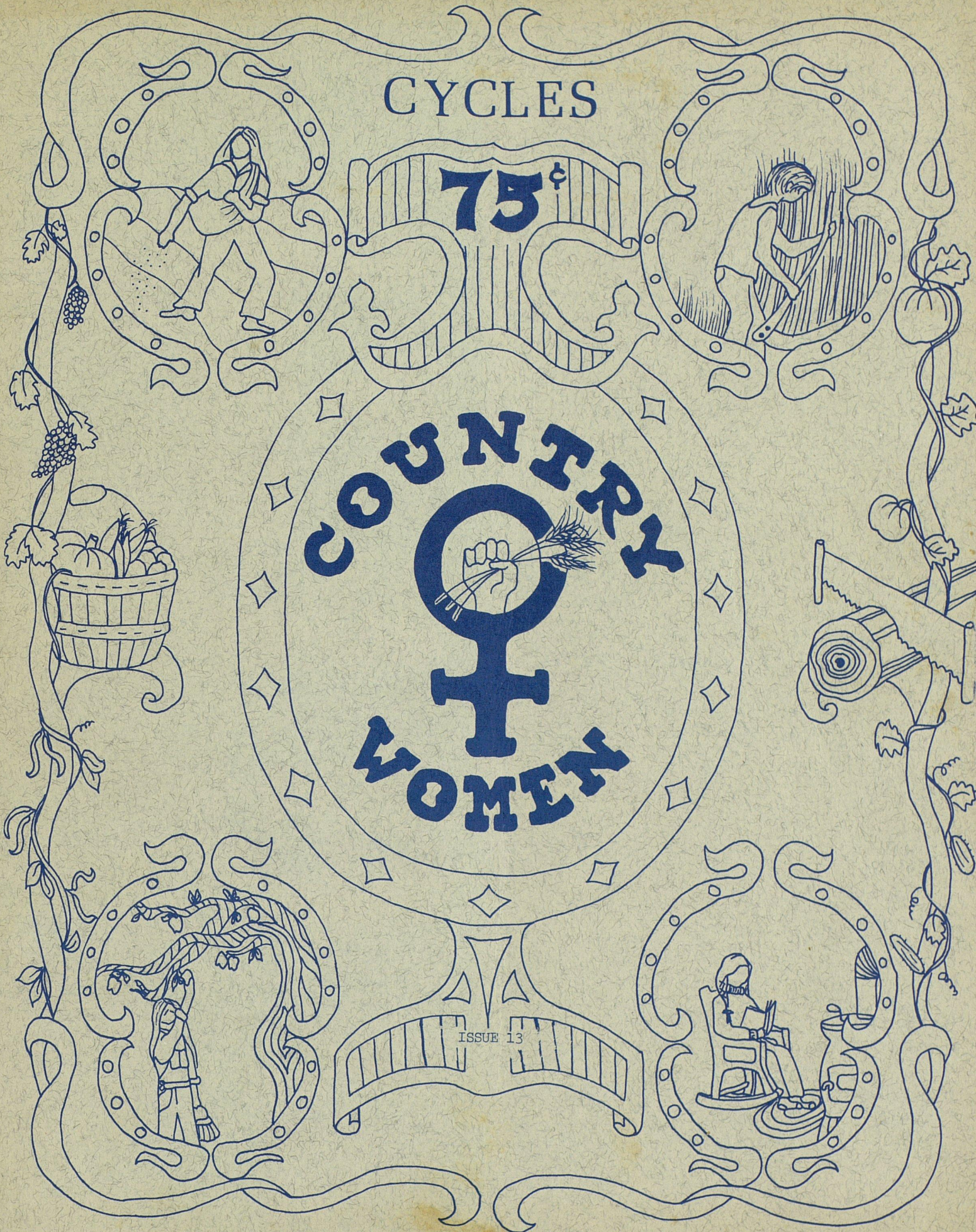


CYCLES

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COUNTRY
WOMEN

ISSUE 13



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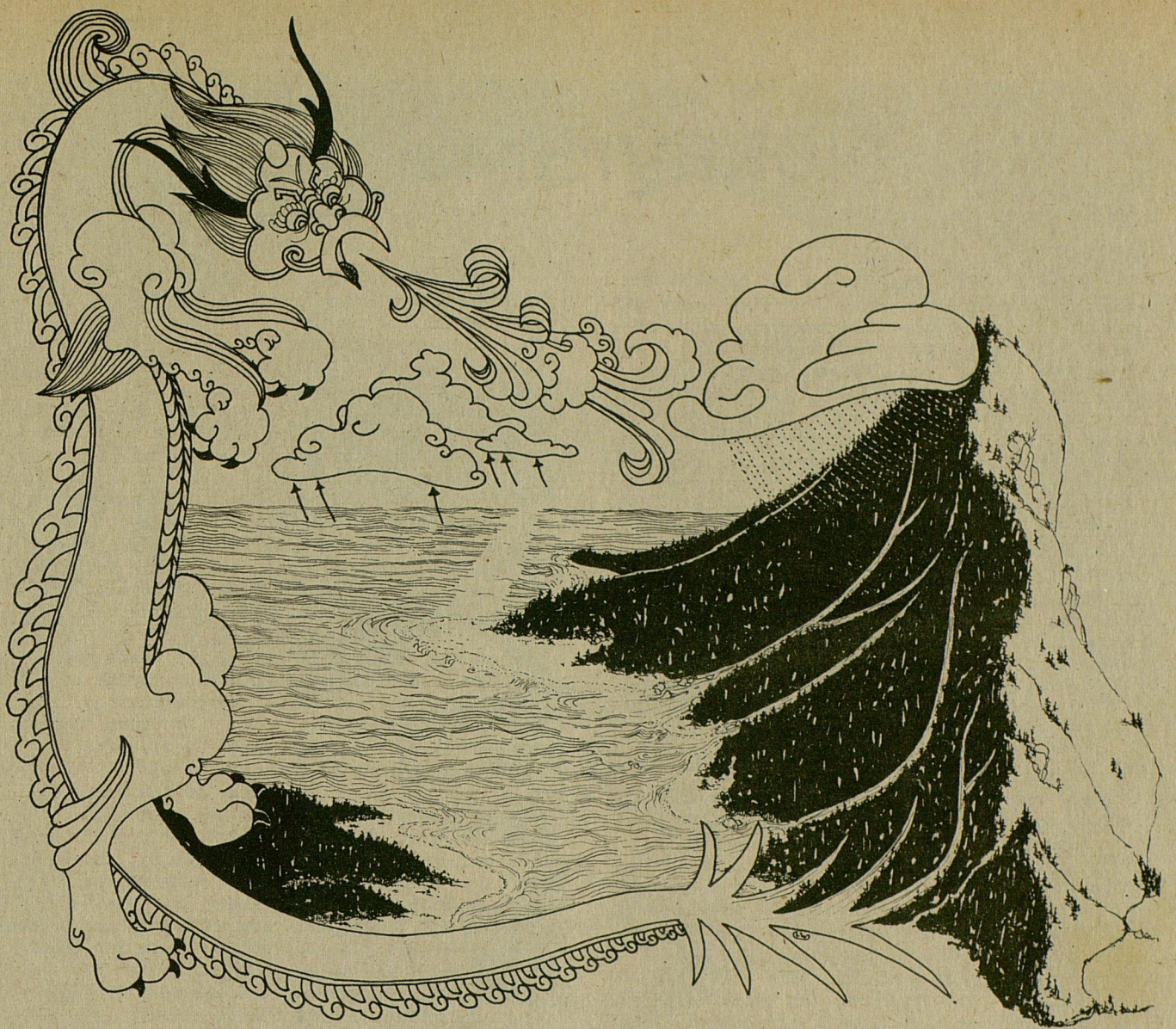
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Water comes to me from a clear creek that runs down the mountain,
jumping and shouting to the river;
the river runs to the sea.

Sun shines on the sea,
water evaporates into the air and forms clouds, which blow back
over the land, and snow themselves out onto my mountain.
Sun melts the snow and the water runs down to me.

The wheel turns.

BIORHYTHMS

Rhythms and cycles, cycles and rhythms and patterns. We see, feel, experience them every moment. Moon phases, menstrual cycles, periods of depression and ecstasy. They are eternal, internal, external. Sometimes we might see them as polarities, highs and lows, ups and downs, but that is mistaking the parts of the cycle for the whole. Understanding the rhythms of our lives is tuning in to the universal music of all things, to living and dying.

It is impossible to separate the cycles from each other. They are all inter-related, and then entwined with cycles of other people, of the earth and stars, and of plants. It is for the sake of exercise that I see a point in focusing on only a few kinds of cycles and trying to understand them. In the study of biorhythms there are three modes, physical, emotional and intellectual, but there are ways to correlate consciousness of other cycles with these three basic cycles, as I will explain later.

I first learned about biorhythms from a book called *Biorhythms*. It disappeared from my shelf shortly after I learned how to do my charts, and I've been doing them on my own ever since. The book described the beginning of biorhythm research by European and Japanese efficiency experts in factories where they were trying to understand accident prone people and accident cycles. Working backward from data on accidents they (whoever they were) gradually postulated a 23 day physical cycle that follows a sine curve. The days that the cycle is crossing the base line (see chart) were called "Critical Days" and those were most likely to be days of accidents. Eventually, they also postulated a 28 day sensitivity cycle and a 33 day intellectual cycle, all following the sine curve. The mathematical justifications of biorhythms escape me; I gather that the sine curve means the cycles will never vary from a certain pattern. Thus, the day you were born is day One of each cycle and they continue for every day, many thousands of individual cycles elapse in one lifetime. The biorhythmic span (the time it takes all three cycles in relationship to each other to return to where they were at your birth and begin again) is about 58 years and two months.

Besides the book, I also read of *Biorhythms* in a *Psychology Today* article which discussed the use of biorhythm charts to determine the best playing days for members of the Los Angeles Rams football team. I thought this a perversion of the knowledge, but this is Amerika.

My third encounter with biorhythms was a course I heard of at Sonoma State in which students had computer print outs of their charts for a year in advance and studied and compared them.

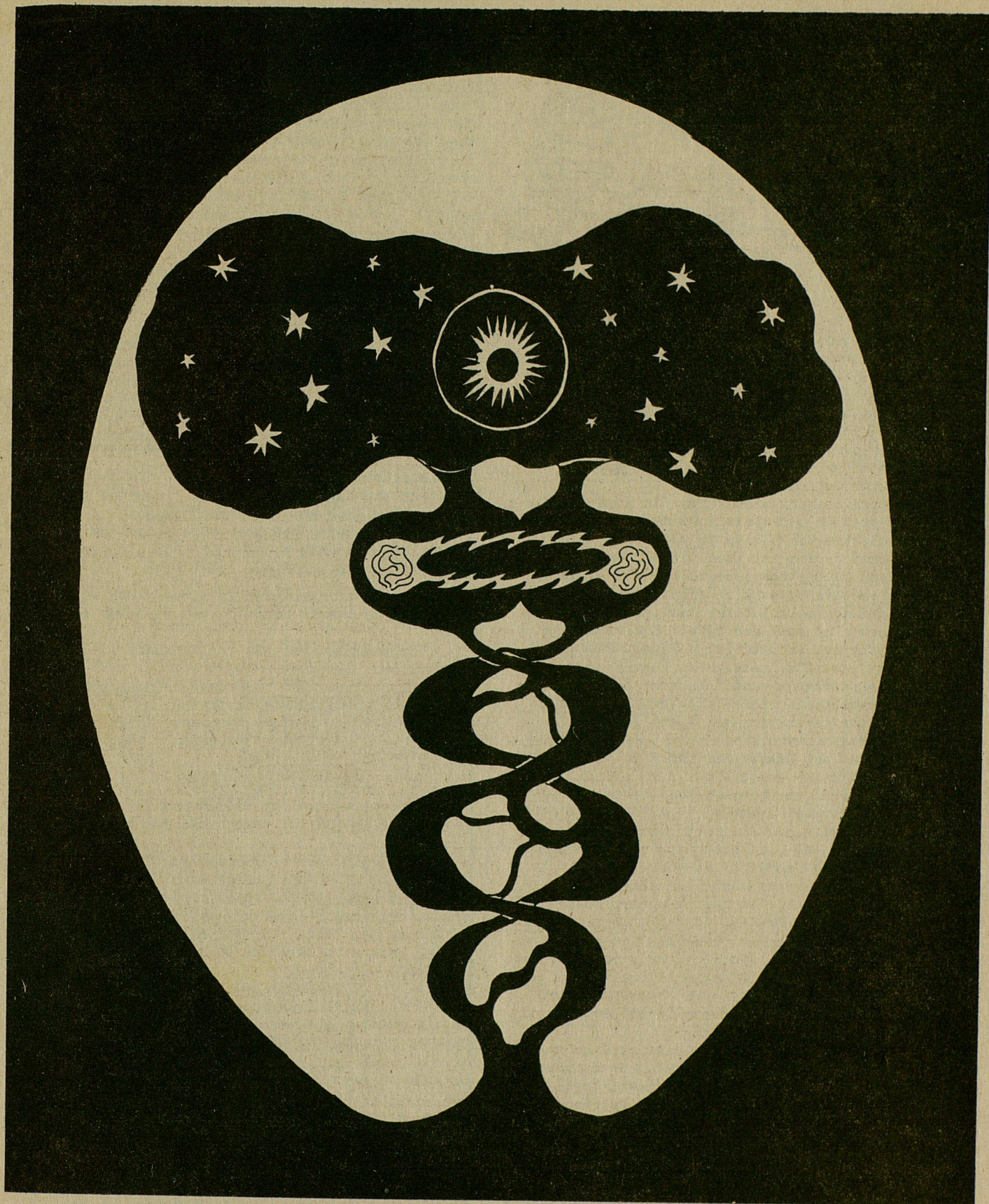
Thus, my factual background in biorhythms is scant but my experience of the last two years of charting has convinced me that it is a valid tool for focusing awareness and consciousness. Who could prove that these rhythms actually exist? Perhaps we already know of them intuitively; wonder why some days are good from the start and others start out like scrambled eggs. Sometimes there are answers in the biorhythm charts.

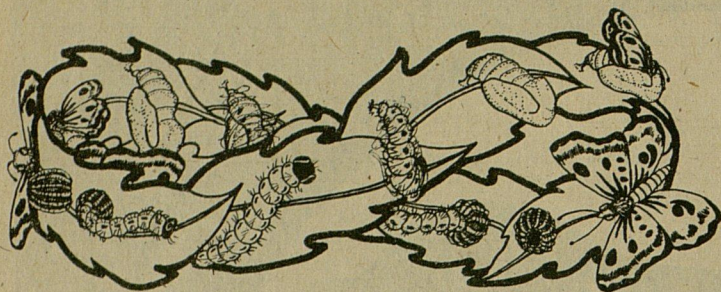
Think of biorhythms as a certain frequency that you are always operating on, from birth. The cycles are individual to the extent that only someone born the same day, within hours, and year as you will have an identical chart. There is a "high" and a "low" point to each cycle, but everyone's highs are different, as we well know by now. As you begin to follow and study your own charts, the subtleties of the peaks and valleys become clear. Since each rhythm is a different number of days, the combinations of cycles are ever-changing too. The term biorhythmic year has been coined to describe the mathematical span of just the sensitivity and physical cycles. The reason for the creation of the biorhythmic year was the very high correlation found between critical periods of these two cycles and accidents and deaths. The biorhythmic year is one year and nine months.

Sometimes I see the chart as a yin-yang symbol, the upper part yang and expending energy the lower part yin and resting, renewing energy and spirit. The language of polarity- high and low- has heavy connotations that I'm not sure are appropriate. The "Critical Days" are days when the rhythm is shifting modes, above or below the baseline. They seem to be times of shifting gears, going into "neutral", maybe being off center and not quite grounded. The early research showed there to be times when workers were careless, made poor judgements, were clumsy and had accidents.

The three rhythms charted are simple and easy to identify in daily life. The physical cycle is a cycle of the body- health, physical energy, prowess, ability to exert yourself. The critical days in this cycle might manifest in inefficiency of the body doing work, feeling out of synch with your physical form, and possibly resulting in accidents. The sensitivity or emotional cycle is a cycle of emotional states. Here the critical days might be chaotic and tumultuous if you tend to dramatics anyway, or confused, unsettled, undefined. The intellectual rhythm is a cycle of the mind and includes the ability to speak and write lucidly, to grasp new ideas, to learn. On a critical day you might be less mentally alert, make foolish decisions, have difficulty concentrating on mental tasks.

continued





So here are just three of the many cycles happening within and around us every day. Charting them you begin to see the innumerable interactions and juxtapositions of energies. One day the physical and emotional cycles are both peaking while the intellectual is at the "bottom", probably a good day to work and be happy and forget about reading that article on how to build a wind generator.

You could chart biorhythms for months in advance and plan your life around them. Exactly how you use the tool is up to you. I've never quite wanted to foretell the future; usually I use the charts for retrospection. I draw up a chart for several months in advance and then go back to it regularly jotting down events and insights on the appropriate days. Sometimes the correlations are astonishing. There have been many times when I've been going through a period of temporary insanity and I look at the chart to find that all three cycles are "critical" in a three or four day time span... and I go Aha! there is something going on here. It's like being nervous and crabby and then realizing it's two days before my period.

Okay. Suppose there is some kernel of insight in the system--what to do with this information? What good does it do to know that my physical rhythm is at the bottom when I have to go out and chop wood anyway? At worst, the charts are an explanation of what I am already experiencing on some level; at best they are a way for me to focus on my rhythms, to pay attention to and question my energy. Sometimes the charts and my reality don't coincide but I don't feel that the whole system is thereby invalidated. What I am getting from this is the ritual, the meditation of paying attention to the ebb and flow of my life.

Since I started keeping these charts two years ago I have added other variables to my charts: moon's phase and sign, and menstrual cycle. I found some interesting coincidences here too. For example, for several months the full moon occurred during the peak of emotional cycle and I definitely felt an emotional frenzy, high energy during those times. Also, if my period came during a "low" point of physical cycle it was more crampy, physically exhausting than when it came when the physical was above the baseline.

These "experiments" would make a scientist shudder in her shoes perhaps, but there have been insights and revelations for me, and I don't intend to generalize my findings to anyone else. There are grand cycles and small ones; sometimes it's hard to move far enough away from the immediate reality to see the patterns but they are always there.

These rhythms represent some basic energy ebb and flow that continues through and above all, but they do not indicate prolonged periods of high or low crisis or success. Thus, I noticed during a six month "downer" that the "highs" and "lows" continued and a two week period when all three cycles were above baseline and coinciding was noticeably "higher" and energetic even though I was still in an unhappy situation.

It's difficult to put personal insights into words. I know what I know about myself and you likewise know your own truths. If you are looking for maps of consciousness, biorhythms might open up new areas of thought for you. Explore yourself and hear your own inner music.

How to Chart Biorhythms

Biorhythms are based on three cycles which began on the day you were born. In order to make a chart for any given month, past, present or future, you must figure out how many cycles have already elapsed in your lifetime, and what day to begin the chart with.

1. Figure total days elapsed since birth with birth day as day 1. Don't forget to count leap years.

For example: to cast for February 1, 1974
 Born October 13, 1946 = 19 days
 Nov. 1946 = 30 days (Leap years -
 Dec. 1946 = 31 days 1944, 1948,
 1947 = 365 days 1952, 1956,
 1948 = 366 days 1960, 1964,
 etc. 1968, 1972)
 Jan. 1974 = 31 days

2. Divide this total by ^{Total}23, 28 and 33. The remainder is the day of each cycle you begin your chart with.

$11,392 \div 23 = 495$ (cycles elapsed) +7
 7 = Day 7 of Physical cycle

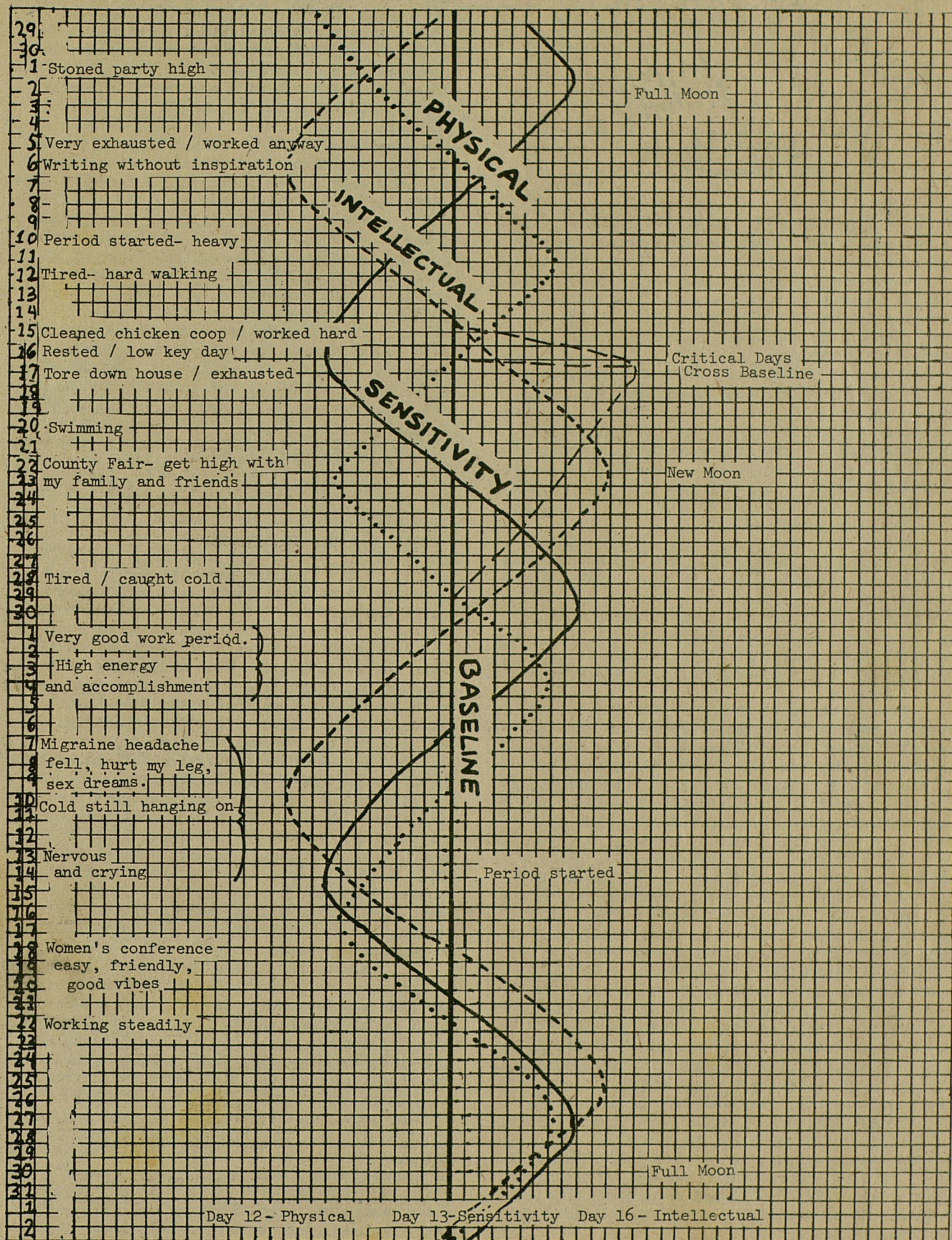
3. Make a graph of all three cycles. Cycles cross the baseline halfway through, peak at 1/4 of the cycle, reach "bottom" at 3/4 of the cycle, return to baseline on last day.

