening, gathering, fishing, and assorted summer activities. No pay, but lots of reward and a spectacular location two miles from the ocean. I want to make swift progress, so a sure hand with saw and hammer are musts. Write now to:  
Yerba, Star Route, Whitethorn, Ca. 95489

We are three women who have just bought 22 beautiful acres in southern Oregon which has two little old houses on it. We would like to meet other women who are seriously interested in forming a women's collective in the country: Dian, Carol, Billie J., 1531 Grays Creek Rd., Grants Pass, Ore. 97562

Two dykes looking for two of the same to help with garden, care of animals and misc. tasks. Our farm is located in downeast Maine, 1/2 hour from Maretines (Canada) and a five minute walk from the ocean. We offer room (9' x 9' tent), board, a small salary (\$25 month) and two days a week to call your own. Write for information: Uva Ursi, R.F.D., Robbinston, Me. 04671

We would like to extend an invitation to women who are interested in sampling country living to visit our farm. We have been here eleven years, have a large organic garden, chickens and raise small stock. We would be glad to share our knowledge and our house and a double guest room with women. We would have to charge \$3.00 per night per person (supper and breakfast included). Women only. We need advance notice and will send a map. Hiwassee is in NW Arkansas. Contact: Virginia and Diane, Red Oaks, Route 1, Box 20, Hiwassee, Arkansas, 72739

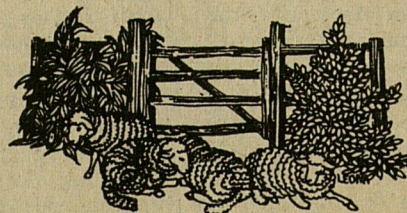
We will send a gay liberation literature resource and a feminist literature resource list to anyone who sends a self-addressed stamped envelope. The stamped envelope is a must!! Valuable guide as to where to obtain books, pamphlets, etc. Send to:  
Southern Gay Liberation, Box 2118, Boca Raton, Fla., 33432

We are in the process of having Our Bodies, Our Selves translated into Spanish, primarily for Spanish-speaking women in this country. We would like to make contact with any women who are close to or part of Chicano communities in order to have more Chicana input for the translated version. Contact:  
Judy Norsigian, Box 2668 Star Route, Pt. Arena, Ca. 95468.

We would like to get in touch with lesbian country women living in the south and midwest (New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, etc.). We are considering moving to this area and need information and advice. Also interested in West Virginia. Contact: Hilary and Linda, Box 14, R.D. 2, Accord, N. Y. 12404

There will be a National Organization of Women creative writers conference from Aug. 2 - 4 in the Tower Room of the University of Bridgeport, Conn. for brochure contact:  
Valerie Harms, 10 Sunset Hill, Norwalk, Conn. 06851

Country women making music? We don't have electricity or access to recording studios. But if you can send us two good quality cassette tapes, we'll send one back filled with music from the woods. Mail tapes, packaged well to protect them from damage, to:  
Women's Experimental Studies Project, Route 3, Clinton, Arkansas, 72031





# Country Women is all of us

## Announcing Country Women Special Editions

We have been receiving more good material than we can publish or than fits within the format of the magazine. So we have decided to publish four special anthologies of country women's work during the next year. These will be in addition to and separate from the magazine, but distributed by us. We will keep the cost as low as we can and use the profits from the first to publish the second, etc. Please submit work for these anthologies to the editors listed below and send a stamped, self-addressed envelope if you want your piece returned. If you would also like your writing or photograph considered for the magazine, please send a duplicate copy to Albion.

Country Women's Poetry - send to:

Box 233  
Harris, Calif. 95447

Fiction for Children - short stories or excerpts from longer works.  
send to:

None of the Above Ranch  
Star Route 1, Box 38  
Covelo, Calif. 95428

Photographs of Country Women - a book of portraits of country women and their lives. Send to:

Box 90  
Philo, Calif. 95466

Country Women's Fiction - short stories or other short fictional prose.  
send to:

Box 508  
Little River, Calif. 95456

## Third Annual Country Women's Festival

We're planning another festival of country women this year, to be held in northern California, September 6 through 10. Like last year, the festival will be a live-in camp, a four day community of country women sharing experiences, skills, crafts, fantasies and ideas. We've learned from some of last year's mistakes, too: we're scheduling more free time for community meetings, music, and games, and we'll try to schedule fewer workshops simultaneously so women can get to most of the ones they're interested in. We haven't arranged the workshops yet, but last year's included: wood splitting, basic car mechanics, yoga, chainsaws, sheep shearing, self-defense, veterinary skills, shake splitting, T'ai Chi, massage, healing circles, plumbing, electricity, dreams, carpentry, dance. Please let us know if you have something to teach.

Because of space limitations and child care problems the last two years, we are discouraging children (except older girls). The cost for the four days (includes all food) is \$20 per person. A few scholarships or trades can be arranged. Reservations, accompanied by a \$10 deposit must be made before August 7. We're going to give preference to women now living in the country; city women who send in deposits will be placed on a waiting list and given space if it's available.

Because we're limited to 125 women, no one will be admitted without a prior reservation. So, get your reservation in now and we'll send you more details. The community of country women should be high and exciting!

SEND RESERVATIONS TO: Country Women Festival, Box 54, Albion, Calif. 95410





COUNTRY WOMEN  
BOX 51  
ALBION, CALIFORNIA 95410