Physical	Emotional	Intellectual
Day-1	Day 1-Baseline	Day 1
Day-5 3/4	Day 7-Peak above	Day 8 1/4
Day-11 1/2	Day 14-Cross baseline	Day 16 1/2
Day-17 3/4	Day 21-Below baseline	Day 24 3/4
Day-23	Day 28- Return to Baseline	Day 33

4. Use a colored pencil to illustrate each cycle. Red- physical, blue- sensitivity, green- intellectual

5. Make the graph large enough so you can write comments next to the date. 8 1/2x11 works well.

6. Once you have started charting you can continue from one chart to another without doing the division each time. ♀



A SOLSTICE GREETING FROM DRUID HEIGHTS

Our life as humans has no meaning except as it relates to and is in harmony with all that is and from which, whether or not we have recognition of the mystery, we are inseparable. We are never cut off in reality: only conceptually by the dismembering knife of the intellect - which we must respect for the beautiful tool it is without letting it destroy us.

We are of earth, air, water and fire, informed by "the spirit that moves upon the face of the waters". By virtue of that spirit we know our being and rejoice. Also by that virtue we may share the insight of the powerful modesty of a Lao Tzu, a St. Francis . . . or of the millions of women unnamed in history who with their bodies and the love of their hearts have ever been creators and nourishers of life.

These know that arrogance, the arrogance of the alienated and domineering ego, is a lock with no key: it locks into a hell of solitude all who try to live by it. As our Western malaise demonstrates, its outcome is a towering insanity . . . insanity so all-immersing that like water to fish it is unperceived except by those who proceed to its outermost limits and take a heroic leap.

That is where we are now. But ills at extremity generate catharsis. Today, is not this exemplified by the world-over revolt of the young against the dry-rot, the death, the active evil in most of our institutions; as by the gratitude for this revolt of those among their elders who support them, rejoicing for the fire thus provided for their more sultrily burning torches.

It is in the way of nature and its healing rhythms that the green fire of youth should be everywhere starting, promising revivification of our mores, just as here at Druid Heights, in the shadow of a sacred mountain, Mount Tamalpais, at this season of the rains and storms, through the year's dead and rotting vegetation, a mist of green is announcing rebirth of the grass. It may start later elsewhere. But it will start. The important thing is to be awake to the rhythms, the changes: the new ones of this moment, often painfully emerging; the ageless ones through which we swing through birth, life, death and rebirth, over and over in miraculous cycles and patterns. What we must inwardly know is that there is no chaos, no confusion except in our own unperceiving, no rootlessness if we will learn to feel our way back downward to the living root of all being and inward to our own core, the Void about which activity marvelously weaves the patterns of the Dance.

Coming awake to the natural rhythms, let us celebrate them as they swing from season to sea-

son. When this is read we will be at the Winter Solstice. The power of the sun, at its lowest ebb, commences to increase and its light to wax. We humans may participate in its rebirth. On the eve or the day of the Solstice we light a ceremonial fire to replenish the fire of the sun and assist the birth of a new year, the while renewing ourselves in community.

Come, then, in spirit to Druid Heights where each year this is done. From last year's Solstice fire we have saved the core of the Yule Log. Now that lump of charcoal is bound to this year's log along with branches of fir and tied with colored cord. The hearth has been prepared by the woman who is the elder of the household, the woman immemorially being the keeper of the hearth and the guardian of the sacred fire. Carefully, with veneration, she lays the bed of kindling. Those who will participate have gathered around, gayly dressed. There may be music, quiet during the ceremony: a flute, drums, the mood one of meditation. Children or the youngest members of the community or family hold lighted candles. Others may ritually bring kindling to the keeper of the hearth. An elder of the household or community brings in the Yule Log. (If elsewhere hearth and log are very large, there may be aides.) The elder is greeted by the keeper of the hearth who indicates how the log shall be placed. The youngest female of the bearers of the fire presents her candle to the keeper of the hearth who, kneeling, accepts it, sets it to the kindling material and broods with concentrated attention as if she would give her own living fire until the flames catch and unfold the new log and the residue of the old.

As crackling, blazing light fills the fireplace the music changes from meditative to joyous and dancing, chanting or song may start according to the mood of the participants. The Solstice celebration has begun. It will proceed to feasting and the renewal of community.

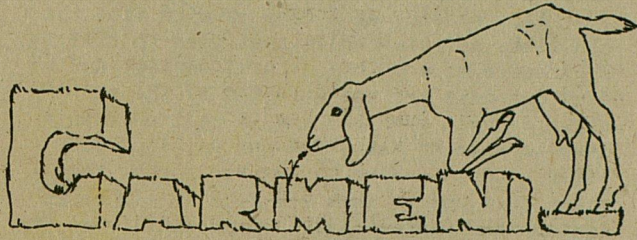
In the household from which this is written the fires rekindled each Solstice, always from the core of the previous Yule Log, date back some three decades. Where such continuity is not possible, either in individual homes or in communities, a symbolic Solstice ritual may still be deeply felt and observed with lighted candles. Or, as in some ancient cultures, by means of games or dramas wherein an individual personifies the declining sun and is revived to general rejoicing.

It is the awareness of the perennial rhythms within which we have our being that is important and that subtly assures inward peace and contributes to outward harmony. Let the girls and the women of the new day begin to consider the central part they may play here, taking up again their ancient role as priestesses of rebirth.

Where awareness of the great rhythms is absent or weak, what better time to feel our way to it again than this time of Winter Solstice when our ego-centered world is in crisis and our society in epileptoid throes, projecting its death wish outward over the planet and beyond? Women must have the confidence and courage to make the leading moves to guide it back to physical and spiritual sanity.

Peace, peace on the way! ♀

CYCLES : REFLECTIONS



I am learning to grow here.

I'm learning to grow from the goat.

I'm learning about the beginning, the conception, when she cries at the fence and wags her tail all day and we take her over to the breeding pen and bring the buck over from the buck pen and put him in with her and he licks her neck and paws at her back and makes a special (waaba waaba) sound and finally mounts her and quickly ejaculates sperm into her.

Womb where grows a fetal goat, growing from egg to fish to more like a goat for five months. Until it is pushed out and pushed out and pushed and is born.

A wet warm quivering mass which dries and shakily stands up and is a new baby goat.

She grows up and is bred, and grows older and is milked, and grows old in this cycle until one day she dies.

Whereupon if her death was mysterious, you need to cut her open to find the cause.

...
Martia had a shiny black coat and was aloof, very calm and sure, a LaMancha queen with a royal neck.

She is sliced up the middle, skin ripped from belly to throat, ribs hacked apart, the veterinarian's knife jammed into her leg while he looks for her lungs

amid a sea of wet warm mass

growing cold.

...
I am learning to grow here.

I'm learning to grow from the tomato.

From the beginnings of a small yellow seed laid on top of sunwarm soil and covered over into a moist womb of darkness. For seven days there is only bare soil under the garden string. And on the seventh day the curved back of the tiny plant, root and head still in the soil, shows green in the brown earth.

The plant straightens and grows and grows out and grows out into leaves and blossoms and pale green fruits, turning red among the green leaves.

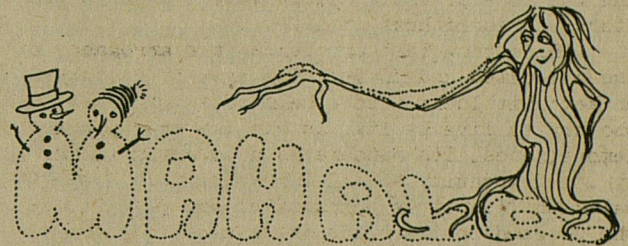
Each morning I stand over the sea of tomato vines, a lushful rest in the dry summer garden. Until one morning when the air is too cold I stand and look over a sea of wilted stalks, suddenly frozen to death in the night and now decomposing in the sun. Soon the winter grass grows up and they disappear.

I am learning how to grow here.

And I am learning how to die here.

.....
"A farm year has, actually, no beginning and no end. Like an old-fashioned roller towel, it begins anywhere a farmer can get hold of it."

Rachel Peden Rural Free



I am a woman of seasons. I grew up with the weather cycle intimately affecting my whole physical being and consciousness, though I gave it no thought at the time. Cold Iowa winters with deep snow, incredibly fragile spring green, hot buzzing lazy summers, intense emotional moments in the wild sad joyful color and wind of fall.

I lived in California for five years. After one or two I began to find myself driving down Vine Street in Berkeley in the fall because it was the only street that had trees whose leaves turned... and I watched Vine, too, for the moment when the plum trees bloomed. Then I lived in Bakersfield for awhile, a place which was a desert for me physically and spiritually. The weather cycle there brought me so low I found myself opening my door every night and standing there with an intense desire, an intense sense of loss which I could not define or understand.

I wrote this poem then:

Here in the desert I need the wind
To rise against the sameness of each day
To sweep around the square white corners
of the world
And blow the careful curls away
To raise in me a sudden rush of joy.

continued

Then I moved to New York, where weather doesn't exist, and if you open your door at night, you're out of your mind.

I slowly learned that I was susceptible to weather. I went to the ocean often on both coasts and all my thoughts and emotions would be swept into a wild high or low depending on the state of the sea. Yet a dear friend of mine asked me why I went to beaches where one couldn't swim etc. ... "there's nothing to do there".! Also when I left New York and got into any country, I always found my mood changed, and often felt comfort, especially sitting against a tree and keeping quiet and letting the sound and color seep into me. Wind is especially a strong force. And rain, which can drive me to awful lows or sometimes give me a gentle sense of happiness.

When I finally came to understand that it was the weather and cyclic change itself that was affecting me, I was incredibly excited. It's me, the actual physiological me that is reacting, not all the cultural reactions, the layers and layers of learned responses. God, I was overjoyed. Now I live in the country and in a place (Northern Wisconsin) where the seasons are pretty extreme.

It's wonderful. Because I accept that the rhythm of any life is made of high moments and low ones, serene ones and intense ones. Before I always struggled to "understand" my moods. Now I know that much of what I feel has nothing to do with my head... so feeling down isn't scary anymore. And when the wind blows hard before a storm, I feel it inside of me in a real triple forte crescendo of mounting tension and excitement - it's a tremendous high.

When the moon is full, I can't sleep most of that night. That's okay. I am deeply pleased that my body knows when the moon is full. The man I live with has built a window above our loft bed in our log house so I can watch the movement of the night sky.

Winter is the resting time. I am keenly aware that all the trees that surround us have drawn their life down into their roots and are waiting. Many of the animals have curled up to hibernate. I am glad that, like the mice and deer, I am awake and leave my tracks in the woods in winter as they do, skimming along in the silence on my skis. But I also have learned to hibernate, in those occasional intensely cold and dark days of winter, or rainy days of spring or fall, when instinct calls one to pull the covers over one's head - we do. David and me and Naomi, our daughter - we all go to bed then in the middle of the day. God, what a sensual pleasure to be able to react to that kind of impulse.

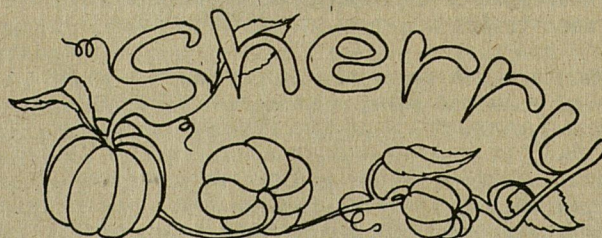
Then, while the snow is still deep and the nights still very cold, the sun begins to warm up whatever it touches in the day, and I know the sap will rise soon. The new cycle starts gently. We tap our trees, we snowshoe through our sunny quiet woods listening to the plink-plink-plink of maple sap dropping into buckets. Geese fly over. Juncos appear. The snow melts and the rivers swell.

It is wonderful to plant, now that I have absorbed all those details of what to plant and when and how. In the hot days of June, as I plant a drill of seeds, I do not think. My consciousness is in my body, feeling the warmth of the sun on my bare back, and in my fingers dropping each seed, smoothing the dirt.

Each season, as I free my mind from the old lists and timetables that used to fill it, I perceive more of the natural world. And we find our days are now affected by the sun cycle. We wake when the sun is well up (can't seem to wake at dawn) and our day ends soon after sundown. Here in the far north, that means that summer days are four to six hours longer than winter days. David and I were embarrassed when we first found ourselves sleeping longer hours in winter, but now we accept it. It is a natural cycle that perhaps we would not have perceived if we had electricity and a color TV.

In the fall and in the spring, when the geese fly overhead and the wind rises, I always feel that same desire that made me stand at my door that night in Bakersfield. It is wanderlust. Now I know that it is not dissatisfaction with my life, but it is an intense desire to leave what is familiar for the unknown, to go over the hill to see what's on the other side, to be on the road again. I need to find a way to satisfy this desire.

Like the Indians who live here, I am beginning to conceive of the year in terms of natural cycles, instead of months with names that don't mean anything. January is the month of cold so deep that the trees crack in the silence, ... April is the month when the meltwater from the winter snows fills every river and creek and sends rushing torrents of water north toward Lake Superior... I feel my own personal energy rise and fall in rhythms I begin to perceive as natural.



When I first moved to the country, fifteen months after leaving school, I still counted years as beginning in September. More often than not, I also thought of them as ending in June - the summer was an uncharted void. For fifteen years my life had followed the rhythms of a school system that entrapped me and that I hated. Now years later, those rhythms and that pain have been erased. I still have trouble counting years, though. That arbitrary calendular January beginning has no more relevance to my current cycles than it did to my old ones. Often, if I speak of years at all, I mean "four seasons ago," but sometimes I mean five or six or eight. A year is a rather inexact measure

in my mind - more of a feeling of time. If I count up "years," I still have a tendency to mark them by the Fall - the time of harvest, the end (if there is one) to the cycle.

It seems strange to me if I think of it consciously, that winter should feel like a beginning to me, but it does. Winter is a time of body rest and of spiritual and mental growth. The truest, veriest beginning of spring's beginning. I have come to love winter now as passionately as I once loved summer. Perhaps because it represents a new kind of freedom for me - the freedom to rest, which my puritanical soul has little respect for, but great need of. I am learning that the intensity of work and creation that come during the other seasons could not happen without winter's peace. By late fall, garden mulched for winter, animals bred, hay in the barn, vegetables and fruit canned or frozen, I'm aching for my rocking chair by the woodstove. I listen hopefully for the rain, feel its currents moving in the wind. My Cancer nature is now immersed in a rain swept, water-soaked universe. Surrounded by water, steady rhythmical beating on the tin roof above, I am nestled warm in my house. As though it were the womb, I float a rock within it; safe; warmed by wood, by fire. I write and read and dream. I spin webs of visions, weave visions into plans. Am already bursting forth when the first lambs are born in the last wet, cold days of winter.

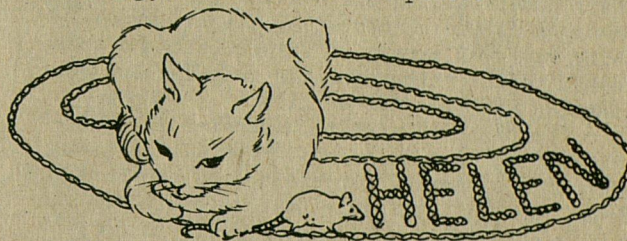
Someone said to me recently she was moving to Colorado where "there are four seasons." I looked a little blank and didn't answer. There are at least four seasons here. Maybe twenty. The longer I live here, the more sensitive I become to the steady unfolding rhythm. Day by day I watch the colors in the spring grasses transform themselves towards summer drought. Subtle, muted changes, yet each so clear. I am coming now to know the pattern of the wildflowers and to know where each first blooms. I watch for the narcissus by the pond in December, frost on the ground; for the perfect simplicity of the April wild iris; for the proud spiky foxglove which will bloom when the iris are gone. I know where to look for the first fall mushrooms, which combination of rain and sun will bring out the rarer species.

The seasons are the basis of my life. The pace at which I work, the balance of work and play, which tasks I do when, are governed by the seasons. This is not a self-conscious choice, but a simple fact. It is one of the ironies of country life to me that living seasonally only partly means living in the moment. It also means living the cycle; preparing for the future, remembering the past. On a hot August day each year, when the vegetables somehow tell me that they've reached their peak, I know it's time to prepare for winter. Months before the first rains or frost, I begin planting the winter garden, splitting and stacking the winter's wood. Spring planting begins the previous

summer, collecting seeds from the earliest, strongest plants, and in October, manuring and mulching the soil. Fall canning depends on whether spring rains and frosts hurt the blossoms on the fruit trees.

No season is separate from any other, though each has its mood, weather, and work. Clichéd images have become concrete realities. Spring is dawn to me - the clear early morning light on green fields, after the short dark days of winter. Spring is birth, of garden plants, lambs and goats. Summer is daytime: long, warm sunshine days. It is growing and blossoming, a time of lush fruitfulness. Fall is sunsets - the only time of year we see them here - brilliant streaks above the ocean. Fall is harvesting and dying, incredibly painful to me as I watch well-loved plants wither. It is also building and preparing: fall garden work and breedings are the foundations for spring's births. Winter is nighttime to me wild, wet, and windy outside; safe and warm within. It is a time of peace and rest and inner growth.

My moods and energies seem to match the seasons. From each I learn another aspect of myself. From them all I learn that the essence is the flow. My life is like the cycle of the seasons: a spiral, always returning, never to the same place.



Why are we so afraid to write of cycles? We whose lives are so immersed in them. Why do we seem unable or unwilling to think about the mystery of the circles within our lives?

Birth; death. Tonight, full moon-night. Fancy cat sits chewing on a mouse she has waited for all evening, while my sister Darlene waits in labor for the birth of her child. Living here, for the first time, I am witnessing birth and death. I remember how amazed I was when your goat died and we carried her body out into the pygmy to be eaten by buzzards. And another time watching Jeanne help some kids be born. Within this cycle is a clue to an understanding of the cosmos that is, perhaps, felt so strongly inside that it is impossible to communicate its impact.

Cycles, cycles. I played today in the compost, ran my hands through the fine black earth which so recently was food and plant material and manure. I placed it around the small winter plants and hoped it would not frost early and that the plants would live and nourish us this season.

These cycles are so basic to our lives that we act as though they are too mundane to

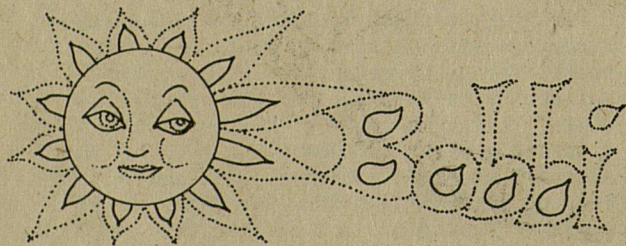
mention. We laughed tonight about the cycle of growing a carrot. Too trite perhaps for our worldliness, but a miracle nonetheless. On a good day a plant growing can be an opening into the universe.

Cycles. They surround us. Macro-cosmically the planets, starts, suns and moons each moving in its particular way, each influencing the earth by its movement. Micro-cosmically, within our bodies there are the constant manifestations. Food is utilized by the body for energy and is then passed back into the earth. We breathe, we never stop until it is time to disincorporate; breathe in oxygen, breathe out carbon dioxide, breathe in life energy breathe out disharmony. And this cycle of breath connects us intimately to the plant world whose photosynthesis provides the oxygen for our bodies and which utilizes our waste carbon dioxide. The cells within our bodies are constantly dying while new ones are being born. The forms change but Life continues.

The sea, the tides pulled by the moon, a daily reminder in this coastal town of continual change; in, out, magnetic force. And this same pull experienced monthly within our bodies.

To the Indians everything was the circle; the Medicine Wheel, their homes, their dances, their understanding all contained a constant reminder of the circle of creation. Everything was (is) a part of this circle and they looked to all things for the learning and re-learning of this fact of life.

The closer I come to understanding these cycles, the more I learn to flow within them without resistance. Acceptance of the birth, death, and rebirth cycles within ourselves and in our universe will help bring us into harmony with the nature of our being.

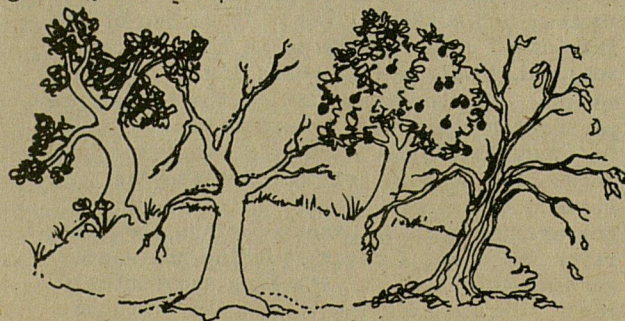


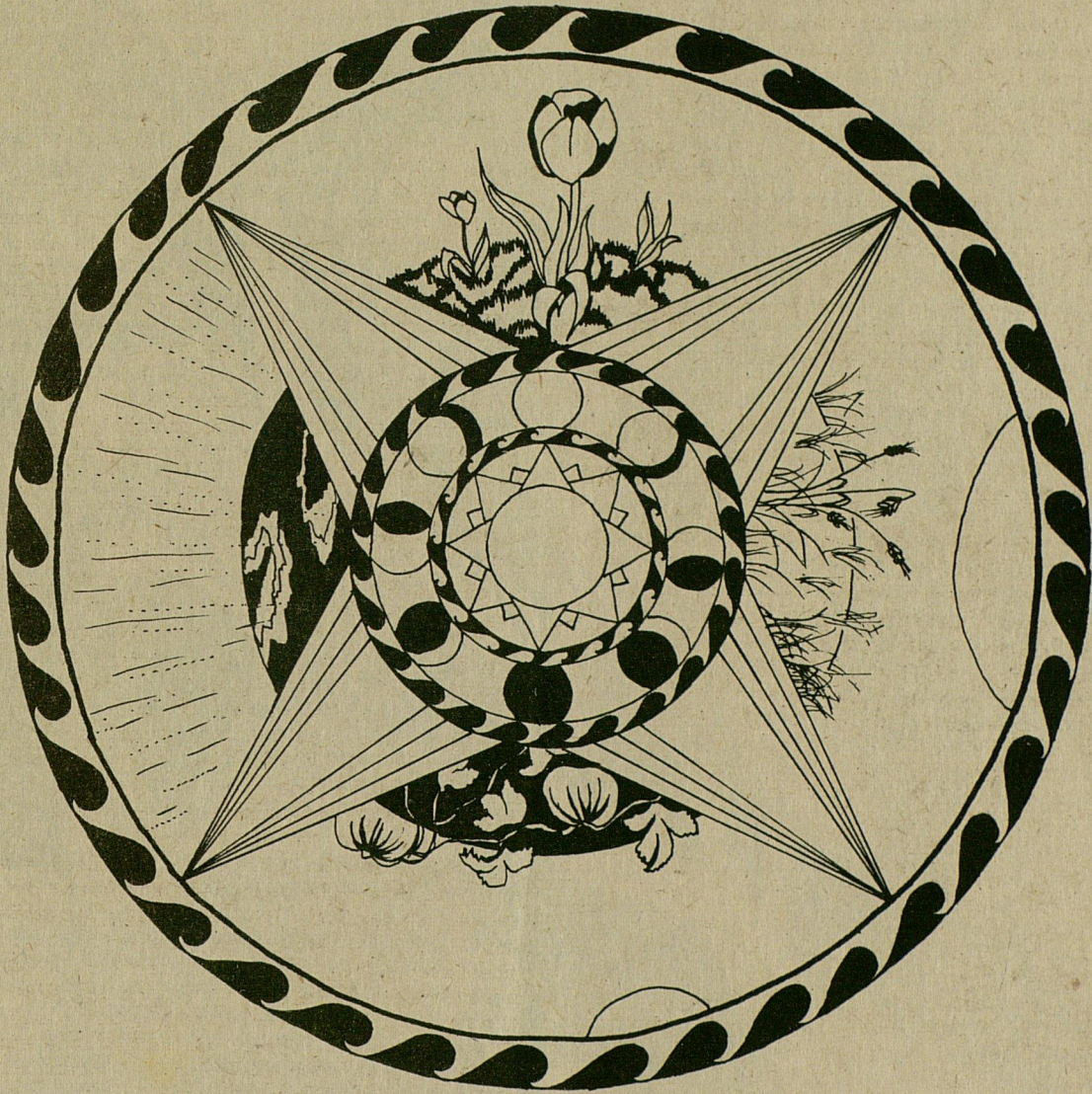
The heat feels intense and good. The earth and my body are absorbing the sun's warmth. Everything needs more liquid now. I am no exception. I find myself eating less but drinking gallons of liquid. Soon summer has dried the grass and the heat absorbed almost all the water. My body tan like the earth is brown. Nature effects my emotions with intense love of the heat but then depression if the heat makes me lethargic and guilty I'm not doing enough. Emotional cycles and natural cycles are so often interlocked. Now the wind is blowing strongly,

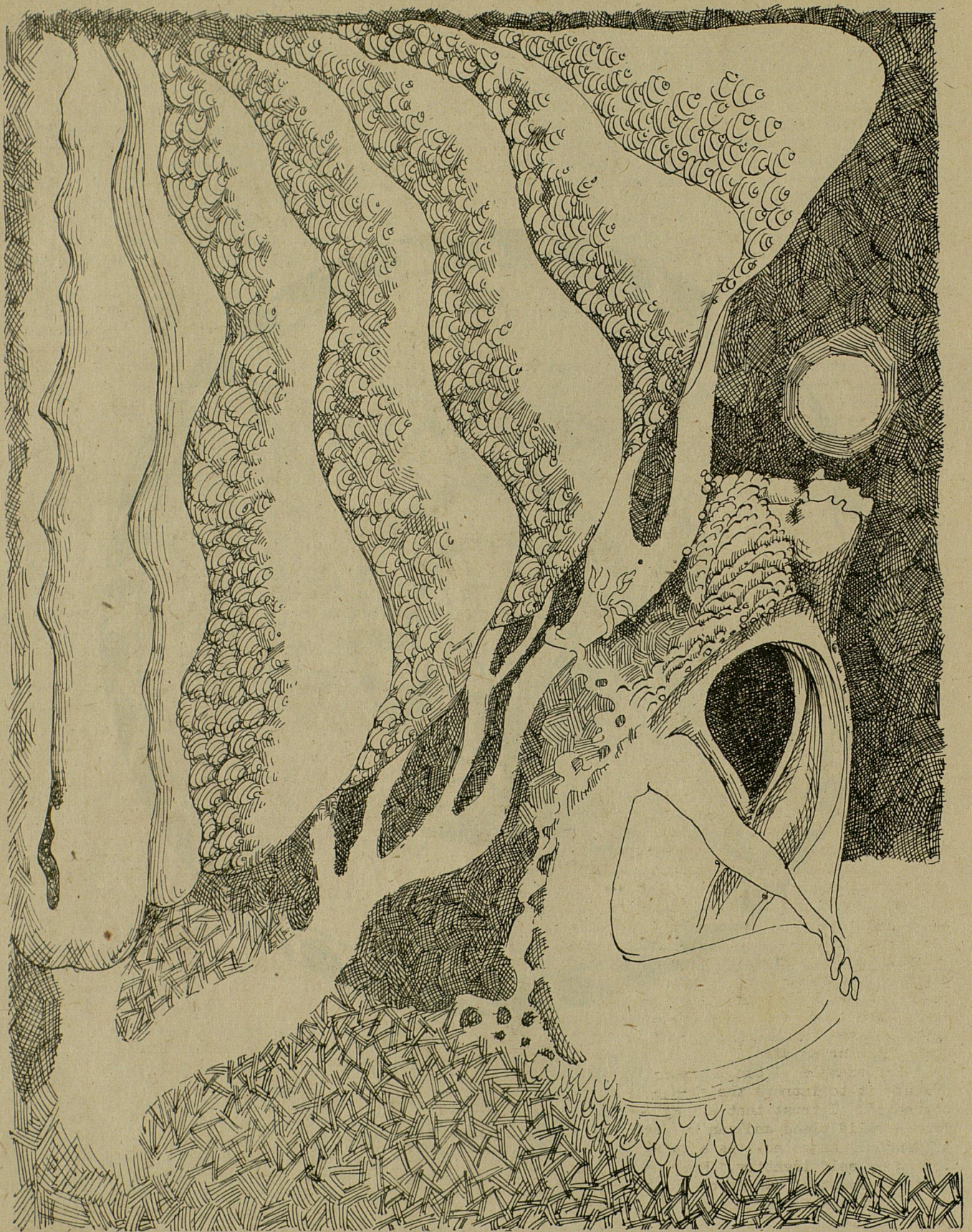
pushing the trees so hard my gravel road is covered with yellow and gold speckles from above. Tonight is still though. The moon is full and dominating the sky with its orange glow. Each Halloween I see the moon's face matched by the shining jack-o-lanterns. Pumpkins which I watched grow from seeds and now picked off their dead withered vines, they glow with a life of their own. My garden is dying now, and the crisp cold mornings tell me the frost and winter are coming soon. My life is also part of this life and death cycle. I am a part of nature's cycle. The frantic roof-patching, wood-gathering, each year's preparing for winter always seems to be so sudden - the first rain and you know the forty days and nights of rain will soon be upon you. In between rain storms I walk over the land. While fixing the road I look into puddles which shimmer like lakes and reflect the tall green trees. I love the winter rain because it keeps everything so green and beautiful. It is also a time for my hibernation. I stay inside more and reflect on myself, on my growth, the land's needs, the future, and do those quiet things I'm always too busy to do. The rain on the roof seems to pound into my head. I often become very depressed (some call it cabin fever), but I always work through it to the other side. Winter is a time of inside growth.

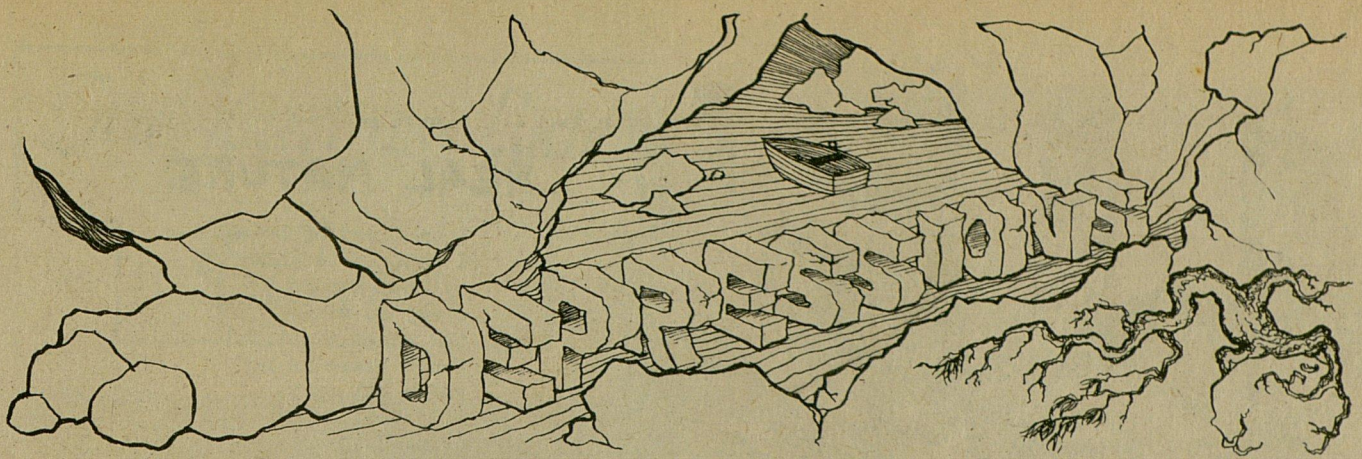
Spring is my heaven. The birth of nature surrounds you everywhere. Tulips opening their red lips to kiss you. Fields of rainbow colors, while the narcissus fills the air with sweetness. It is the awakening after your sleep and hibernation. Flowers of every color, birds singing, the sun glowing on everything. I can't find words to express nature's beauty nor my elevation and happiness. I can see why this is the time of love, nothing can remain contained inside; life and birth are everywhere. I feel at such harmony with the world that I have no inside or outside; I am merely a flowing part of the universe.

There are so many cycles to deal with, not just nature's seasonal cycles nor my emotional cycles. Cycles within cycles until finally the cycles disappear to reveal the integrated, continuing, whole. We are a part of the universe which never stops; birth, death, rebirth, growth, our circle is always complete. We as a part of the whole are always at some stage in our continuing, growing circle. ♀









I remember all the times when I have been so completely down, so totally nonfunctional that reality becomes an illusion. I can't seem to find out who I am or in what direction I'm going. I have tried different ways of dealing with this situation. At first I denied my feelings or tried to repress them. Later on, I got a little more in touch and attempted to explore the reasons for my being, questioning on a much deeper level the existence of my life. This always led to an introspective self-analytical period where my body and soul craved a quiet time - a healing period of complete absence from society. This is usually called a depression. At this point societal programming hits me and I feel guilty for wasting time. People tell me I'm wallowing in self pity. So to be accepted I immerse myself in a whirl of activities and relationships. Society pats me on the back, but I soon become void of life forces. My inspirations and creative energies dwindle into non-existence. At this point my hold on life slips and I approach one of those months to years depressions or else I contemplate suicide.

To prevent this stalemate situation I must go back and follow those positive urges to rest and resupply my life energies. Depressions can be seen as a positive way of getting in touch with hidden feelings and unknown resources and as a way of self healing. How I handle this period of self analysis is aided by knowledge of the astrological sign Scorpio and its planetary ruler Pluto.

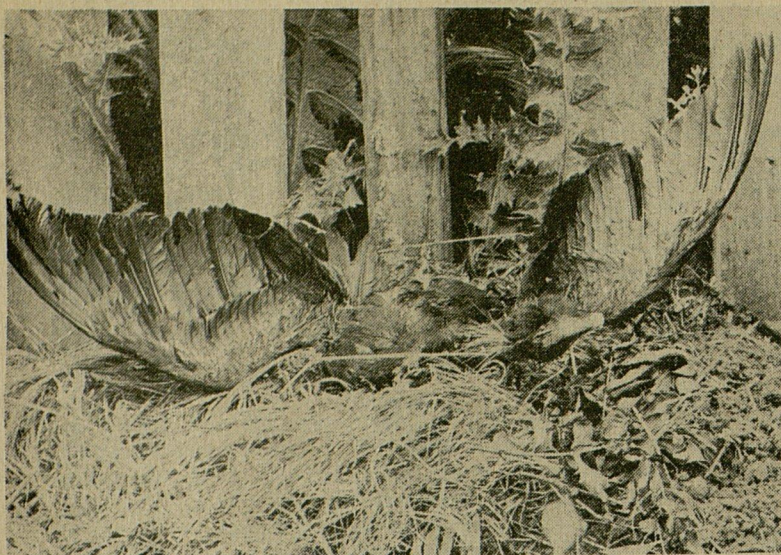
Pluto and Scorpio have taught me that life and all its experiences are cyclic. Life, as the ocean, has its high tides and low ones. Scorpio is the unification and oneness of opposites. I can't have one extreme without the other. In order to appreciate the good times and learn from them, I explore the other side; the unhappy times and those parts of myself that I don't like or am afraid of.

For example, I can learn to face my anger and use it to improve the closeness of my relationships. I trust that all my feelings come from a valid place and can be used as a source of wisdom. Anger acts as a safeguard against losing my self identity. Merging with my loved ones is essential but it can only happen when I can separate again and exist as an individual self. By repressing my anger, I only punish myself. Of course, I cannot unleash my anger with

its full velocity. I must channel and direct it for constructive purposes. I must keep in mind that energy is pure; only its use determines its creativeness or destructiveness. By understanding this I can confront all feelings, examine them with a positive head, and then use them for positive self development.

The next time I have no energy or don't feel like seeing anyone or going anywhere, I must not force myself to do it. I must let go of my controls. Relax. Experience completely what comes naturally. Take care of myself in the best way that I can. It could be sleeping twenty-four hours, spacing out with music or nature, or crying or screaming. Pluto the mythological god of the underworld, purifies me by purging me of my negativities and inadequacies. It's not easy. It forces me to travel the road to insanity. It accepts no excuses, for its lessons are necessary. The danger comes when I try to postpone or control the experience. Then I get trapped and can't seem to get my head in a positive place. But once I have let go and let myself sink into nothingness, I am on the right path. When the intensity builds up to the point where it can't increase, when the worst is upon me, I get a flash that changes the perspective. It's not an answer but a new way of looking at the same problem or emotion. The experience is overwhelming. But due to letting go, the duration is short enough that I can handle it. I have experienced a death and rebirth of myself. I am relieved of my torments and feel a total unity of my highs and lows. I understand the whys and the wherefores and am able to see my place in the cyclic flow of nature and its beings. I am able to realize that depressions and hard times are an essential part of the whole. Most importantly, I am really high!

Life is a cycle of death and rebirth both on the physical and non-physical levels of reality. I grow and experience and enjoy life to its fullest. Through a death I can integrate these processes throughout my entire consciousness and unconsciousness. I am reborn pure again with new insights and clearer direction. The wisdom of Pluto and Scorpio can make my growth periods a lot easier. In fact, sometimes, I might find myself looking forward to these introspective times. Healing myself is a fine way of getting in touch with who I am. ♀



TIREDFNESS

tiredness licks
 at my heels
 an old
 dog
 walking across
 the patio;
 the belly is gone,
 the hair
 faded.
 I have traveled
 from
 patio to patio, pool to pool
 dipping my feet
 in various seas
 (Aegean, Atlantic, Pacific)
 waking each
 time as if
 now I would
 stay awake
 and my feet
 would not
 doggedly shuffle
 in the same circle
 looking at
 each point
 for the sunlight
 on the water.
 Tiredness,
 I give in to you.
 I am making a
 house for you.
 I will love you
 like an old dress
 become worn and soft
 I will smile on you
 with your hair
 turning dull and old
 I will welcome your aching and
 your half open eyes
 because tiredness at least
 you
 have always been
 faithful.

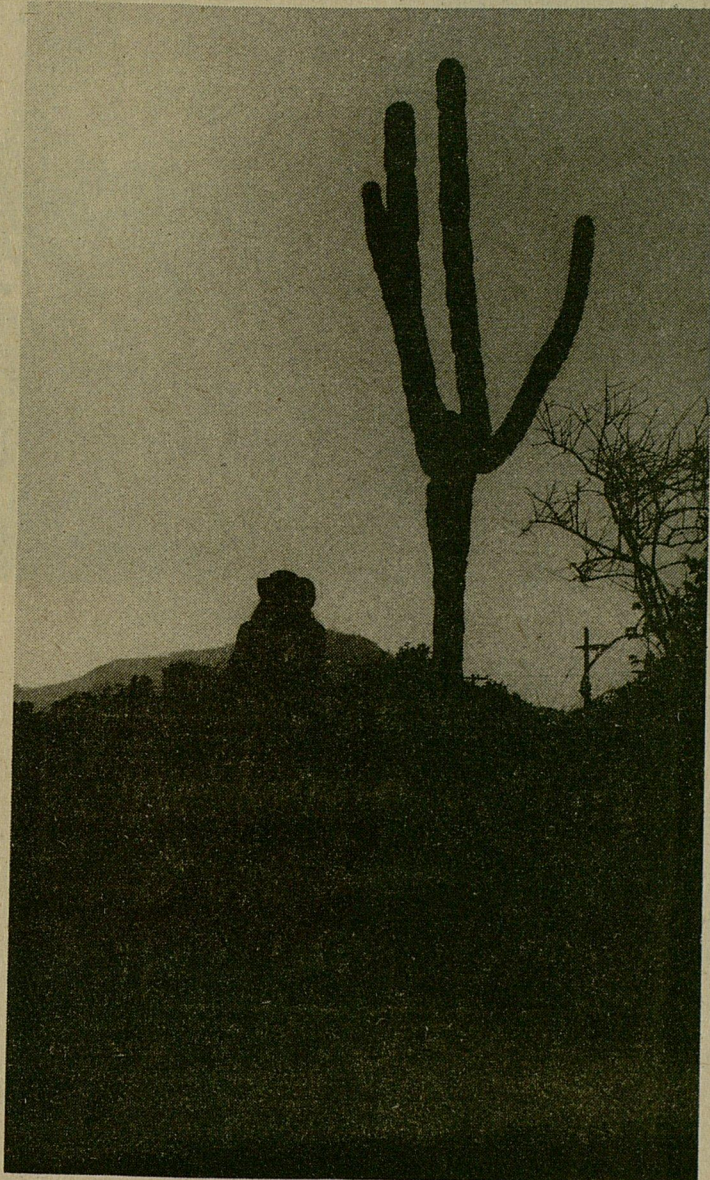
REAL NATURE

I am tired of being good
 I want to let out
 my real nature
 a day so windy
 the trees might fall.
 Since there is no
 water but only
 the illusion of
 dying I
 have flowered and
 flowered and my
 bouquets rest prettily
 on shelves in
 private rooms
 while I
 wait
 hanging by a rope
 not dry enough to die, my
 real nature
 does not consider
 every possibility
 like a
 tired movie critic
 who always waits
 a just end.

My real nature
 loves in the
 blue light
 before dawn
 in a room
 filled with roses
 and Edwardian
 chairs;
 loves the
 highwayman,
 dresses in his clothes
 and rides under the moon
 never robbing
 but always hiding robbers
 danger thrilling my heart
 red velvet
 ribbons laced
 at my breasts,
 breasts which
 are always loyal
 but never faithful,
 which cry
 as the highwayman
 is captured by
 the noose,
 and do not stop
 crying
 in the arms
 of his other lover
 a woman
 with braids as thick as mine
 who also
 rides under the moon
 hiding robbers
 danger thrilling her heart
 whose body
 hums like a cello
 near mine.

The Tiredness Cycle

Fall, 1973



ALWAYS

I am trying
to
salvage the day again
that started at quarter to nine.
I was safe in the
kitchen til noon
and I knew even then
I shouldn't have left.
Upstairs the closets
yawned half-written
letters to me, while I
sat in black under
pants and decided
what to wear.
The sunlight said
to go out the door
but
where?
Should I stay in
all day and cry
or should I try
to change
the look of things
inside?

In my mind I
imagine a group
of women concerned
about me--
they make a thousand
suggestions and then one by one
leave.
I sit with the
thousand suggestions.
I tell them what is
the use, they
shake
their paper heads, I
hold them close, break
down, I murmur
breakdown and kiss
them on the
ears.

Were you always like
this? they
ask me, as they
swiftly fly
away,
yes, yes,
I freeze, I am
freezing, yes,
I am standing
stock still, I
am always like this,
I have always been
and I always will.

And always the house is the same
the window is standing
open,
the door is
shut,
it is quarter to one,
the morning is done--
the day has more than begun.

continued

SERIOUS

I am tired
I have read my poetry
which made my friends laugh.
Alice tells me,
"You'll be the
Lenny Bruce of the
Woman's Movement."
And just when I
thought I was
getting serious.
I was having lunch
everyday
in the middle of the day.
I was serious
with calendars and
carbon
copies of letters and
file boxes.
I have a muffler on
my car and at night
I brush my daughter's teeth.

My life takes on
a recognizable shape
I arrive places at
predictable hours and
on vacations
I dive into the sea.

Last Saturday
I wandered from room to room
cleaning and
weeping: Things are
always the same.
I wrote a poem called Always.
This Saturday
I rocked in my clean
living room
read someone else's poems and thought:

There is a time for everything
a time to clean
a time to weep
a time to read
a time to brush your daughter's teeth
and replace them each
with a dime.

The doorbell rang
and I let in a friend
who pointed
out her
period on my kitchen
calendar
and bled into my toilet bowl.

In the Museum I said
is a painting
of menstrual blood.
And in another gallery
photographs
of faces all over
the world
some the faces of the dead
now,
all,
with the same expectant
expression.



I remember Lenny Bruce
said the Jews
and all oppressed people
sing, dance and tell jokes
to charm the boss
so they can get away with
lighter sentences.

Lenny Bruce is more dead than God now
but we
have a moving picture
of him.

And day after day
I sense
I am getting away with it
getting away
and wait to find out
with what.

I have succeeded in charming
myself away
from my own urgency:
in the dark
some are
drinking themselves to death
and some are so
nervous they never
sit down.
I am serious,
I am laughing,
I dwell
on the line.

CHILE

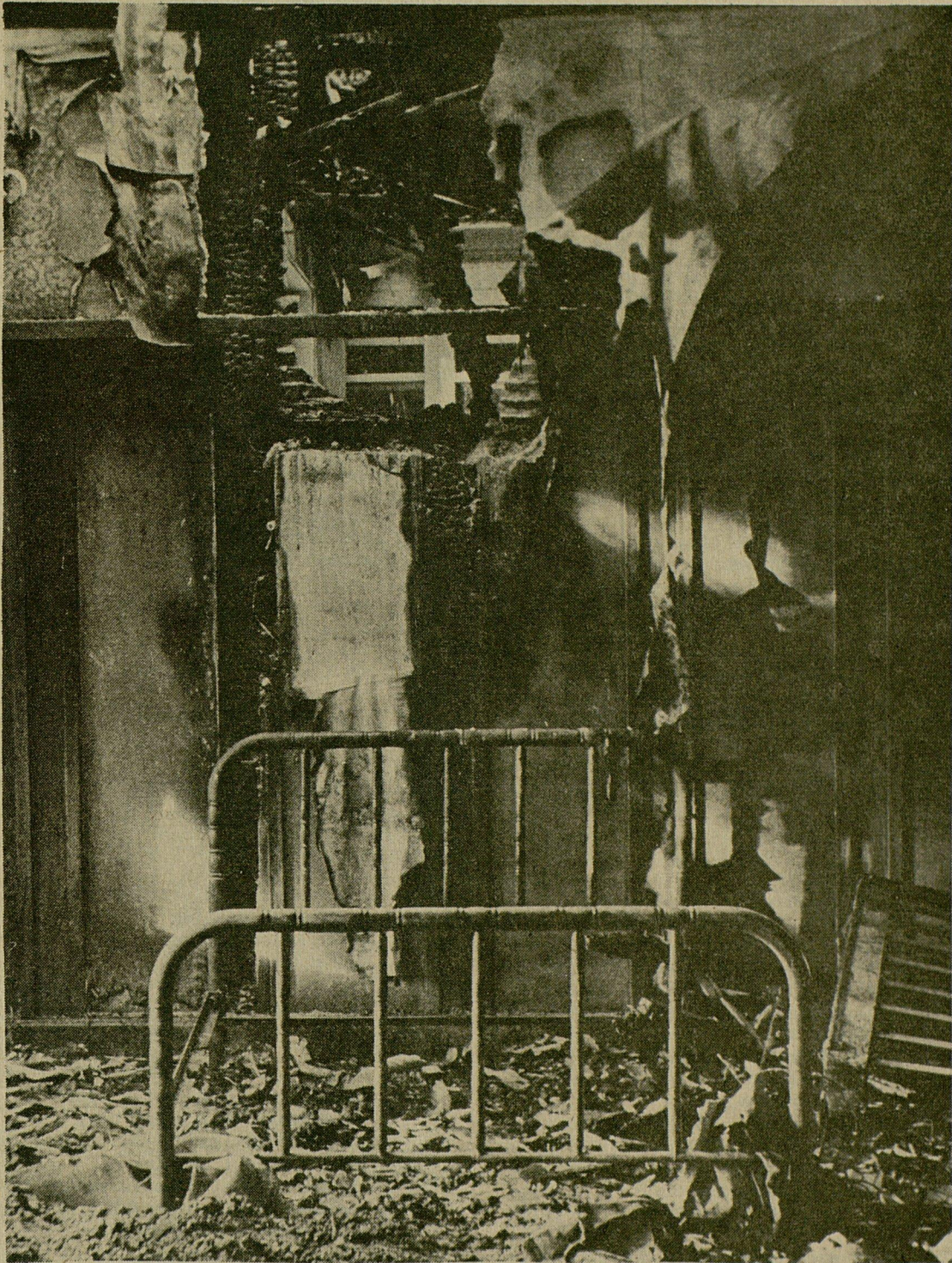
My daughter pleads with me
for the life of our goldfish
sourcing in a tank
of ancient water,
"I want them
to
live," she
says. Late at night
I pass the green tank
still full of guilt.
I have chosen
in the hierarchy of my life
to go to work
to shop, to cook dinner, to
write these words
before saving the fish;
choices surround me.
Nothing is ever right.
Every breathing space
asks for help;
dust multiplies in the
 hallway;
lecture notes fly away
through windows which
need glass and paint
and in the back of my mind
somewhere
is a woman
who weeps
for Chile
and shudders at the
executions.
All along she
has been
pondering the social order
and her
worried thoughts
slow
my
every movement.

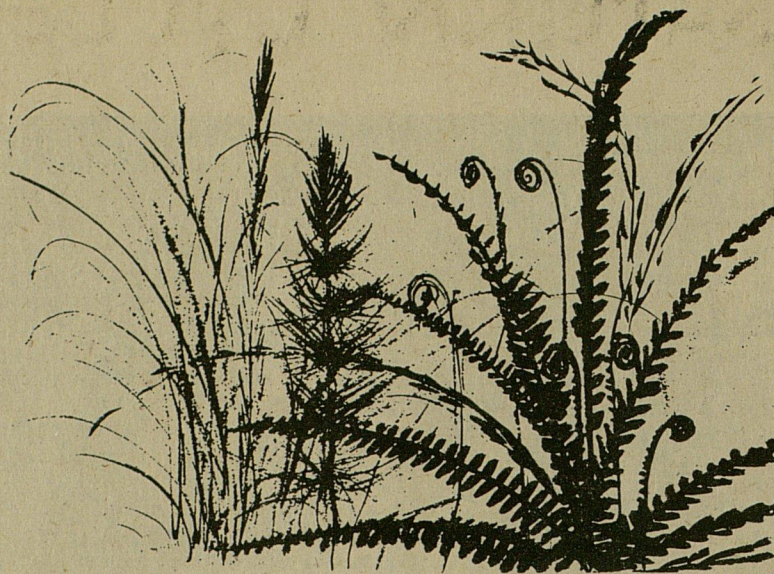


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THIS IS THE STORY OF THE DAY IN THE LIFE OF A WOMAN TRYING TO BE A WRITER AND her child got sick. And in the midst of writing this story someone called her on the telephone. And, of course, despite her original hostile reaction to the ring of the telephone, she got interested in the conversation which was about teaching writing in a woman's prison, for no pay of course, and she would have done it if it weren't for the babysitting and the lack of money for a plane fare, and then she hung up the phone and looked at her typewriter, and for an instant swore her original sentence was not there. But after a while she found it. Then she began again, but in the midst of the second sentence, a man telephoned wanting to speak to the woman she shares her house with who was not available to speak on the telephone and by the time she got back to her typewriter she began to worry about her sick daughter downstairs. And why hadn't the agency for babysitters called back and why hadn't the department for health called back because she was looking for a day sitter and a night sitter, one so she could teach the next day and one so she could read her poetry. And she was hoping that the people who had asked her to read poetry would pay for the babysitter since the next evening after that would be a meeting of teachers whom she wanted to meet and she could not afford two nights of babysitters let alone one, actually. This was the second day her child was sick and the second day she tried to write (she had been trying to be a writer for years) but she failed entirely the first day because of going to the market to buy Vitamin C and to the toy store to buy cut outs and crayons, and making soup from the chicken carcass that had been picked nearly clean to make sandwiches for lunch, and watering the plants, sending in the mortgage check and other checks to cover that check to the bank, and feeling tired, wishing she had a job, talking on the telephone, and putting out newspaper and glue and scissors on the kitchen table for her tired, bored child and squinting her eyes at the clock waiting Sesame street to begin again. Suddenly, after she went up stairs to her bedroom with a book having given up writing as impossible, it was time to cook dinner. But she woke up on the second day with the day before as a lesson in her mind. Then an old friend called who had come to town who she was eager to see and she said, "Yes, I'm home with a sick child," and they spent the morning talking. She was writing poetry and teaching she said. He had written four books he said. Her daughter showed him her red and blue and orange colored pictures. She wished he didn't have to leave so early she thought but didn't say, and went back to pick up tissue paper off the floor and fix lunch for her and her child and begin telephoning for babysitters because she knew she had to teach the next day. And the truth was, if she did not have a sick child to care for, she was not sure she could write anyway because the kitchen was still there needing cleaning, the garden there needing weeding and watering, the living room needing curtains, the couch needing pillows, a stack of mail needing answers (for instance if she didn't call the woman who had lived in her house the month before about the phone bill soon, she would lose a lot of money.) And besides, she had nothing to write. She had had fine thoughts for writing the night before but in the morning they took on a sickly complexion. And anyway, she had begun to think her life trivial and so it was, and she was tired writing the same words, or different words about the same situation, the situation or situations being that she was tired, tired of trying to write, tired of poverty or almost poverty or fear of poverty, tired of the kitchen being dirty, tired of having no lover. She was amazed that she had gotten herself dressed, actually, with thoughts like these, and caught herself saying maybe I should take a trip when she realized she had just come back from a trip and had wanted to be home so much she came back early. And even in the writing of this she thought I have written all this before and went downstairs to find her daughter had still not eaten a peanut butter sandwich and she wondered to herself what keeps that child alive?

continued





This is a piece of writing about the parts that die.
Which parts have died or will die I cannot clearly name.
Their deaths occur before
the shapes of their identities
still infantile, still motionless and curled
become clear.

One feels only a vague lack and remembers
the causes of death more than
what actually died.

One of the causes certainly is death
itself, the deaths say for instance
the death of the father (or it might have
been a mother) and with this dies
the lack of awareness of death that
makes the child's life
youthful.

But some of the parts die
a slower death;
a certain eagerness of
mind for instance seems to be subject to
a permanent sleep
and the causes of this moribund process
are woven into every minute during
which circumstances appear to be
overwhelming and the subject perhaps
turns her back and
says, "All this is making me tired."
And some of the parts struggle and
refuse to die but weaken,
the voice becoming hoarse
and even a bit cynical
for instance

considering one human
being's compatibility for another.

And some
one is glad to see buried and done
with as when the subject learns
for the final time
that expectations are dangerous
that opening one's mouth
is foolish
the going forwards or backwards
is a reciprocal process;

And some
one forgets ever existed
except as perceived
in the eloquence or grace of others
and that may be perceived with anger or even
jealousy for
the question is, is it true
that one is either born to jump high
or one is not,
that one holds genius in her hands
at birth, or
one does not,
that birth
and not
the lack or presence
of food and mother and father
and grants-in-aid or
state supported schools
or central heating
or books on shelves or curtains on windows
or laudatory remarks
or degrees in frames
or accidental falls from carriages or private
rooms, or paint brushes or
ink or a reading public or space or time or
folded laundry or letters in boxes
but birth alone is the spark
that determines every baby
every child, every youthful or aged
step toward a destiny
written only for geniuses and that true genius
evades every accidental, fortuitous or
systematic detail of life?
Or is genius instead
like all the other
parts that can die
before naming,
a substance
variable in shape and color
altered by circumstance and
perishable.?

SATURN CYCLE

Astrology is a system of cycles, and the motions of the planets against the zodiacal constellations can help us understand our own individual life cycles. Why, for example, does it seem that so many people, as they approach the age of thirty, reach a resolution about the kind of work they want to do and the kind of life style they feel most comfortable with? The late twenties are years of change - breaks from the past and resolutions about the future. This cycle repeats itself around the mid to late fifties - children have grown up; there are many divorces or changes in relationships as people find that they can no longer fall back on their youth and the plans, hopes, and building for the future that sustained them through the earlier years; many people realize that they are bored with the work they have been doing for twenty or thirty years, and often they have to deal with the rejection by their children of all they've built for them through this work. . .

These critical periods in our life cycles coincide with the cycles of the planet Saturn. Approximately every twenty-eight years Saturn completes a cycle around the twelve signs of the Zodiac. Thus, every individual experiences a "Saturn Return" around her/his 28th year and again at 56 and at 84; that is, at about ages 28, 56, and 84 Saturn returns to the same degree of the same sign that it was in at the time of the individual's birth. These two, or at the most three, Saturn Returns are major landmarks in a lifetime and an increased understanding of the planet Saturn, can help tremendously in dealing with the upheaval people commonly go through at these times.

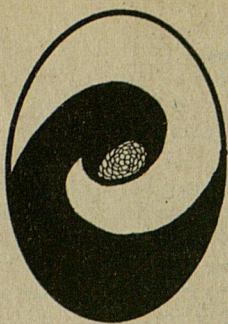
Saturn teaches us about sensitivity and responsibility - being sensitively tuned in to the needs of oneself and others so that one can then be responsible about meeting those needs. Saturn teaches us to focus on reality and to learn to assess it; to develop a sense of judgement and to use or develop the strength and fortitude to follow through; to act on one's own assessment of reality and one's own needs. It teaches us to trust our centers, our guts, to know what is right for the individual in the present - not for anyone else and not what was right yesterday or what may be right tomorrow, but for the Self, Now. Saturnian strength is knowing that nobody else's standards are quite suited to you, just as yours will not be quite suited to anyone else; that each person must follow her/his own inner structures, needs, strengths and standards.

Thus Saturn is always striving for individual growth. But it is also constantly reaching out to its environment, its society. Saturnian growth is always linked with social usefulness - what can I contribute to the social whole? How can I affect my society? So sensitive is Saturn to its social environment that a strong Saturnian influence can make a person a virtual microcosm of whatever social structures

and norms surround her - unless, that is, she can get to her own deepest center and tune into the person rather than the structures that seem to contain her. The question "How can I be socially useful?" presupposes a clear sense of the "I". No one can be wholly effective unless she is functioning from a solid foundation, a solid center within the self. The Saturn Return is a good time to ask oneself - Am I creating or adapting the structures of my life to best fulfill my own needs and potential? Or am I adapting myself to fit into the structures provided for me by my society, family, or whatever?

Saturnian energy can help us to see what is happening internally and externally at any given moment and to respond (from the same root as "responsibility") to that reality. The response is always geared toward growth - not the most pleasurable, or the easiest, or the most immediately satisfying resolution or action; but that path which will lead to the greatest ultimate development of the soul (individual) in question. Saturn's lessons are difficult, but solidly rewarding. A Saturn reward is not a pat on the back or a passing show of approval; it is an anchor in reality, an anchor in sanity that can help stabilize and strengthen one through whatever storms life may take her. One has to work for such an anchor; one has to earn it - and it is through the process of learning Saturn lessons, or the lessons of reality, that this is done. Testing one's limits is the way to stretch them. Thus, a period of hardship - physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual - necessitates raising one's tolerance level and increasing one's self-reliance. The less one needs those things which one can lose, the less fearful one becomes, the more anchored and stable within the self.

The Saturn Return is a time for self-examination. Where you've been cheating, restricting, or denying your true potential for spiritual growth, accept the prods that nudge you toward it. Where you've been fulfilling and developing your potential, accept the rewards and keep moving. Remember that reality is in a state of constant flux and it is realistic to accept change; to be able to respond to the reality of the moment in a way that feels right at that moment for yourself. Remember also that Saturnian movement is slow and steady, not sudden and spasmodic. A Saturn Return may be felt for a year or more, though its peak intensity is usually about six months or less. It is difficult to know what Saturn is doing to or for you until there is some distance and hindsight. While it's happening, it may feel either like your life is coming together or like it's falling apart, but it is only with the perspective of hindsight that you can wholly appreciate the new strengths and wisdom you may have gained. ♀



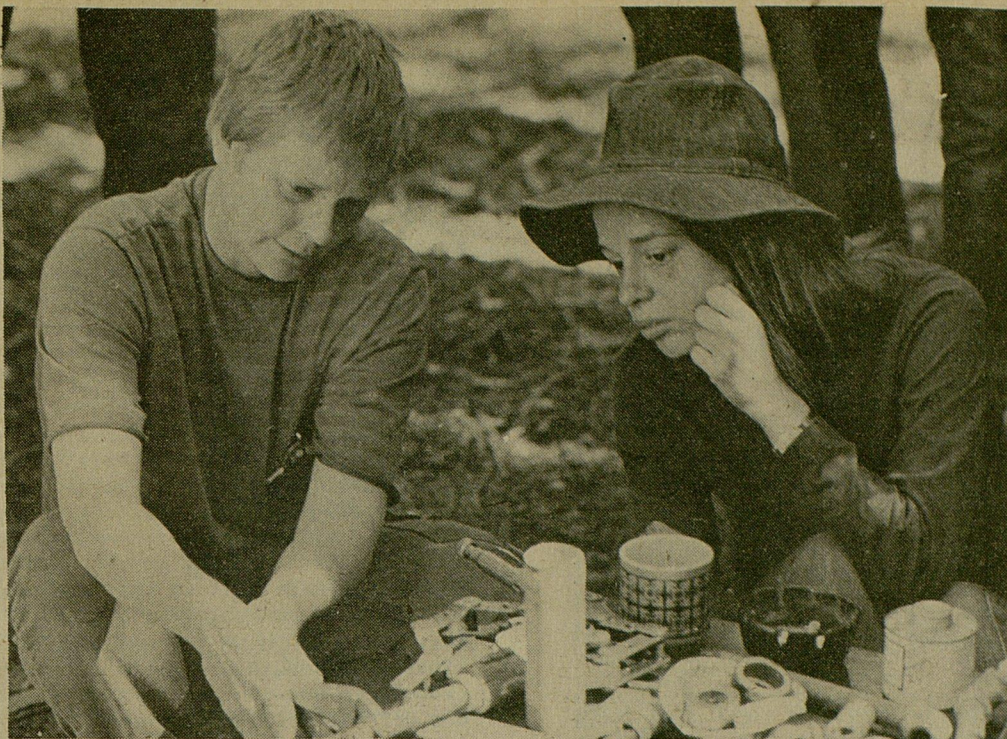
FESTIVAL RETROSPECTIVE: THREE POINTS IN TIME

The Country Women Festivals have been so important to me on a personal level, that I'm not sure if I could/would want to try to translate my experiences from a kind of journal response to a less subjective "article." What happened at the festivals, what happened in my life as a result of the festivals, and the changes in the feminist movement, all seem part of the cycle of the past three years. Process. Change. Journeys and connections.

The first festival was held at the Albion Community Center. Because of the great number of women from the Bay Area who arrived pretty much unexpected, simple survival mechanics began to dominate what was happening. Where were people going to sleep? How were they going to be fed? What about the toilets which kept flooding? I came up with two women I hardly knew, but we were fortunate enough to have arrived early, and found a place to stay. Almost as soon as the major hurdle of housing and some communal meals was resolved, a much bigger problem arose. The same separatist-non-separatist split which was dividing women all over the country, almost destroyed the festival. Many women who came up from the city, who had no idea of the kind of moral courage it took to plan an all women's dance in a small town like Albion, were angered that men were allowed to come to the crafts exhibits and films during the day, though the men were excluded from the evening programs. The festival had not been planned by and for lesbian separatists from the city; the festival was planned by Albion women, straight as well as gay, relatively unpolitical as well as radical feminists. It was planned as a chance to share not only with other sisters, but with the entire community they lived in, with their men friends and lovers and children, as well as their women friends and lovers and children. Although I came to the festival as a city person, as an outsider to the nascent country women's community, I felt really freaked out by what I perceived as the demands of some city women that the festival be converted to fulfill their expectations, without regard to the desires and needs of the women who planned it, without regard to the possible unpleasant consequences which the Albion women might face in their community after the festival. So many men, and women who came with men, were treated with hostility by city women. My growing feeling of affinity with the Albion

women, which began with the warm reception we received from Joanie and Harriet, increased enormously as I found myself defending the right of Albion women to have the kind of festival they wanted, regardless of whether it was the kind I necessarily would have chosen. But I felt frightened of making that political statement; I felt frightened of alienating women whom I saw as powerful in the women's community I lived in, in order to defend women whom I thought I would probably never see again. Most of all, I felt frightened that my political/moral decisions could be influenced by what might be politically expedient. After all, wasn't there a reason we were trying to build a new women's culture with new values? A number of women went back to the city that day, and although the festival calmed down some, there were still a lot of hurt feelings and tensions all the way around. I managed to get drunk at the poetry reading and stay sober at the dance.





Despite the strained vibrations and the hassles about food and housing, something strong and good was happening in this community and among many of the women who stayed at the festival. I don't know how to explain exactly what it was, I only knew that I wanted very much to be a part of it, that I wanted to live among these women in this community, and that I wanted to badly enough that before the festival was over, I had made arrangements with Judith, a woman from Berkeley whom I met at the festival, for us to go back to Berkeley and pack our stuff, and move back up to Albion for the rest of the summer.

How do I explain what it meant to me when Judith and Ellen, two women I hardly knew, both offered to stay in Mendocino for a week after the festival was over so that I wouldn't be stranded alone and frightened in a hospital in a strange town for a week, when the doctor at Ft. Bragg hospital scheduled me for emergency surgery the day after the festival. It was clear to me that much of the warmth, concern, and generosity which was shared with me around that incident, was generated from the feelings of sisterhood, of community born at the festival, and the word sisterhood meant something different to me from that day on.

The second festival reflected many of the personal and political (how do we separate those terms?) changes which we had all undergone in the interim. In the year between, the idea of a feminist magazine for women in the country, originating out of Albion, had blossomed from a wild idea of Jeanne's, to a reality which far exceeded our expectations. The magazine became a means of sharing our personal and political lives, of working with each other, of building a strong women's community. Though I had only lived in Albion a few months,

I had grown to love the women there so deeply that I still felt it was home far more than Berkeley ever was. The magazine was in part a means of continuing the sense of connection I felt with Albion.

The second festival wasn't just a festival of women from the country, but a festival of Country & Women, and it was clear that working on the magazine had not only provided close political/emotional ties for many of us, but had been an enormously helpful preparation for the kinds of planning which went into the festival. The haphazard sleeping and meals arrangements of last year were gone, and more importantly, the basic issue of women choosing to make space to be together without any men present, had been resolved. We had four days of being together in a beautiful campgrounds with facilities for communally prepared and shared meals, and the same cabin to sleep in for four nights, so we could get to know the women we bunked with. The astonishing number of workshops (chainsaws, carpentry, sheep-shearing, t'ai chi, self defense, massage, dance, poetry, music, etc.) was a testimony to the abundance of our developing women's culture. We were certainly not without problems, though. There were so many workshops scheduled simultaneously, with so little free time left between, that most of us felt frustrated at having to make choices between finding space to sit down quietly and talk, or going frantically from one workshop to another. The only community meeting where we could all discuss the problems of the festival was held on the last day, instead of being an on-going, daily occurrence. The workshops on women living with women, women living with men, and women living alone, had been designed so that women would have a safe space in which to

continued



discuss their lifestyle and sexuality; instead the three separate workshops simply made many women feel uncomfortable, feel as if they were being asked in a sense to label themselves. The feeling of alienation and polarity caused by this was not resolved completely, but few if any women felt the kind of bitterness of the previous year.

Despite the problems, most women felt extremely positive about the festival. The private campground was a wonderful place to gather, and it was incredible to have the privacy to be able to wander around naked and enjoy the sun, and not to have to feel the self consciousness about our bodies as most of us would automatically feel if men were in the vicinity. I was so blown out by not feeling self-conscious that I wore enormous red ski pajamas most of the time, not caring if they made me look "unattractive." I even felt safe enough to venture into a fat liberation workshop. There was so much exuberance and tenderness that most of us felt our defenses drop in all sorts of situations. I had a bad flare-up of a chronic circulatory illness, and my impulse was to hide in a dark corner of my cabin and not come out until I was completely better. My paranoia about being thought of as a "sickie" would ordinarily have taken over, but didn't this time. Betty and Jean hoisted my sleeping bag and me outside in the sunlight to a healing circle, where I let go of most of my embarrassment at "being sick again," and allowed the energy which other women were sending out, to reach me.

The festival was a time of trust and growth, of really getting to know new women, and greeting and being with old friends.

If the second festival gained from the experience of the first, the third festival continued this cycle of growth even more. One major political decision was to try to restrict the festival to almost entirely women who live in the country, so that even more women who had been isolated from support groups could experience the festival, and so that the festival would have a more coherent focus. Women came from Alabama to Alaska. Country*Women had become a national publication. Women who had read each other's articles and poems, who had seen each other's photographs and drawings, were finally able to meet each other. Many of us felt we already knew each other through the magazine, and there was a stronger sense of a common bond than in the previous two festivals. The politics of separatism became the subject of a workshop discussion, instead of becoming a spectre which again threatened to divide the whole festival. The issue of its being more important for us to keep our commitment to the festival's being an all-women's event than for us to be entertained by a band with one

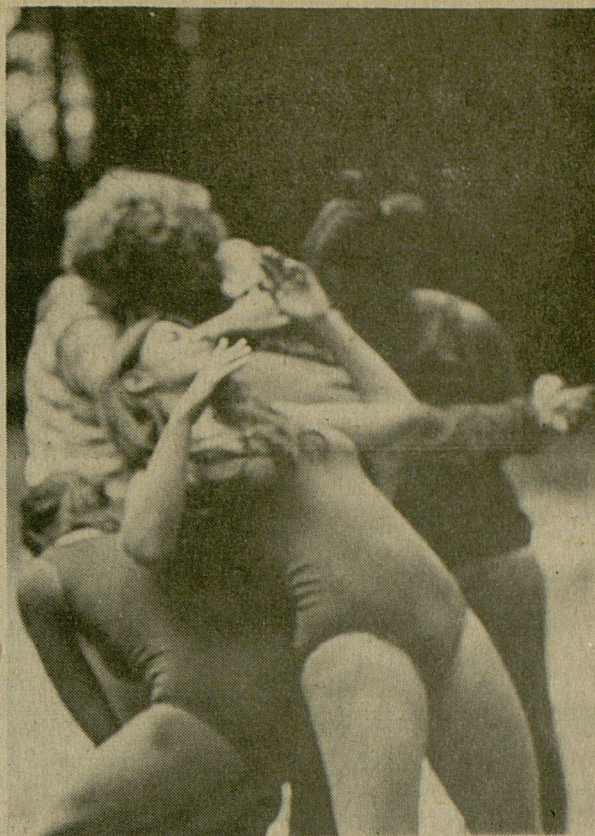


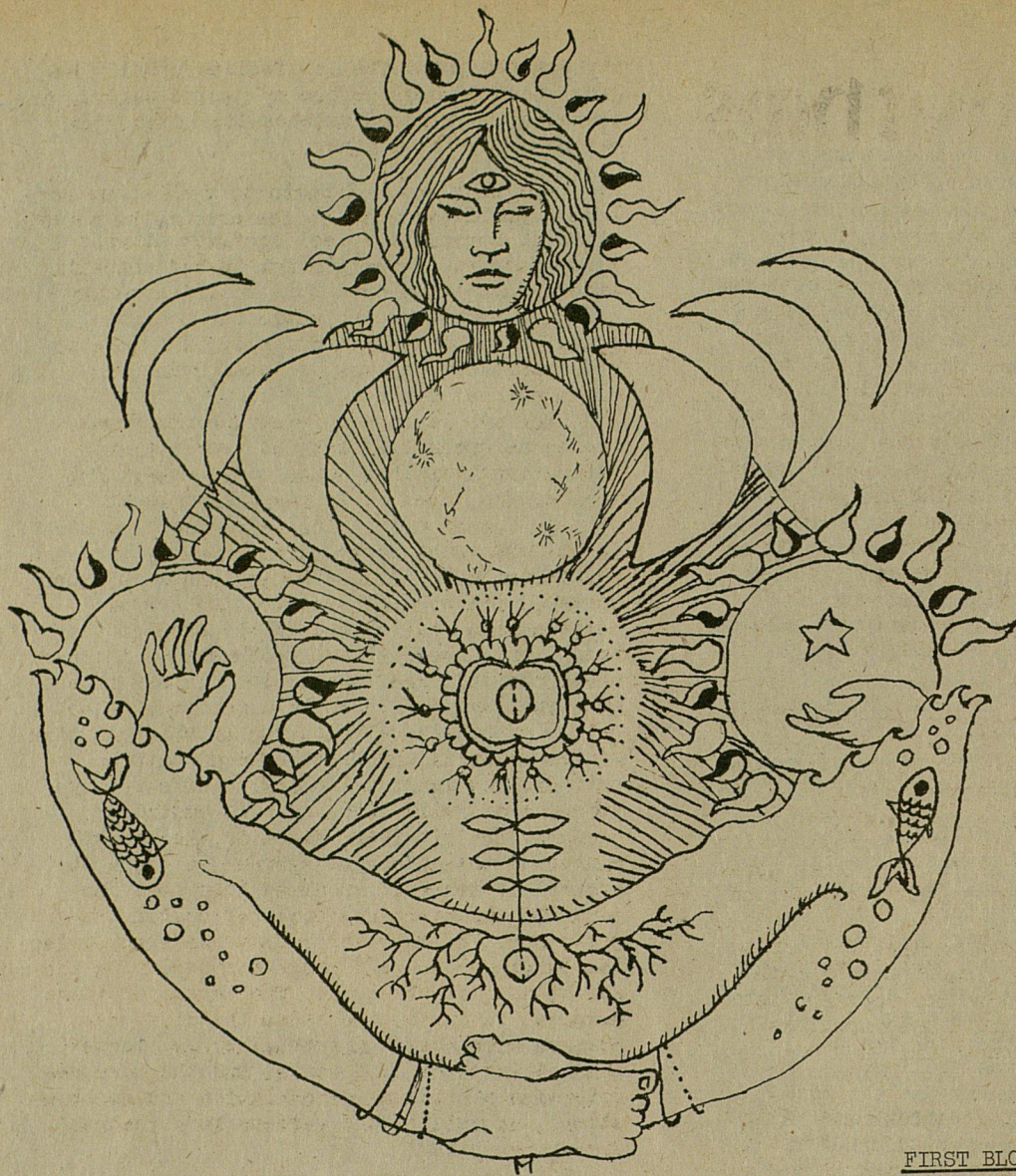
male musician was resolved in a sane and non-divisive way. Women refused to cut themselves off from one another, and the sense of freedom and strength that brought was indescribable. Instead of a huge controversy over the Gertrude Stein band, we had a singing circle which brought us all a lot of closeness. The problem of over-scheduling was dealt with, so that there was free time and fewer, longer workshops. There were fewer kitchen hassles, thanks to paper plates and better planning. About the only thing which did not go smoothly was childcare. With some solicitation, enough women did sign up, but many children did not feel especially welcome, and many mothers still felt that they were left with the brunt of the responsibility, especially during the evening programs. At a community meeting the last morning, it was suggested that for next year's festival, several women could choose to be a temporary "family" for each mother and her children, and would share the responsibility of those children for the duration of the festival. It felt as if whenever problems arose, women were making themselves more and more equipped to deal with them.

Instead of feeling conflicted, as I did at the second festival, between taking pictures, and really being at the festival, I came to the third one determined to capture as much of it as I could on film. But there was no way to be a spectator to what I was seeing. I shared in those moments in which women were connecting with each other and with themselves. I was on a meditation with my camera: my eye was taking in what my heart was feeling.

The sharing night Monday was the most emotionally and spiritually fulfilling experience that I can remember. Yo-te-he's music, Laura's T'ai Chi, Elsa's poems, Anne's presentation of the pipe as a gift from the city women to the country women - what was being shared was far more than art; each woman in that room shared a gift or herself, of openness, of love, of trust. There was no audience and no performers; no ego, just sharing in the most beautiful sense of that word. I have read my own poems perhaps sixty times in the past three years, and I have never felt so totally alive to my feelings, so totally willing to be vulnerable, to connect with the place in my soul from where the poems came, as I did that night. It was as if, for ten minutes of my life, I was given the very great privilege of feeling safe to be who I really am behind my walls, and I was moved beyond words.

On my way home from the festival, I told Carmen that I wasn't ready to leave Albion. I didn't; I carried the festival, Albion, with me, inside of me. I guess that's the fourth country women's festival: the one we all took home. ♀





FIRST BLOOD

There, unmistakable blood.
Not from a fatal liver disease -
that stunning first thought,
dead at eleven.
Remember the book that made this gore
a precious drop,
and me, a woman -
with no breast or softness,
or desire to be.

No longer one being,
I am parts to be lost to the earth.
Stained for one kind.
Red proof that I will not become a man.
I did not cause this wound.
It comes from within,
done to me without consent.

Still, the force is mine.
Call the blood magic -
set a rhythm to my power
and predict the coming mark.
My days are numbered now,
but I control the code.

BODY Rhythms

Rhythms have always greatly interested me, whether they be the rhythms of nature around me or my own body rhythms. So I began to take note of my cyclical changes in moods and feelings about my body, both emotional and physical; the focus being on my menstrual cycle and the myriad of changes my body goes through from one period to the next. I believe that seasonal changes as well as planetary changes influence my well being too, but charting the ups and downs that I felt directly related to my menstrual cycle seemed to be a good starting point. For some months, I've been recording my feelings from time to time. Only recently I began taking note of the day in my cycle as well.

July 19, 1973

".. this feeling of dissatisfaction with myself--Why? Not feeling creative, avoiding the dancing I love so much, no energy for yoga, tension in my lower back, sexual tension--blocking- repression-not letting go in order to enjoy all that I might. Do I avoid dealing with some big question when I am in this tense non-turned on state- this me I don't like and find hard to accept.

I feel as if I need something, but can't identify what- closeness? tenderness? Warmth? I feel vulnerable, scared to be close and yet closeness is the very thing I need now. Take another look tomorrow, Anne."

July 20, 1973

"..No energy and little acceptance of this void. Any of the activity my mind can create, my body can't perform (a walk, work in the garden, dancing, bicycling, yoga). If anyone were to see me now, they'd see through me. I'm like a clear glass. Not only do I not want to look at this side of me, but I don't want others to see me this way.

My body feels puffy, heavy, bloated, tender breasts, no appetite. The heat seems intolerable- I crave liquids and fruits, milk and yogurt. "

July 21, 1973

" pee-ed all night from yesterday's intake. This morning I awoke feeling alive, like the Anne I love, energy, elevated mood, excitement about today's projects, feeling very sexual, turned on in my body, wanting to dance, drew a beautiful mandala this afternoon. Anne is high again, and feeling creative and positive."

... and so it goes, the build up and then the release. One week in April was like this, in June it was 5 days, in August it lasted 8 days. The changes follow a pattern, movement towards, movement away, a circle, no beginning, no end- always something on the other side of

any defined point. The low feeling usually begins about 10 days before my period begins. An elevation in my mood reaches its height just before my period begins..

Where to now.. I begin to read about hormones and how women's bodies are at the mercy of their hormones. I feel conflict at what I find. Support- maybe I'm not in bad shape if other women experience this too. Anger- why can't we reach a point where our bodies function smoothly with our help. I'd like to share here some of what I found regarding our menstrual cycle.

We have learned to view our menstrual cycles as automatic. Nothing ever happens automatically in the human body; everything that occurs, does so in response to some stimulation or other. The sequence of events in the menstrual cycle is governed by the physiological processes taking place in other parts of the body. The control center of menstruation, is located at the base of the brain. This center (the hypothalamus) influences the different production centers of the menstrual system. There is a menstrual clock in the hypothalamus which regulates the timing of the menstrual cycle- the length between periods. The menstrual clock is affected by stresses of daily life and also emotional changes. The pituitary gland is the control center of the endocrine system; it sends it orders by messengers called hormones. The adrenal glands produce hormones called progesterone. The ovaries produce estrogen during the entire cycle, and progesterone during the second half of the cycle. The levels of these hormones in our bodies cause the different changes within each menstrual cycle. These changes vary for each woman. But the hormones determine the timing of ovulation and menstruation, as well as the various body changes during pregnancy.

The relationship of estrogen to progesterone plays a vital role in the different kinds of pre-menstrual symptoms and menstrual flow that each woman has. It is this relationship which I would like to dwell upon, since it varies so greatly from month to month, as well as in different women; and also because it seems to cause us the most discomfort. Because our cycles vary, it becomes difficult to pin-point what is normal. We hope to find consistency in our own cycles as well as in other women's. I'm beginning to believe that the only consistency for me is to be accepting of who I am each month at this time.

The Premenstrual Syndrome is a name given to the array of feelings and physical changes which women experience in varying degrees prior to the menstrual flow. Katherine Dalton points out that this syndrome has only been acknowledged for the past 15 years through clinical observation. Further biochemical study is being done now, which may prove or disprove her theories on the Premenstrual Syndrome.

Shortly after ovulation, the amount of estrogen in the blood decreases and the amount

continued

of progesterone increases. The amounts of estrogen and progesterone vary, but normally are almost equal just prior to menstruation. Women with only a slight variation between the two are generally free of menstrual discomforts and disorders, whether the estrogen level is higher or lower than the progesterone level. When the progesterone level falls markedly below the estrogen level, there may be varying degrees of premenstrual symptoms and menstrual cramps.

Dr. Dalton explains what this imbalance creates in our bodies. (It is at this point that many women taking the pill have unwanted side effects due to a further imbalance created by the wrong pill for them.) It is suggested that if, during the premenstrual syndrome, the ovaries produce insufficient progesterone for the uterus, some progesterone is taken from the other source--the adrenal glands--leaving them short for their production of other hormones. The balance of hormones is temporarily upset and may result in water retention in the tissues, imbalance of sodium and potassium, lowered resistance to infection and alteration of the blood sugar level. When women are treated with progesterone from mid-cycle to menstruation, premenstrual symptoms do not develop. It appears that the correction of the premenstrual syndrome is the correction of the water, sodium, and potassium imbalance; as well as the depression-irritability, lethargy tread. However progesterone is very risky to administer because of its many side effects, some of which may be severe.

Removing the extra water from the body has also been tried with drugs called diuretics, which increase the output of urine. Some diuretics also tend to remove the potassium as well as producing other side effects. They may relieve physical discomforts of bloatedness, but not depression, irritability, and lethargy. And they may even increase tension.

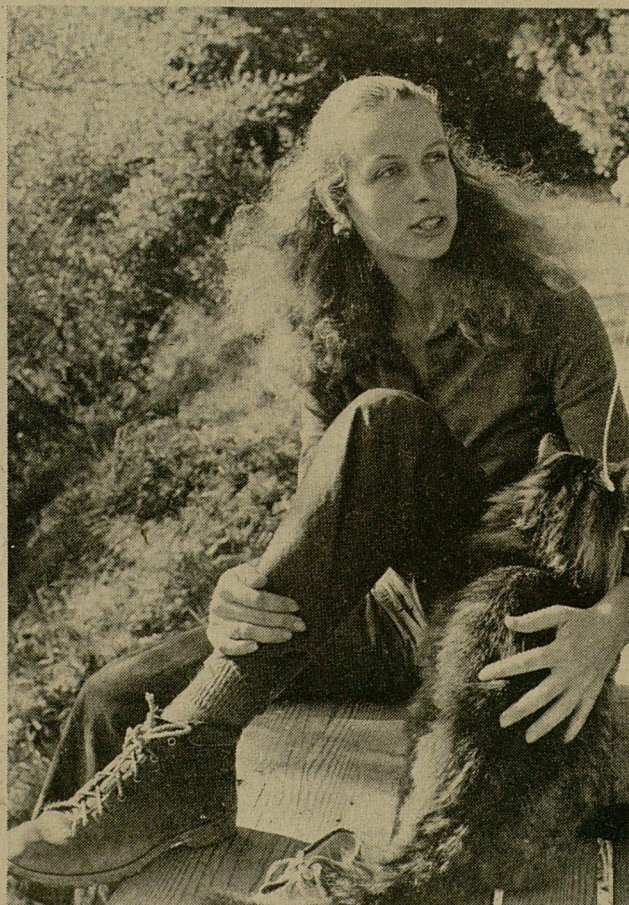
Our bodies are delicately set in their rhythms. An upset or change in one rhythm may alter another. So it is important that we take care when tampering with the mechanisms of our endocrine system. Taking in less fluid and or salt during the last half of the menstrual cycle seems to help many women. Drinking coffee or teas that act as diuretics in small amounts may actually help more than commercial diuretics. Adelle Davis: Let's Eat Right to Keep Fit has a readable explanation of the water, potassium and sodium balance in our bodies. Exercise and walking seem to inhibit the accumulation of fluid especially in our arms and legs. Many times this is the very thing we have so little energy to do. It would seem that a diet adequate in protein would help give a good supply of energy as well as iron. Grains and dairy products would furnish B Vitamins and calcium that are much needed due to the stress of the premenstrual days. Fruits and vegetables will not only supply adequate water, but also Vitamin C and potassium. An acceptance of this low energy level would also relieve the tension we build up by not liking who we are at this time in our menstrual cycles. Katherine

Dalton began work on her book so that she could enlighten everyone as to the causes of a woman's changing moods and feelings each month. Her hope was to clear up the notion that these feelings are neurotic. They are real as experienced by millions of women at different times in their lives. And yet far more time and money has been spent trying to solve problems such as infertility than investigating the common discomforts of the menstrual cycle. I, for one, needed to hear all of the support which Dr. Dalton attempts to give.

The Menstrual Cycle : Katherine Dalton

N.Y. Pantheon Books, 1969

Our Bodies, Our Selves : Boston Women's Health Collective
Simon and Schuster, 1973 ♀



MYTHS FOR MENSTRUATION

Margaret Mead and some other people spoke about lots of our modern day troubles arising from the lack of rituals and rites of passages. Apply this to the female body, womanly consciousness, man's experience of woman, and his anima. The first aspect of cyclical rite of passage for women that leaps to my mind is menstruation. There is one culture wherein the woman who menstruates is secluded from the rest of the community and in fact the men believe that if they were to gaze upon a menstruating woman they would die. Now this is ritual and supportive myth and at least is something. (Like the child who misbehaves to get at least some response in this case punishment-from her apathetic parents). Our modern day culture is lacking positive, supportive and nourishing rituals and myths for our menstrual realities- a reality that most women will confront with varying degrees of clarity thousands of times in their lives. . . A student of mine reported to me that after one class of yoga for women, she experienced her period without the agony that was usual for her. She questioned me whether that was due to the special postures she had newly learned and was practicing or the fact that she is "taking care of herself", doing something positive about her problem. I answered both-the ritual of yoga coupled with the attention to her own special menstrual reality- plus something else I did not realize at the time. I had mentioned in class that my last period began without me even noticing it-if it weren't for the sensation of warm blood trickling down my vulva and thighs. She told me that usually her periods were severely painful ever since she had gotten off birth control pills and after the first class her next period started without her realizing it until she saw her underwear. I'd mentioned this incident not to present some goal but to illustrate how the presentation of an alternative, a new myth deeply affected this woman's whole menstrual reality. All aspects of our sexuality are culturally contingent on the myths.

It didn't occur to me that menstruating was an expression of sexual self until I was pregnant. I was relating to my uterus in a new way now that it was fulfilled and freshly realized that the contractions I was feeling now were "cramps" just like I felt when I had my period.

Contractions or waves of my womb were starkly pleasureable and with conscious breathing and allowing energy flow my childbirth waves washed my girliness and my uptightness away to shore so that feeling smugly aphrodite I was born a woman along with my baby being born. This illumination shone onto the next obvious aspect of my sexuality heretofore unconscious as such - my menstrual mystique, my reality as a menstruating woman.

I began where I've re-learned to begin everything- my body. When I refer to body I mean all levels of me-mind/soul/feelings/body. I became aware of my breath when I had a period

- "cramps" were merely contractions and, as I knew from the experience of labor, contractions became crampings when insufficient oxygen or imbalanced breathing or unconsciousness occurred. Such a simple thing, the breath - yet I noticed that relaxed, conscious breath made the difference between pain and pleasure during menstruation. Menstruation became a flowing experience that I really began to turn on to, and begin to feel as orgasmic. Menstruation has since become a time of ritual - I appreciate all aspects of "being on the rag".

After I had a baby, my period was suppressed as is natural for nursing mothers. Counting the length of my pregnancy, I had had "amenorrhea" for three full years. This was three years in which no ovulation took place, no hormonal swing, and no period. I came to learn many things about my menstrual cycle reality during this time of being "outside" the experience. For one thing, I came to actually miss my periods and the flush emanating love ovulation experiences. I realized the womanliness that menstruation had given me, for now I felt adolescent again on one level.

When menstruating, most of us have at one time or another pretended to the world (and ourselves!) that nothing special or different was happening - you know, the tampax maiden in a white bikini archetype. In my home, everyone (Michael, Loi and Marc) knows that I have my period. They respect the space I sometimes create to perform my "purification" rituals. I put purification in quotes because the word implies that something is being made purer, i.e., it was dirty to begin with. That is not the meaning I intend. Other cultures allow the women to go to special huts for purification, but as the men held that there was something dirty (their own dirty anima), I am becoming convinced that the women just grooved on being able to get away from their families, children, husbands, other men, and be with each other. Here they would bathe together, chant, and reflect for a quiet time on their common and their unique natures. I welcome a three day period every twenty-eight days to do this. ♀



MOON'S cycle

When I lived in Mexico I was outraged that ten regular tampons cost \$1.50. For Mexican women that's a lot of money. Many of them look to Americans for patterns. They want self dignity, comfort and a beautiful style. I do too. I also strive for self sufficiency and ecological soundness. I was disturbed enough by the destruction of trees to actively seek alternatives to paper products. I was most infuriated at being dependent on male companies for "sanitary protection", "total freedom", "total comfort", and "confidence".

So I started making pads to catch my menstrual blood, narrower between my legs and longer than commercial "sanitary" napkins. I sewed together 4 layers of red felt but it wasn't absorbent enough. I stitched a layer or two of maroon cotton velour to either side of the felt and then completely enclosed those layers in slightly larger pieces of velour. Voila! A royal blood red, soft and luxurious menstrual pillow.

Each menstrual cycle I flow heavily for a few days and lightly for two or three. On those light days I felt my napkins irritating so I gradually custom made tampons. The first I made were too long. Then I measured my vagina with my middle finger and cut 1/2 inch thick soft sponge my length. I covered the sponge with some of the same maroon velour and sewed a strong string to one end for easy removal. Actually, when one is saturated it starts oozing its way out of me gently. It's an improvement on a commercial tampon which hurt me as it worked its way out. To insert my tampon I put my finger on the muscles in the pelvic sling to relax my vagina and with one or two fingers work it into place.

Next month I'm going to use an uncovered half of a natural sponge a woman friend I live with gave me. That I'll be able to wash and boil clean like I do my more elaborate blood catching creations. Also, like my covered sponge tampon, it will absorb more easily if it's moistened first.

Seem strange that I touch my vagina so much? A few years ago I didn't. I slowly discarded my false modesty. I went to a free self-examination class at the San Francisco Women's Health Collective Center, bought a speculum at cost, learned how to use it and hooray! Saw my cervix for the first time.

Now I look at and touch my genitals, my cervix, and my vagina. I also taste and smell my vaginal juices and my menstrual flow, because I enjoy myself and want to watch out for my health. One month my menstrual blood tasted and smelled foul. The uterus is not an organ of elimination so I fasted and liberally drank blood purifying teas. The next month my flow tasted delicious again.

I needed something to keep all this paraphernalia in, I'm into soft bags for dome and yurt living and for traveling so I made a bag of the same deep red velour. Then I was inspired to embroider my/yours too, my sister, reproductive system in as much detail as I could learn. It's still in progress since I'm still learning how intricately wonderful we are.

In the days when I related sexually to men, before I realized how wonderful it is to love and be loved by a woman, I also kept in my bag my basal thermometer and a calendar on which I noted my every morning temperature that I took with my basal thermometer before I got up (even to piss). My menstrual days I marked with a red dot. My most fertile day, according to the recurrence of the sun moon angle that corresponded with my time of birth, I marked with purple. I figured out my angle, 2.2 or one hour after the new moon, à la the charts in Natural Birth Control. If I could figure my ovulation from feelings in one of my ovaries and/or from my basal thermometer readings I marked it with blue. There's a drop in temperature at ovulation. I also noted my sexual life. One month I received a man's semen in me 24 hours before my most fertile day. I respect the possibility that semen lives 48 hours so I felt I had risked becoming pregnant. With three children and the need to explore more of myself I knew I didn't want another child and I felt I had no subconscious motivation for conceiving. So I did mind control and believe that's why I didn't get pregnant. I menstruated 6 days later, earlier than I expected. Hmm, expectations!?

I want to menstruate every full moon. I also want to be centered. I think if I menstruated every full moon and if I ovulate on the new moon when my most fertile day is, I would have a centered, cyclical rhythm in tune with the rhythm of my friend, the moon. Perhaps through mind control this will be possible.

Once as I climbed our ceremonial round breast mound hill I started flowing to meet the moon as it full. I didn't go down for my menstrual bag of blood catching goodies. Rather I removed my clothes and celebrated my power, my womanness, my goddessness. My deep rich blood streaked my loins. It was all the decoration I needed as I danced the night away, musicking with my people.

The following days were hot so I went and worked naked washing off my blood when it caked and I was uncomfortable. Anyone else who was uncomfortable with the sight and sign of my reproductive power had to deal with it himself/herself.

I realize what a long way I've come from being so embarrassed that I was menstruating, that in my pre-tampon days I couldn't tell the young man I later married why I didn't want to/couldn't go swimming. I was so ashamed of my menstruation, the sight and smell, that I had to protect myself and everyone else from them, as well as from my other natural smells. ♀

O freedom is sweet
Power is wonderful

Water (feminine): which submits
and eventually
fills
each abyss (I Ching tells us)
...Oh but what of:
Water (feminine): when,
moved by reaction to
outside forces
of wind
of earthquake
of cold

rears up in great waves
asserts
moves and scrapes and glances
great glaciers
across the land
To reshape the whole earth!



*Ezekiel saw the wheel
way up in the middle of the air
Ezekiel saw the wheel
way in the middle of the air.*

I wake in the morning, smell the sweet air, splash my face with cold water, and go out into the garden. The full Pisces moon is setting in the west, having slipped low over the southern mountains. I pick some tomatoes and beans. I throw feed to the chickens and collect their eggs. As a Virgo sun rises high into the sky, I split some wood, carry it to the cook stove and start the fire. I cook the eggs, tomatoes, and beans in a fine omelette for breakfast. So begins the cycle of my day, and the day cycles around me.

The first cycle of my existence is my breath; it brings fresh air to my body and takes stale air away. The yogis say it renews my life-spirit. My breathing is actually part of the energy cycle, which is the basic cycle of life on this planet. My garden plants, sopping up water, and basking in the sunshine, are part of it too. These plants, using their own special magic, take light energy from the sun and carbon dioxide from the air and water from the earth. They split the carbon dioxide molecule, release oxygen into the air and build the carbon atoms into a chain, adding on atoms from the water to make simple sugars. The chemical bonds between the carbon atoms of the sugar hold the sun's energy; the light energy has been converted to chemical energy.

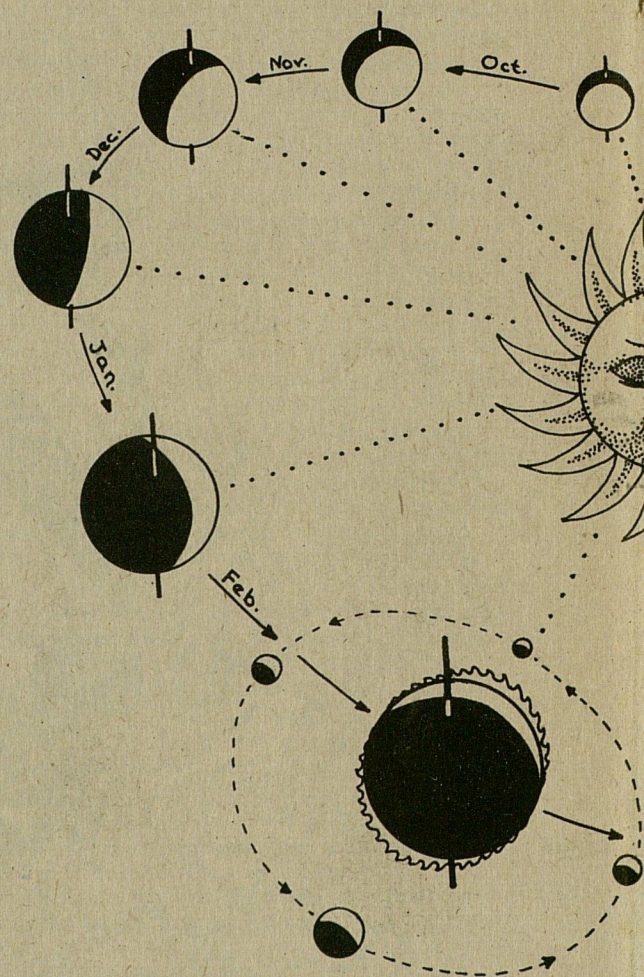
When I breathe and eat, I reverse the process; I complete the cycle. I take oxygen and food into my body. The cells of my body "burn" the food; they break the carbon bonds and oxidize the carbon to form carbon dioxide. In the process of breaking the sugar apart much chemical energy is released and used to drive all the other chemical reactions of my cells. This is how I live and move and tend my garden and write this article.

The sun, source of all energy on earth, cycles around me by day and by season, passing through the signs of the Zodiac. Today the summer sun flies high overhead, the day is long and warm. The earth has seasons because the axis on which it rotates, is not perpendicular to the plane of its orbit around the sun. If it were perpendicular we would have no seasons, and the length of the day would always equal the length of the night. The axis is tilted at a 23° angle, and sometimes we in the Northern Hemisphere are tilted towards the sun. We pass close to the plane of light that emanates from the sun's center, and we pass through daylight longer than we turn away from it.

As the earth moves around the sun, it stays tilted in the same direction. On March 21 it comes to a place in its orbit where, for a moment, its axis is perpendicular to the plane of its orbit around the sun; its tilt is neither towards nor away from the sun. At this point,

we are at fall equinox: the length of the day equals the length of the night; during the day the Pisces sun makes a diagonal line across our sky.

Then the earth continues around the sun, tilting away from it: days are shorter than the nights; the Sagittarius sun rises low in the southern sky; the Northern Hemisphere grows cold. When the North Pole is tilted as far from the sun as possible, on December 21, it is winter solstice, the shortest day of the year, the longest night. After winter solstice, the days lengthen, the sun passes higher in the sky. Because it takes the earth a long time to heat up, our weather continues into winter, but the



solar stage is set for spring.

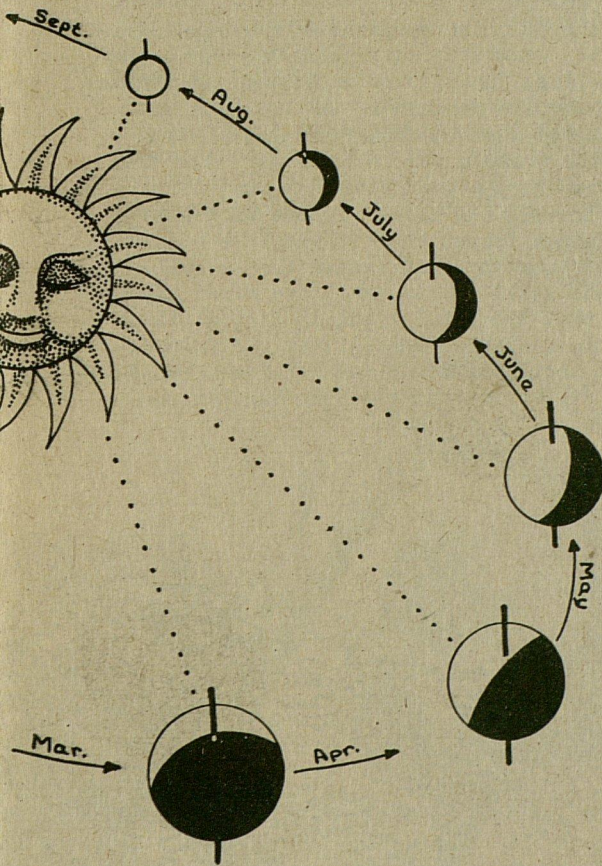
After my breakfast, I set the sprinkler to watering the garden. The water comes to me from a clear creek that runs down the mountain, jumping and shouting to the river; the river runs to the sea. Sun shines on the sea, water evaporates into the air and forms clouds, which blow back over the land, and snow themselves out onto my mountain. Sun melts the snow and the water runs down to me. Once again the sun provides the energy to make the wheel turn. (My plants shout "thank you" and so do I.)

Garden tended, I take some dried weeds, some chicken shit, and my food garbage and add them all to the compost heap. From the finished compost heap I shovel rich decomposed material

into a wheel barrow, bring it to the garden, spread it around the pumpkins. They will make a fine pie for Thanksgiving. The wheel turns again

In the evening, it grows chill, so I light a fire. Like my food, the fire is possible because of photosynthesis. Trees take their energy from the sun, convert the radiant energy to chemical energy, and it is released as heat when the wood is burned. Carbon dioxide taken in by the plants is released in the burning. Oxygen, given off by the plants, is used by the fire.

When I step outside I see that the stars are beginning to fade as Pisces and a full moon



rise together. I see the moon as an instrument of cycles within cycles. The moon orbits around the earth. Half of it is in sunlight, half in darkness. At different times in its circle we see more or less of its lit side. When the moon is on the opposite side of the earth from the sun, we see all of its lit face; the moon is full. So a full moon is a night moon; it rises as the sun sets; it sets in the morning. Since it is opposite the sun in our sky, the full moon is in the opposite astrological sign from the sun. When, in its orbit around the earth, the moon is between the earth and the sun, its dark side is turned towards earth; it is a new moon. The new moon rises with the sun and sets with it, and is in the same astrolog-

ical sign as the sun.

The moon exerts a gravitational pull on the earth, as the earth whirls around through its day and its night. It pulls the earth out of shape, pulls on the seas and causes the tides. The sun also pulls on the earth, but to a lesser degree. When the sun and the moon pull together at new moon, or opposite one another at full moon, the tide is greater; the highest and lowest tides occur around the full moon, and especially around the new moon.

The moon seems to affect the very air around us; maybe it changes the magnetism of the planet. The gravitational force it exerts on the earth actually makes us lighter in weight when it is overhead, especially when it's aligned with the sun, as at new moon. Plants respond to the cycle of the moon: when planted at full moon they seem to grow more vigorously; some say that root crops prosper when planted when the moon is new. Animals respond to its cycle, becoming more active at full moon. In some ancient past it evolved that a woman's menstrual cycle be timed to the movement of the moon. I feel the menstrual cycle as an incredible tide that sweeps me along. The whole rhythm of my body cycles with that cycle. It causes changes in the levels of many different hormones in my body, and in the level and distribution of various minerals in my body. Throughout the month there are changes in my muscle tension, in the size of my breasts, in the amount of water my body retains. My moods, my sense of well-being, the way I feel about my body, my feelings of love and hate and trust ride with that cycle, as do my feelings of spirituality and of being centered. In fact, my menstrual cycle is much more than the building up and breaking down of the lining of my uterine wall; it is all of these things combined to make of me a person changing from day to day, but coming 'round to myself again, consistent over the course of time. I am learning to embrace this cycle because it compels me to flow with it; and because it helps to know, in the hard and painful part of the month, that I will cycle around into the high times again.

As I watch the moon and the stars, and think these thoughts, I feel another cycle within myself; the life-energy that flows from the universe flows through me, renewing me, and in turn being renewed by me, flows out to the universe again. Perhaps this cycle is the composite of all the other cycles that turn around me. The rhythm of them all is very sustaining; it gives guidance and meaning to my life. I have a sense of belonging to a whole, of gliding, rather than bumping along, of moving along the right path; I am held in a fine web of which I weave a small part. ♀

*The big wheel run by faith
and the little wheel run
by the grace of God
a wheel in a wheel
way in the middle of the air.*

Red. Red tide. Out of season. With the moon of foghorns. Tired and low and heavy. White moon changing from full to empty. A period of days. She could see, white moon, legs, between, the red tide, flowing out. She knew now stops, only to lie still on the sand, watch the red stream flow out of her and rush to join the sea water. Contaminate everything.

She was wounded. A woman and so wounded. And the scar did not disappear. When she was very young, she thought she had been broken. That was how the scar came. The long and very deep scar. She was afraid to let other people know about her scar. Embarrassed. Afraid to ask. Always she would hide it. Try to heal the wound with her fingers, try to knit the skin together where it was broken. She would feel better then. But the scar did not ever disappear.

She was not the only one broken. All girls were. All the girls she knew. And they said even the others.

They were broken so that they could have babies. When she was twelve years old, she bled because she didn't have a baby. The wound opened up and bled. "My baby is crying because it didn't get born," she said. Red tears that would not stop for days. She understood it would be like that, her life as a woman, with a wound that opened and closed. Opened and closed.

Lying on the sand, she watched the wound open, tried once again to knit the skin together. Still, it worked and didn't work. The red tide ran through her fingers like sand, like blood.

The red tide left her with a sadness like good-bye. The possibility of new life, gone forever. She felt, every month, cheated. But having real children, she could not imagine. Flesh developing inside her. Moving with the pulsation of her heart. Growing. Couldn't imagine. Even the thought of cells dividing inside of her, dying inside of her. Formed in the marrow of her bones. A joke, divine and demonical. Beyond her control.

Changing her into an object. Like a violin case, a container for all the beautiful music. But only the container. She had nothing to do with the music, within. She could be lost, die, and somehow the violin would find a new case. Begin the song again. A new song. A different song. It didn't matter. So either her body would carry a child, a small violin, or it wouldn't. And it hadn't.

When she herself was a child, she wanted a dozen children. As if childbirth was like going up to a doughnut counter and ordering. A nice round number. One dozen, please.

When she was older, she decided on four children. Enough to fill up a house. Keep her young, forever, and not lonely.

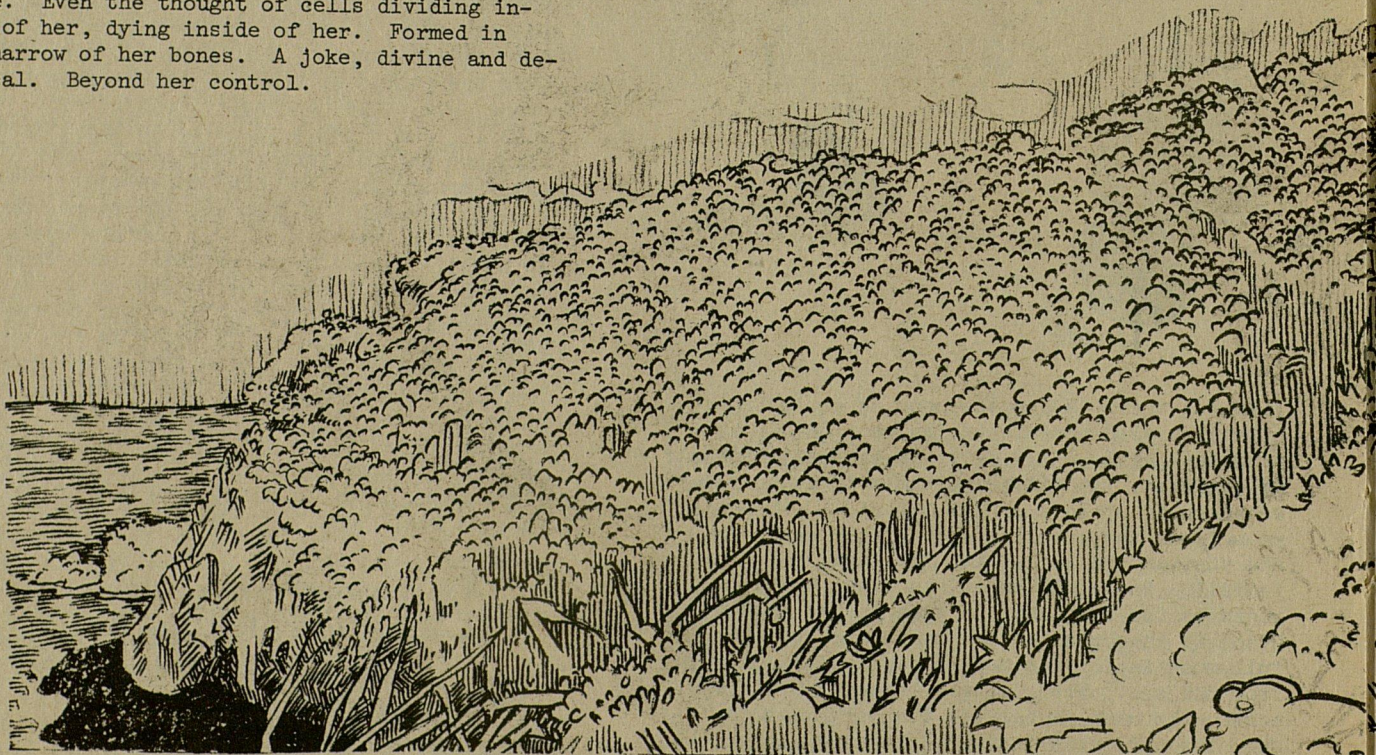
Then two children, one of each. At least to follow the wisdom of Noah.

But the children, they never happened. Were never loaded into the Ark. Every month they gave

a signal, she felt the movement of the egg entering the tube, like a voice echoing through a tunnel, whispering, "now". She would pretend not to hear it. Only the container, the case for all this. Relieved when the whisper stopped, knowing the voice would never be born now. She could have silence, for just a little longer.

With horror, she thinks, where will come a time when women forget what it was like to have babies, not know they can create them at all.

She was still on the land, the first time she'd had that thought. Lying in a room filled with stainless steel. Hard silver everywhere, glaring at her. She could see her face, reflected in the silver instruments, the handles on



doors. Her face. Looked pale. Not distinguishable from the white walls, sheets all around her. No one saw her face. A blur. Antiseptic. Someone, a face, picked up a silver instrument. Aimed. Fired, or, stabbed. She felt the pain of silver. Sword of bullet. The pain of steel. Hard and mechanical. No answer to her own movements. Her muscles locked around the instrument. Tried to force it out. Block it. But stainless steel had a will of its own. And she did not.

For spite, for escape, she imagined herself leaving the rooms, the halls, with a trail of her blood. Deep red stains on the white walls, the stainless steel. Deep red stains that would never wash off. And all the blurred men and women, frenzied, running after her, with rags and sponges.

She cannot remember now, whether the trail was really left, or whether it was only just imagined. It was all a bad dream. At the end, they gave the patient, her, colored candy buttons and toys. Trying to turn it into a child's game of doctor and nurse.

"Take one of these pink buttons every 28 days, and then you take the white ones. and then again, the pink." or "This fits in like so, can you do it?" or "Perhaps you'll like this one. It seems to be the favorite. Most effective."

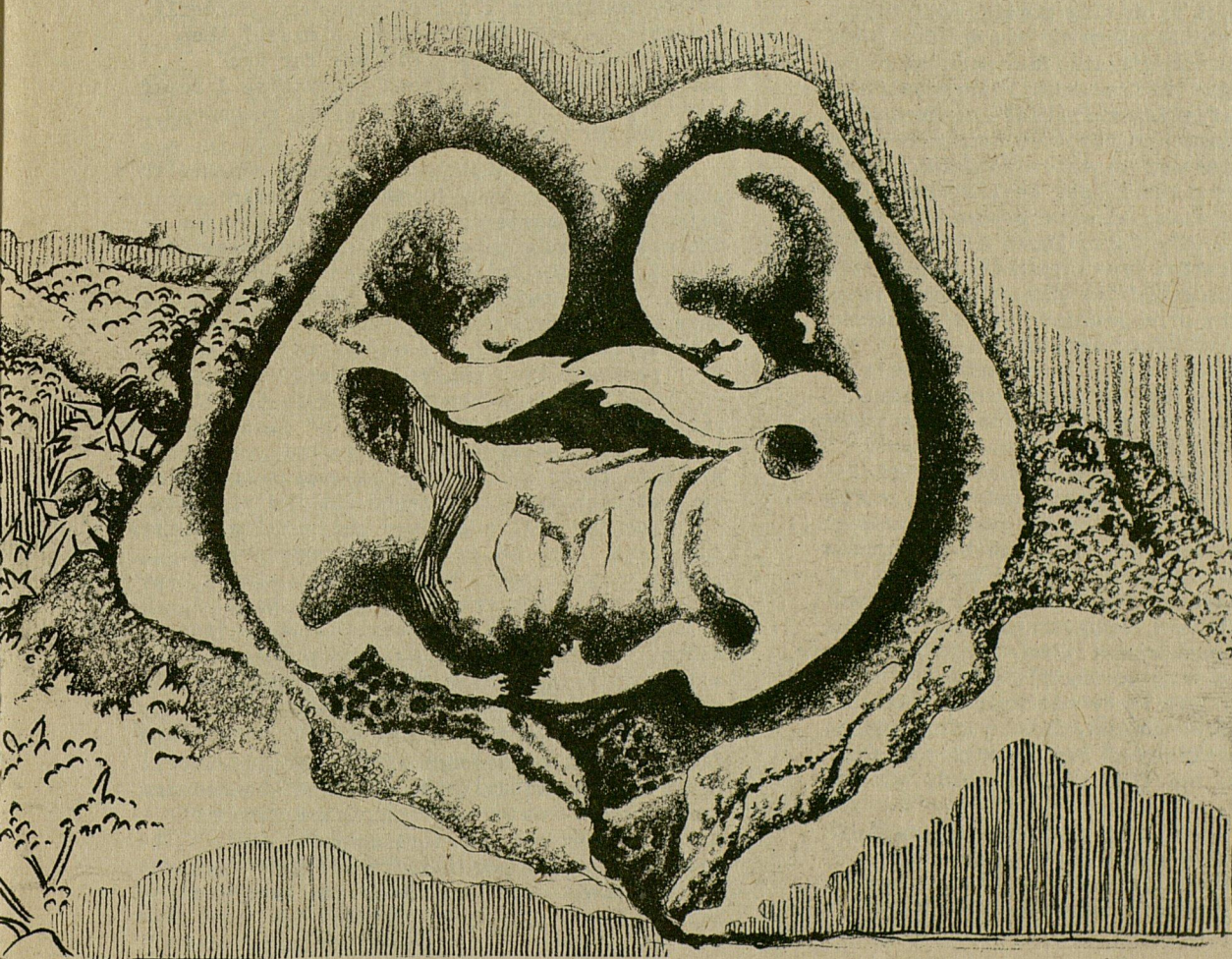
All through teeth, smiles.

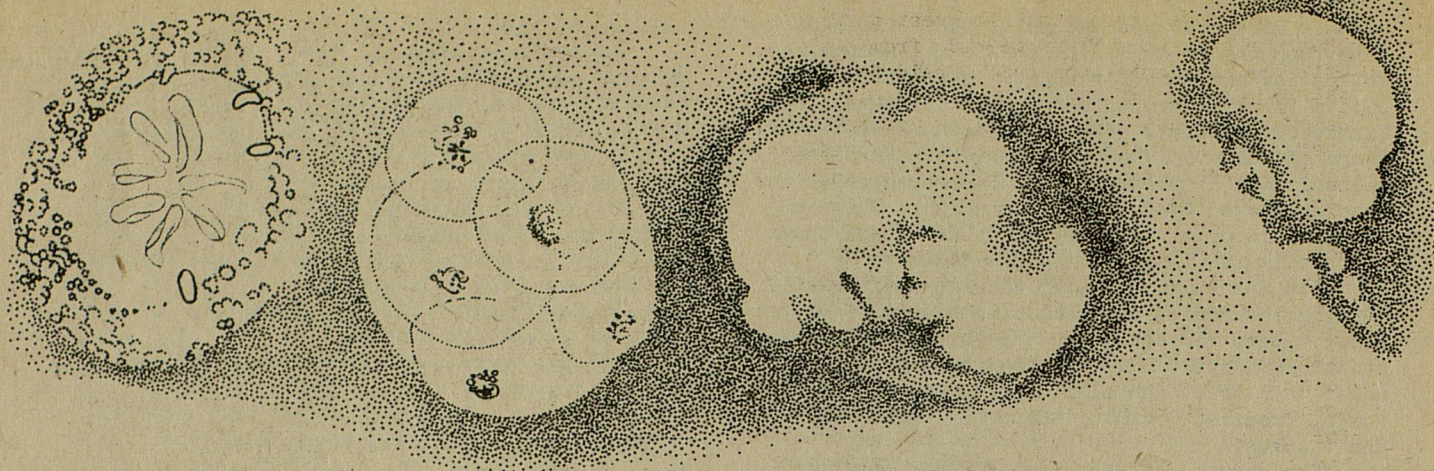
She began to feel her womb, turning into the same stainless steel, an antiseptic blur. Her mouth came open, and she said, "There will come a time when women forget what it was like to have babies, they will not know they can create them at all."

Her voice, (it must have been shrill, womb-suffering, what they call, hysterical) her words had made the teeth, the smiles, stop. The hands put down the buttons and toys.

"Maybe," they said, "you'd like to think about it, decide some other time."

And she turned, her footsteps sounding down the stainless steel corridors, down the stainless steel elevator, through the shiny silver doors. She listened to her footsteps, walked, until she could feel the wind, something real, putting its arms around her and leading her away from the metallic glare of all the medicinal eyes. ♀





Home-Grown Babies

"Woke in the morning to noticeably bigger breasts. I'm pissing more frequently, get up in the middle of every night. Exhausted right after dinner. Nauseous and headachy when get up from bed. Find myself walking around feeling very high ... Period due- slight cramps- no blood. Sitting on the shitter in a state of ecstatic fatigue. Please let it be, please let it be. Decide, just in case, not to take any wine or dope until find out for sure ... I'm sure. Looks like George's birthday celebration has a long-term souvenir!"

These are some of the thoughts from the first four weeks of a journal I kept throughout pregnancy and after childbirth. I'd like to share some of the important moments and learning in a more personal orientation than you'll find in books. This is a supplement only to the basic information you'll find elsewhere. I would strongly recommend that if you find yourself pregnant and are planning to carry it through, read and learn as much as possible. Being informed about the enormous changes and developments in your body and about the process of childbirth is your biggest asset for a well and happy pregnancy and a high, unfrightened labor. (See booklist). Beware however, of the very straight paternalistic books that tell you the whole trip is for the doctors to handle and you, little girl, will have a million miserable trips to go through but we'll save you. That propaganda is harmful and false.

Another body signal that you're pregnant is a need to eat small amounts frequently. This gets increasingly necessary as you get bigger and simply don't have the room to

digest much. I was immediately drawn to fresh fruit and raw vegetables, nibbling constantly from the garden. I also had to eat first thing in the morning or I'd feel nauseous. Suddenly I wanted to take better care of myself than ever before; whatever I did was for two people's benefit. So I read everything I could about diet and nutrition and would recommend that you do the same.

I emphasize diet both for your own health's sake and because many birth and lifetime defects are caused by insufficient diet for the mother while baby's in the womb. Diseases travel down the fallopian tubes directly to the baby, even though co is well protected in many ways. Staying healthy works together with a centered mind and an easier childbirth. Your pregnant time can be high and wise if you help it with a happy body. More than likely you'll experience a fair share of discomfort, in the later stages especially; but you can minimize these to the growing-uterus-squashing-your-stomach type, and leave out the sickness.

Keeping well exercised and working is very important. Just be sure not to over-strain. Listen to your body. Remember that simply sitting still you are working very hard. A well-exercised body will have a much easier labor, for your muscles will be toned. Walk a lot. It's especially good for a small pelvis as it gets the pelvic muscles strong and pliable. Rest is equally important. Everything feels bad without enough sleep and protein. I found a fluttering inside and light-headedness is often not enough protein. Often lack of exercise gets read as needing more rest because it makes you feel tired. Know what you're doing- and exercise if you know you haven't been.

In general, you can truly rest assured that the baby is well protected from external accidents. Don't be afraid to do whatever feels alright- jumping and playing baseball and dancing- as long as you have the energy yourself. Fluid suspension. Packed away in that ocean, sweet fetus will withstand most anything.

Pregnancy is a time of incredible consciousness-raising. You are beginning a relationship of such intimacy that two people are literally one. Your mind can fill with imagined horrible situations as well as times of heavenly clarity. I mention this because it is real even if infrequent, and needn't be frightening. You are not strange for having thoughts of violence and destruction and murder about you and the baby. My daymares came in many forms- usually involving knives and the police with great harm done to one or both of us. These are results of mixtures of fear of all the unknowns about childbirth and children, an enormous sense of protection, hormonal changes of a tremendous quantity, role changes, self-image changes, the parts of your consciousness that perhaps don't want the pregnancy. Almost all pregnant women share these terrible visions. I can only advise that when these images come in, let them in long enough to recognize them as poison your mind is excreting, and then let them go. If they are allowed to roll through without denying them, your mind will keep much clearer and more open for the prevailing joyous images. It is the same for all the worries about labor, especially for a first-timer. Express them, prepare yourself for them, and let them pass.

Your normal hormonal balance is being tossed about. Your emotions will definitely go through fast changes, sometimes minute to minute, sometimes month to month. Never in any other natural way does a body change so drastically in such a short period of time. It feels very much like a young child's way of knowing the depths of misery and heights of ecstasy within the hour.

Keeping your mind environment healthy is as important as your body's. Your state of being affects the unborn child. Try whenever possible to avoid upsetting situations, to not dwell on your worries, to work at staying high and centered. The people you live with can play a very important part here. Pregnancy for me was a time of more consistent centeredness than ever before.

Near the end of term, however, I got very scattered and afraid because I didn't have everything ready early enough. For the sake of well-being, have everything you'll need for labor and the first several days of life with baby ready a good month at least before your due date. I didn't get home from a cross-country trip until less than a month before she was due, and then it turned out she was born two weeks early. I was panicked about having only that short time to prepare the home nest (getting her cradle built, winter firewood chopped, etc.) and to prepare the birth

house down the road with all the necessary supplies and comforts. She was to be born down near the bottom of our nine-mile dirt road as it was already raining, making the road undriveable should I have needed to get anywhere. I also hadn't been able to reach my midwife to make arrangements. Get yourself all set up in leisure time and let your last month be calm and prepared. There's a list of labor supplies at the end of the article.

I found myself thinking about death and believe this is another natural preparation. It is remotely possible that you and/or the baby could die in childbirth wherever you are delivering. How wide can your mind go to accept this? In religious parts of Mexico, women who die in their first childbirth are destined for a pleasant, sunny aztec heaven. They are regarded as minor deities, fingers and hair being kept as charms.

I strongly encourage every child-desiring woman to look into natural childbirth, whether at home or in the hospital. To supplement your reading about this, I emphasize a few points. Every medicine you receive is given in quantity proportionate to your body size. The child gets this dosage many times larger than co's size. The effect on co's heart, lungs, brain, senses is dulling to such an extent that in many cases it does irreparable damage. Babies get traditionally slapped by the doctor, a most brutal beginning just out of the perfect womb, because they are so drugged they can't breathe properly on their own. Shyela popped (gave a tiny cry) when just her head was born. She was wide-eyed and alert five minutes after birth. I am convinced that a large part of the postpartum blues syndrome is the shock of having been disconnected from your own labor process, and it's too much for the consciousness to grasp. I had to work harder than ever before in my life, with some periods of very intense pain. But the experience of being in that cosmic realm, that in touch with tremendous miraculous forces, is not worth missing unless there are serious medical reasons.

I further encourage you to prepare yourself enough with knowledge so you can treat yourself to the lovingness and openness of home and close friends. Most hospital procedures are for the doctor's convenience, not yours. To do what it takes to labor requires total unselfconsciousness, because you're going to be out there farther than you can imagine. This is not the situation for a sterile environment. Find out about midwives in your area. Call women's centers. I think it is very important to have someone around who knows well what is going on step by step. Probably the greatest function my midwife performed was to say to me, after twelve hours of labor with still a long way to go, "Everything's fine." But be prepared for no midwife just in case. Know your basics. Work with someone all through your pregnancy who knows as much as you about labor. When your uterus is working so hard that the blood leaves your brain to help the uterus, you'll need that person to remind you what you know.

continued

One of the main points I want to make is that with all the new literature on natural childbirth, I think the teachings about how to minimize the pain leave out the reality of the pain you might experience. Because I was in such good condition, and people I'd talked to had had easy childbirths, and the books I'd read had said all these exercises and knowledge will eliminate pain, I hadn't been prepared for the intensity I did experience. I'd expected to whiz right through. You can stay on top well enough, but do not be shocked by the power you will be riding.

However you're going to deliver, visit an obstetrician a few times to make sure everything's doing well. Probably the hardest part of this trip is finding a doctor who doesn't leave you sobbing after every visit because of a real lack of understanding of your experience. If at all possible, find a woman. I usually left my appointments feeling depressed, exhausted and traumatized at being so depersonalized and unsatisfied about my anxieties. Treated clinically instead of compassionately. Most women experience maltreatment by condescending, paternalistic o.b.'s and wonder why they feel so depressed and uninformed. Stay strong! It is necessary to get a report on progress since abnormalities can usually be taken care of if found in time. Only 4% of deliveries have difficulties and almost all of these can be determined beforehand. Know your blood type because a woman with Rh negative could be in serious trouble. Don't let the doctor give you chemical pills--you can get what you need much more safely through proper diet and a few natural supplements.

Be especially careful of viruses in the first trimester as all formation takes place then. Likewise, stay away from drugs, coffee, alcohol, cigarettes which cause harm to the developing fetus.

In late pregnancy, bigger discomforts come. The growing uterus literally squashes the lungs, stomach, intestines, until you can hardly breathe sometimes. Your heart is working twice as hard at the same time. Eat tiny amounts at a time. Rest. Exercise. Everything is enormously altered. To alleviate body pains, keep your spine in line, your pelvis especially in balance--not tipped. Your legs may occasionally lose circulation from the pressure. Massage to get the blood running. Massage in general. Harden off your nipples by handling and massage.

There's many theories on love-making. Some say keeping away from intercourse and orgasm in the first trimester helps prevent miscarriage. Other than that, whatever feels comfortable is fine all the way up to the last few weeks if you're concerned about early contractions, or all the way to labor if you want, as long as there has been no spotting or loss of the mucous plug. You and your partners must be very clean to keep any infections from the birth canal. You'll probably find a big change in your sexual appetite and in your body's sensitivity, especially your breasts.

You'll be peeing incredibly frequently as the bladder gets squashed smaller and smaller and can hold only a tiny amount of urine.

Some things about size. The uterus grows first - then the baby. Being big early doesn't necessarily mean a big baby. Generally, your healthy body will not produce an offspring too big for you to bear. If you're a small woman, an early childbirth is more likely. Also true if you have short menstrual cycles. The opposite applies to larger women. Your breasts will grow fast. Support them, otherwise they can weigh you down and get forever stretched.

There is definitely a certain look in a pregnant woman's eyes - the life light from within shining through. Once when I was just two months along and totally unshowing, I thought, an older woman at the farmer's market smiled and said, "are you in the family way, dearie?" At times I wanted to be in a world of nothing but pregnant women because of that emanation.

Take a trip to the ocean for an experience of connectedness. Inside you is that same ocean. There is a very early fetal stage where a fish and human look alike. The sea sent me dancing in unified joy. A floating spirit reincarnates. Formless becomes form.

Moments of amazement happen regularly. Suddenly in the twenty-fourth week, my milk started dripping. It felt like orgasm and urination and ejaculation. Every once in a while you wake up in a whole new stage, like a child does. The thirty-fifth week I sat on a rock looking over a lake and felt the recognition of changing roles - felt myself becoming a mother physically felt the the role change, the head change - a different inside image emerging! I felt very much like my own mother.

Sometimes if you put an ear up to the belly, you can hear the placental pulse.

I found most obnoxious being treated as helpless - this culture's way of taking care of its unborn children I suppose. Another extension of being seen as dependent, weak creatures.

A few more things before moving on to labor. I want to mention just one exercise I didn't find in the books that is very helpful. Lie with you body completely relaxed. Have your helper name one part to contract as tight as you can, leaving everything else relaxed. Helper should test for relaxation. Then decontract and have co name another part. Then move on to two at a time, then three. This simulates the uterus contracted and working incredibly hard while you relax everything else to keep out pain and give the most blood to the uterus.

About male or female babies - all the grandmothers I talked to said I would have a girl because I carried her high and round, compact and in the front. They were right. Also, my midwife explained that male sperm swim faster and female sperm live longer. So if you made love before the egg came down, the females would still be waiting around to unite. If after the egg, the males would get there sooner.

O.K. The day is approaching. The ecstatic glory is mixed with anxiety. Your nesting in-

stinct grows very strong. You want to be sure everything is neat and orderly and simple and ready. About two weeks before, the baby will drop down into position and actually give relief to the cramped breathing and stomach. You will piss even more often! The following story from my journal is knowingly void of practical advice. Please refer carefully to the books for this.

" 35th week - a visit with Dr. Cook - quick and rushed (literally about three minutes) because of patients in labor. There's nothing so much a let-down and emotionally agonizing as having months of anticipated questions brushed aside in a rush of unconcern.

He felt the position - baby is LOP - left occipital posterior - which is head-down position but turned toward the front rather than the back. Baby in this position is born head facing up, if mother is on her back or sitting, instead of down, and has to turn a lot more at that point to allow birth of shoulders. Labor is usually longer and with some backache labor. That scares me. Baby could still turn - not engaged.

Also said baby felt average size - 7-7 1/2 pounds. I was really hoping for smaller because of my small pelvis. Scares me too. What if I'm well into labor and it's time for second stage but baby's too big? Dr. Cook's reply was that that was the trip with home deliveries."

" Two weeks before due date, and Jenny says I look ready! Feel and look to myself like I'm getting quite noticeably bigger every day. Periods of confusion - so many details to keep in mind and take care of. Perhaps many are Doris' (midwife) responsibility.

Down the mountain to the white house. Rain finally stopped enough to go down and start to get ready. Drop a few things off and dash to a party. First look in a mirror in a long time - HUGE - no longer a small woman with a big belly, but all over big. Burned towels three times in the oven trying to sterilize them. Having trouble doing things.

At the party, my 'practice' contractions started coming every few minutes - didn't seem to be getting much stronger, but one right after the other for 45 seconds each. Went on for a few hours. Really wondering for a while if I was going to go into labor. Prayed I wasn't with so much still undone. But they faded late that night."

(Two nights later after getting the birth house fixed up)

" Moving around exceptionally slowly to-night so as to do anything possible to delay labor a bit! Been feeling collected again as things are coming together quite well - everything's finally ready for labor. Went to Ukiah yesterday to get rest of supplies and see Dr. Cook. Another two-hour-delayed and very hurried visit, but what he said is that the baby dropped, head is engaged (he couldn't feel the sutures on the top of the head!): that my cervix is fully thinned and I'm already two centimeters dilated !!! So ... I didn't realize this could happen. I'm definitely in my last two weeks and more likely any day !!

It's already begun, in steps, probably those contractions at the party.

We both (George and I) got very excited and totally preoccupied - but finished our chores, went out for a Mexican meal, and went to see a double feature movie! All evening I was having frequent light contractions again and sharp, but not severe, pains over my cervix! Probably even more dilated now. Pretty easy so far! Cook also said baby's still in posterior position so still chance of longer, harder labor with backache. Doris, whom I finally reached today, says about 25% of births are posterior and they aren't necessarily backache. She said when she was at term with her baby the doctor said she was two centimeters dilated and she went into labor two days later. So it really could be any time. I wanted to go down and see her, but she said since it's the full moon, to sit tight.

An I Ching reading asking about this coming childbirth. T'ai. Peace. The small departs, the great approaches. Changing to Lin. Approach."

(next morning, 22nd October). "7:30 A.M. - leaking bag of membranes...8:30 A.M.- show definitely in labor - child will be born tonight."

"Now with Shyela Mistaya Woodsorrel three and one half days old, I'll try to write what I can about labor. These days have seen me filled with happiness, satisfaction, centeredness, pure love circling within on a warm, soothing wave. Much is forgotten already about labor. Such intensity leaves its message in spirit but not in detail. Pain has no memory of sensation. Love takes over. I have never experienced anything so unexpected in its power. I was prepared for this event as fully as I knew how, yet the degree of force I found I was actually expecting was so miniscule compared to its totality as to be overwhelmingly mind staggering. My mind and body had to work continuously and at a capacity an infinite number of times higher than ever before or ever imagined simply to try and keep up with a force that is so overpowering as to be in a new realm of existence. And all within me.

"I woke up at 7:30 leaking water - felt like having lost control of my bladder. Not odorless, but didn't smell like urine. Feeling well-rested, very energetic, and quite butterfly-like of stomach, I went about getting last minute decorations and preparations together, waiting for more signs that it was really happening. 8:30 I noticed the mucous plug had come out - blood-stained mucous - and the waters kept leaking. I was off on a trip that took me unbelievable places.

"George up; realizing this was really it, he quickly recovered from his fever and stayed energetic, calm, and of magnificent support and understanding the entire time. We puttered about, getting the altar ready, re-checking our supplies. Monte supposed to be getting Doris today - just in time, I'd say - but he better get moving to make the eight-hour round trip in time. George checking over delivery notes. Contractions about five to ten minutes apart. Don't need labor breathing, but it hurts. Feels like heavy menstrual cramps. Are those contractions? I thought what

continued

you felt was tightening of the uterus. But this is sharp - not much - but that kind of pain - right over the cervix. Don't feel it anywhere else.

"Such a trip - feeling elated and energetic, digging the contractions even though they hurt. It was mild (although comparable to heavy menstrual cramps) as they were so functional and we knew that tonight there'd be a baby!

"George and I walk down to the Petermans' (about a quarter mile) to take a bath. Have to stop and lean on him for contractions, coming about every three to five minutes. Getting stronger - reads as "hurts more". It's really happening! Two weeks early. Full moon. Last day of Libra. Feels like a girl - but, 100% of my baby dreams (about fifteen) were boys.

"Petermans' excited and helpful - I have to move more slowly, feeling pressure build up in my body. Must relax, be calm, be high, be steady. G wants me to rest. I feel too energetic - good night's sleep - lots to do. Take a long warm bath - handling contractions in the tub. Must lie back for them, or kneel down from standing in shower. Let me insert here that you should take the highest precautions against germs and not bathe unless you're certain of tub and water sterility. Shower for cleanliness.

"More blood staining. Seems normal but better check. Call Doris - 2:30. Monte not there yet. Hurry! Seems to me could be about four more hours. We figure we'll do it ourselves and Doris will arrive to check up after. How little we knew. Good thing, perhaps. But maybe not - those books just don't tell you about the pain and intensity - not that you could - but they minimize it so that I expected to sail through with hard work and no suffering. I suppose the past accounts have been of pain and fear and unbearable agony only, so the new books want to put that all away. Most of it does disappear with knowledge and preparation and relaxation. But some exists, depending on individual circumstances.

"So - Doris says the spotting can keep happening. I should go to bed and rest and drink plenty of liquids. Pains getting stronger - must breathe in earnest in level B. Still great fun. Been going on for seven hours and so simple so far. The hard part must be very short.

"Must stop several times during walk back up. Contractions getting uncomfortable - must rest all my weight somewhere to handle them.

"Back at white house - messages getting delivered - people on their way here. I try to do a couple of things between contractions, but no time anymore - coming too often - every two or three minutes. Get in bed with clothes off - didn't get up except to pee until midnight. About 3:00 now. Have to start really concentrating on breathing - deep level B - beginning to slip into level C. Still aware of other goings-on and carry on conversations between contractions. Jenny and Heather and Matt arrive from the top. Missy arrives with her children, who watch fascinated from the foot of the bed until they crash out long before delivery. She brings apple sauce and honey for

me and reminds me to take deep breaths after each contraction. G cooks me eggs - but I'm wondering if it's too late to eat - digesting system already closed? Seems like I'm so far along - but was too busy to eat earlier. Or last night. Shit - will I get real weak? Can't eat - drink a little. We discuss whether to give an enema. Decide no - too far along - and it hastens contractions which I don't think I want for fear of Doris having even less chance of making it. [Never did the enema - and no feces ever came during delivery or for couple days after - but in general it's a good idea to do it early and get cleaned out.]

"Couple of hours of strong contractions - what I thought were very strong - accelerated breathing necessary. People arriving - reading childbirth books! Massaging and effleuraging me - breathing with me. No backache! Oh gracious goddess - thank you. Such a blessing. Getting very spaced out, pain and intensity increase. Kathy, Bob, Jenny, Heather, always George, encouraging me, breathing, effleuraging continuously. Rinsing my lips and face - giving me sips of water and juice. I forgot all about drinking the teas I had planned to take - but couldn't really drink anyway. G reminding me to take cleansing breaths, helping me relax tense parts. Higher and higher as this massive force begins to take me into a new reality. Handling contractions well but with discomfort. Rest between them still quite enjoyable. Whenever I open my eyes, everything looks like I'm tripping. People milling about or sitting and watching, activity fading out of my consciousness. Contractions needing full concentration and effleurage on my stomach over cervix. Suddenly, total loss of both legs - gone - no circulation - people massaging like mad to get them back. Arms, hands, legs periodically checked out - but beautiful massaging always worked quickly.

"Can't imagine having done this without my friends.

"At one point during early space out stage, a nurse happened by on the road - visiting a friend who owns land somewhere up the hill. Mistaken for Doris, she was greeted at the gate, and upon hearing the news, stopped in. I didn't know what was happening - a nurse? - but didn't really care. Did people think things weren't going well and call her somehow? Doesn't matter. She saw the scene here and, I was told later, was so touched and impressed by it all that she left \$16 for a gift for the baby.

"This was a period of what I considered very strong contractions. I could keep up with much effort - nothing devastating at all. So far, childbirth is definitely ecstasy. I remember in between contractions talking about it's being like a big trip - saying how fun it is and everyone laughing. I always had a great urge to laugh myself, coming down from every contraction but was never physically able. Very similar to laughter that comes off an orgasm.

"G reminds me to pee - I need support getting off the bed and onto the pot. Nice to handle pains squatting.

"Different positions - mostly 45° angle with legs spread and knees on pillows. A couple of times I lay on my side. Everyone so beautiful in their support and help - true servants to the cause.

"All of a sudden, the contraction peaks changed (more intense?) so that I could use the tune level. My tune all through practice was the spiritual "As I Walked Out in the Valley to Pray." Everyone knew it and sang it out loud to the timing of my finger-tapping. The trouble was that everybody sang twice as slowly as it was in my head, and it would initially throw me off and get me angry. But being pissed off helped take my mind off the pain - and then I'd switch to the slow speed, and that would help me relax. I would always start thinking the tune fast because it was the natural progression from fast breathing.

"Order of things is lost now. There was a whole period near beginning of heavy labor when I totally checked out from this earth place. Oblivious to anything else going on - rest between needed equal concentration. Started shaking and shivering - aha! transition stage! Not bad, I thought - this labor business is hard as hell but just not bad - be through it in no time. Turns out I was only about five centimeters dilated at that time.

"Pain getting mighty intense - contractions lasting over a minute all the time and coming real fast. Eight hours of heavy labor - about the last four or five were monstrous. Am I not able to handle my labor that others found quite handleable - or is this a harder labor than most? Posterior position doesn't stimulate the cervix well.

"G playing harmonica between contractions - time only for a few bars and another one comes around. Getting a bit worried - hours longer than I thought - pain very intense - can't stay on top - only just with or just behind. Realize how possible it would be to just buckle under. If somebody offered me pain killer I'd sure be inclined to take it. The pregnant women here must be thinking they never want to go through this. (It never looked nearly as hard to anyone else as it did to me). Shit - I'm not sure I want to be going through this - if only I could rest - G telling me to relax. Sitting up with bent legs - leaning forward resting on him or other people. Relax? Abdominal muscles anything but relaxed - other parts could get there. Panting all through contractions now - pant and blow, pant and blow - come on breath, come on breath. Faster and faster and heavier - oh god, it only I could rest awhile.

"Doris and Monte got there near the beginning of the heaviest part. Doris calm - hardly said a word. Guessed I was about seven centimeters dilated when I had thought I was about ready to push. Very discouraging. I'll never make it. Doris says this is an average posterior labor. Jesus. She says some women labor for 24, 48 hours. I would die of exhaustion by then, I'm sure. Pant blow pant blow - can't keep on top for seconds at the height of contractions - huge heave through my body and throat - making incredible noises. This goes on about three hours -

I'm being held on the pot to piss. Just about impossible not to heave sometimes - feel like I have to take a monstrous shit - heaves push it some. (I see now why babies are sometimes born in the toilet.) I wanted to push that huge shit out so badly - that shit which was actually Shyela beginning to move down the birth canal. My body was pushing and I was trying desperately to stop it from pushing. Panting as fast as I could - this sure feels like the pushing reflex, but nobody's said anything, i.e., Doris, about its being time. Good damn thing Doris is here - the length and strength of this labor is getting beyond my comprehension. She waits calmly - why don't you examine my progress, damnit. No, we'll wait. Back on the bed - impossible to move myself at all. I say I just cannot help pushing. Doris says I'm in transition. Everyone of magnificent support - all the energy in the world could be poured into me and I'd just swallow it up - use all of it and room for more.

"Doris gets ready to do an examination. Glory be. Please, oh please, say I'm nearly there. The contractions are coming so fast she can't do it. Sitting full up - leaning back - oh, relax, relax. She gets a moment - feels inside -- the head has turned to a better position - can't feel any more cervix - go ahead and push. Aaaa - words from heaven - sixteen hours of this incredible laboring and now I can push out the baby! [Turns out I'd been ready for an hour, which was the time of my heaviest heaving.]

"Well, the pushing hurt too - but it was easy in comparison. Also incredibly satisfying once I figured out how to do it - just like practicing. Contraction begins slowly, two deep, slow breaths, hold breath and bear down while G holds my head forward. Incredible to feel her pushing and sliding down the canal - knowing she was on her way - I can taste the release coming - relief of pressure. The burning, stretching sensation came right away - very strong. Turns out it was an added strength because she made the complete turn to normal head - down, anterior position, coming down the canal and pressing on my vagina. One push and I hear Doris say, "Outasight - There's the head!" Exclamations from everyone - talk of how much my vagina was stretching - me so afraid of tearing - but none occurred. Constantly asking about tearing, about the progress, about whether to push or not - the fruit of this labor so near I wanted to do it just right. Level C breathing and much effleurage needed between contractions. Hard to tell when contractions were over. Being so careful not to tear that I didn't push hard at all - yet the power pushed her right on down. About two more pushes and I felt the head being born - big sighs from everyone. Burning eased up - and a little cry! Did I hear that? Look down and there's a tiny wet squished together dark-haired head! Doris says try not to push with next contraction since she has to turn to let the shoulders out - ease her out (Doris already knowing she was she). So I pant with all my might - a little push breaks through - she turns and pops completely out all at once! Out. Over. Relax. Relax. Born.

continued

"11:16 p.m. The last hour of Libra on the cusp of Scorpio. Full Taurean moon shining directly overhead. When just head was born, Doris lifted her chin and cleared out the mucous in nose and mouth. Then she shot out - covered with vernix, tiny, alive, beautiful - one eye open. Someone says she's a girl! My heart fills with a joy as grand as the moon. A girl! Shyela. Hello baby. Hello Shyela. Barely enough energy to look at her. She is placed on my stomach, attached to thick coiling cord, wet and sticky and warm - looks like an organ out of my body. Hello baby. Doris carefully watches my vagina for separation of placenta. [This third stage of labor requires extreme watchfulness and care. Make doubly sure you are learned about how to deal with expulsion of the placenta. DO NOT PULL!]

"I can't even hold Shyela - she is held on me. Brought to my breast, her lips go for the nipple. I'm so exhausted and relieved, I can barely pay attention.

"Doris ties and cuts the cord. Independent. The full moon just pulled her out on these incredible pounding waves of the sea - the tide ebbs and leaves her on the shore - ocean creature comes to land, she is wiped off of blood, wrapped in a blanket (which left fuzz stuck all over her because it was new), and weighed on our milk scale. Six pounds, one ounce.

"Turned out I did get cut on the inside labia by her turning shoulder. It took three weeks to heal, legs spread to the sun.

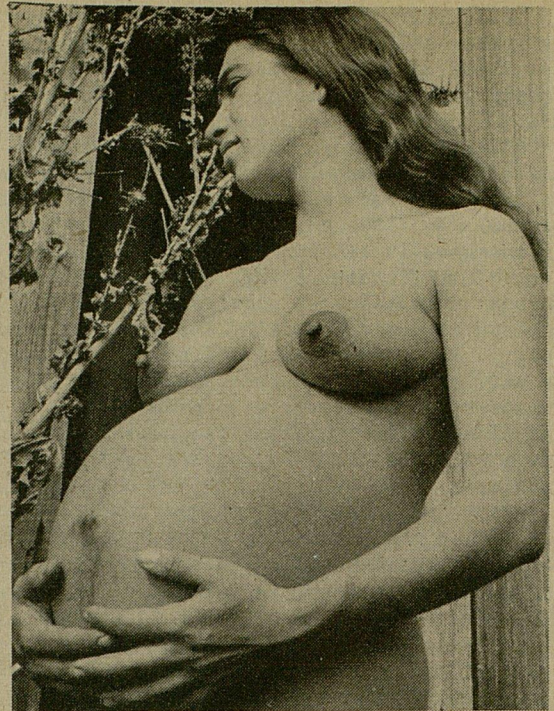
"The cord was tied off with sterilized shoe laces and cut. I didn't feel another contraction come, so she told me to gently push anyway - and out slid the placenta into a special wooden bowl. Complete, magnificent organ which we later ate - cooked like liver - incredibly delicious and full of energy.

"For two weeks we stayed in the white house. G served me gallantly. I rested and was able to take the necessary time to be calm and slow and very, very happy - unhampered by other responsibilities. Beginning to get the nursing relationship together, breasts filling like mountains of milk, nipples getting used to the friction. Being able to quietly touch and smell and love and learn Shyela with all the space I needed in my mind and environment.

"So tiny, so exquisite. Awake and alert. A creature emerges onto this earth, in the world of our consciousness, through my body, from a place completely outside our realm of consciousness. A dimension not of our senses at all - and appears into our senses. Miracle of miracles. The perfection of the ever-turning cycles. ♀

Pregnancy, Childbirth and the Newborn; Leo Eloesser, Edith Galt, Isabel Hemingway. (A manual for rural midwives - home country guide)

The New Childbirth; Erna Wright. (Lamaze technique for labor preparation - this was my main practical guide)



Six Practical Lessons for an Easier Childbirth; Elisabeth Bing. (Lamaze technique)

Commonsense Childbirth; Lester Hazell. (Fantastic information, all-around liberationist viewpoint)

Preparation for Childbearing; Maternity Center Association. (Exercises for pregnancy)

Our Bodies, Ourselves; Boston Women's Health Course Collective. (Magnificent sharing of both practical information and common experiences)

A Child Is Born; Nilsson, Ingelman-Sundberg, Wirsén. (Photographs of life before birth)

Childbirth Is Ecstasy; Alan Cohen. (About home births)

Two Births; Janet Brown. (Home delivery)

Birth; Catherine Milinaire

Birth Book; Raven Lang

Why Natural Childbirth; Dr. Deborah Tanzer

The Experience of Childbirth; Sheila Kitzinger

Back To Eden; Jethro Kloss. (For pregnancy herbs and teas)

American Indian Medicine. (For herbs and teas)

Nursing Your Baby; Karen Pryor

Womanly Art of Breastfeeding; La Leche League

Baby and Child Care; Benjamin Spock

woman strength

Wo-man I strength is the strength that I see in you, When you
build, when you lift, when you plan. It's the strength that you use to
make a wo-man's world; with your arms, with your back, with your mind. wo-man
wo-man world a place where we learn from each oth-er, where our struggles and mis-takes, they
make us wo-man strong. No more giv-ing our strength to an-oth-er; To-
ge-ther will make us wo-man free.

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2. Love is the love that you give to me
when you look, when you touch, when
you laugh.
It's your love for a woman trying to
make a woman's world;
with your body, with your hands, with
your smile

3. Woman life is a life full of tears
and joy,
full of learning and laughing and pain.
It's a life you can make, it's yours
to take.
You can step, you can grasp, you
can climb.

4. Woman grown is a woman whose
body is strong,
who has taken her strength as her own.
She can use it to fight, she can use
it to love,
she can use it to dance in the sun.

Chorus

5. Woman wise is a wisdom not of
books and words,
But of gestures and patience and
signs.
It's the wisdom of one who's held
a waiting world,
A woman's world, soon to be born.

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SLEDGES & WEDGES or..the well tempered firewood cord

It took me several years of country living, complete with the annual saw-split-stack shuffle, to learn that, painfully acquired skills with axe and hatchet notwithstanding, my wood problems were not yet over. Unhappily and somewhat belatedly, I learned that swinging an axe in definitely at the same piece of wood guaranteed me nothing more than a rank mood and ranker armpits. Then I was saved, sisters, saved I tell you, when I learned of the existence of sledges, wedges and splitting mauls. Using them makes possible the splitting of knotty wood, wood often immune to the most adeptly wielded axe. As a lot of good, plentiful firewood in my region (Northern California) is bull pine, difficult to split whether knotty or straight, learning to use these tools was a survival must.

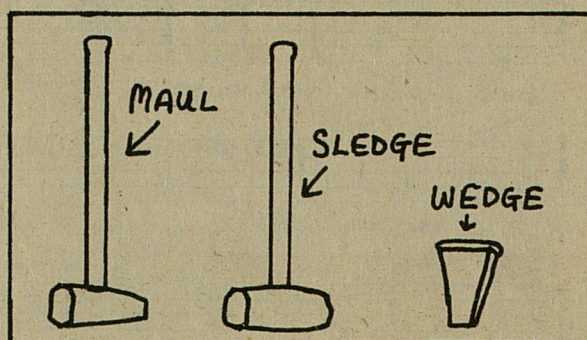
A sledge/wedge combination or one good splitting maul are quite comparable, although the really difficult pieces may respond only to assault and battery by the former.

A sledge hammer is a heavy symmetrical head mounted on a long handle. Standard sledge head weights are six, eight or ten pounds. A six pound head is a comfortable weight, eight pounds is heavy even for a strong woman, and don't consider the ten unless you have advanced Amazonia. They are almost always mounted on a standard sledge length handle - 36" long. If you are lucky enough to locate a place which has some unmounted heads, try some of the shorter handles - they come in 28" to 32" lengths. I have a sledge mounted on a handle about as long as a hammer handle. It is heavy enough to drive the wedge but infinitely easier to guide than a long handled sledge. The standard handles, like the 36" one, are designed for use by average men - and the average man is six inches taller than the average woman. Unless you are five foot six inches tall or thereabouts, you likely as not will have better control with a handle a little under three feet. You can, of course, cut a few inches off if you buy a sledge already mounted.

A wedge is a tempered steel, wedge-shaped block, designed to be driven into a piece of wood with a sledge - object, divorce. Wedges seem to be a standard weight of five pounds. You need two at least, and a third one is helpful (to get out the other two which on occasion will both get stuck before the wood splits.) You may have noticed that I carefully described the material in the sledge head and wedges as "tempered" steel. This means they have been subjected to a special hardening process so that when steel meets steel, jagged slivers do not come flying off as a result of the impact, to injure, perhaps blind you! Axe heads are not tempered - do not use them as wedges. If, in desperate straits, you feel you must, wear eye and body protection and make sure there is no one in your working vicinity.

A maul is a splitting tool which has a head, one edge shaped like a wedge blade, and the other end shaped like a sledge head, and is standardly mounted on a 36 inch handle.

Standard head weights are 6, 8, or 10 pounds. I like the six pound best, but I know women who work comfortably with an eight pound head.

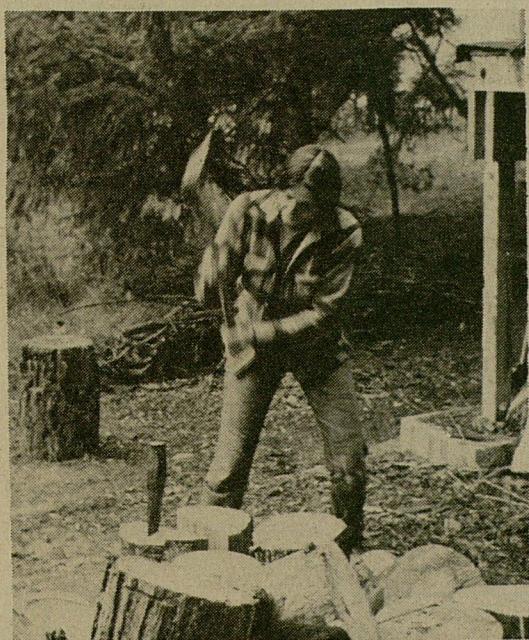


Well, now that you know what your tools are, let's talk a little about how to use them. The principles of axe-splitting are different than splitting principles for sledge/wedge and maul. An axe is designed to "pop" open fairly straight grained wood, despite its relatively light weight (axe heads weigh 3 - 5 lbs.) because one properly placed blow will split the wood as a result of the impact traveling along a single plane from the point of contact. Clearly a case of vibrations being felt and reacted to!

In a knotty or curly piece of wood, you don't find a single plane which responds to an axe. You find several planes which intersect. If you strike a really knotty piece with an axe, the impact will carry the blow down into the wood as far as the first intersecting plane--then it will stop dead, reverse its movement upward back into the axe head, which will then bounce off the wood. The only way to get beyond these intersecting planes is with something which is designed to push through them--a sledge/wedge or a maul.

A maul works best with moderately knotty wood. The blade is wedge-shaped to push its way into the wood, and the heavy head, propelled by a good swing, gives it a hard-driving push. Generally, anything which will split with a maximum of two sledge/wedge blows can be mauled. Of course, you can split axable wood with these items too, but that's a clear case of overkill. Although the sledge shaped end on the maul head is for weight, it can be used to drive a wedge, as mauls are tempered too. Don't, however, use a sledge to drive the wedge end of your maul in. That will loosen your maul head and possibly split your handle.

To use a sledge and wedge combination, the first thing you do is look at the piece you're splitting. Look at where your branches and knot holes are. Branches and knots always run in toward the center of the tree--so visualize what your cross-section looks like inside, even though all you see are branch marks on the outside bark. You can not split across a branch--don't even try. Place your wedge so that you will split parallel to, rather than across, an interior branch. Then set your wedge by tapping it gently to start it so that it holds itself in place vertically. Then aim your sledge and swing. The technique for swinging is the same technique for an axe. Once it has reached the top of its arc, let gravity do the rest. All you have to do is aim carefully and get it aloft. The different handling, due to the heavier weight, will begin to be more comfortable as you do it and get more secure. You will discover your own rhythms as you go along.

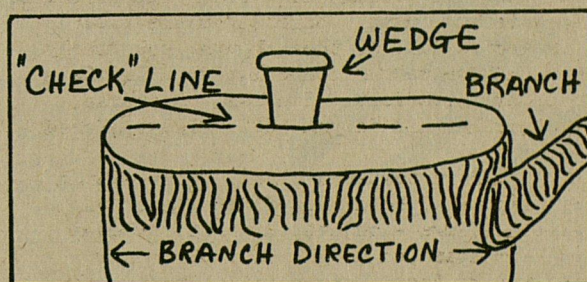


Okay--you are smashing your wedge into your log--its getting deeper and you're getting higher, but no signs of splitting yet. Don't drive your wedge all the way in. Take your second wedge, place it in the same plane as the first wedge, set it and then start driving it. Usually, the second wedge will do it. The reason for this is that you may have hit an intersecting plane where the grain direction changes with the first wedge, and driving a wedge in, no matter how far, will do nothing except get your wedge stuck. The few inches difference between placement of the first and second wedges frequently means a whole different interior geography so according to my experience, the odds are in your favor that you won't come up against that intersecting plane with a different grain direction, and that the grain will be parallel enough for the second wedge to complete its split.

Sometimes this won't work. You'll run into the same situation both times, or you will hit one of those obnoxious rarities--an interior branch which doesn't make it as far as the bark--so you, unwittingly, are driving wedges across a branch. Naturally, you will be pissed off and keep on smashing the wedge, figuring that they have to split the wood eventually, goddamnit! By the time you've heeded the warning signs, you, all red and sweaty, are bitterly looking at your two wedges which, in your zeal, you've countersunk in your log, and the only thing that's gotten split is your rear Levi seam.

Well, here's where that third wedge comes in. Drive your third wedge right next to and in the same place as one of the other two wedges. This should open the plane up enough to get one, maybe two, wedges back. If the goddesses favor you that day, the third wedge will split the log and you'll get all your wedges back in one fell swoop. If you get some but not all your wedges back, you will have to improvise ways to get the rest out. This procedure will give you plenty of time to think about remembering not to drive your wedges all the way in next time. If they're not all the way in, you can get them out fairly easily by hitting them on the side.

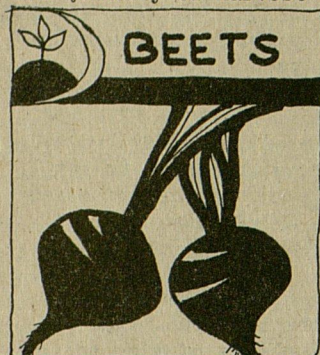
Another method of using a sledge/wedge combination is called "checking." Tap your wedge into the top of the log about a quarter inch over and over, making a line across the top from side to side through the center. Make sure you're parallel to branches. Set the wedge into the center of your line and drive it in. The slight breaks you've made into the grain across the top will help the wood to split clear across. When your wedge is about halfway into the wood, you should begin hearing a low cracking sound. A couple more blows from the sledge and it will pop open. Even logs of two feet diameter respond to this method.



You have now, sisters, finished this article and, inebriated with power, are rushing outside to practice your newly acquired skills. Stop! It is now sometime between Thanksgiving and Christmas, which means that, in most parts of the country, it is raining, snowing, or worse. Relax. Your winter wood by this time is cut and stacked; if not, nothing short of divine intervention will bail you out now. Stay by your cozy fires, reading Country Women and dreaming of Springs to come. This is the time to savor. ♀

MY GARDEN JOURNAL

Covering the Years 1970-1974 on the North Coast of California, and including such Important Information as Variety and Age of Seed, Date Planted, Amount Planted, History of the Crop and Quantity of Harvest



1970 Ten ft. of Detroit Dark Red (1969) planted on July 31. Plenty of compost dug in. Began harvest Oct. 10 finished by Nov. 26. Had one last beet March 10 and it was still delicious. Not enough planted.

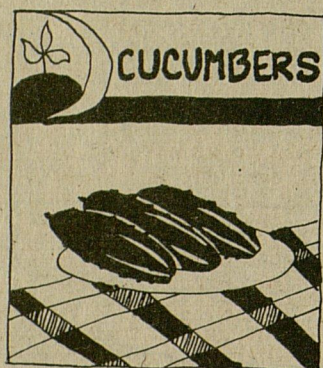
1971 Twenty ft. of Det. Dark Red (1971) planted April 15. First picking June 29.

Kept harvesting until Dec. 19.

1972 Sixteen ft. of last year's seed planted Aug. 11. Fair germination. Not thinned. No crop.

1973 Ten of 1971 seed planted Sept. 7. Too late to develop before winter. Most went to seed before bulbing. All pulled May 7.

1974 Twenty ft. of Det. Dark Red (1974) planted Aug. 5. All sprouts eaten. Grasshoppers? Re-planted Aug. 26. Growing well in mild Oct. weather.



1970 Circle of National Pickling (1970) twelve plants planted in front yard in early July. Water ran out in Sept. Plants generally neglected.

1971 Twenty ft. row of Marketmore (1971) planted June 11 in sheep manure and compost enriched soil. A lot of seedlings eaten during June. Dozen plants doing

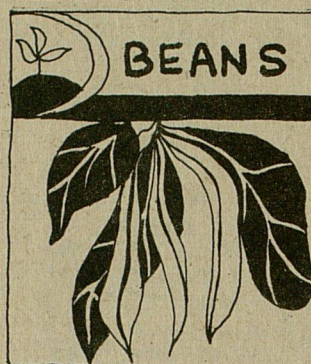
well. Started harvest Sept. 14 and killed by frost Oct. 28. Made eighteen quarts of pickles plus salads.

1972 Dozen and a half Marketmore (1972) plants started in the hotbed Feb. 11. Put in ground late April. Puny plants but began harvest July 1. Later hills of same seed planted May 24. Harvest ready Aug. 20. Plants larger and stronger than hotbed ones.

1973 Six hills of Marketmore (1972) planted May 2. Thinned to an average of six plants per hill but many died so average of three per hill left. Fair but continual harvest beginning in Sept. Enough for five quarts of pickles Sept. 20.

1974 Seven hills of Marketmore (1972) planted May 14. Watered really well so most plants survived. Harvest began in mid-Aug. Two dozen qts.

of pickles and many given away. Plants dying end of Oct.



1970 Planted Blue Lake (1969) pole variety June 15 using chicken wire support. Plants are pale, probably from nitrogen lack. Mulched well with horse manure and straw on Sept. 30 and one tbsp. of cottonseed meal per plant. Plants show immediate improvement but still no beans. Took down vines Nov. 7 after

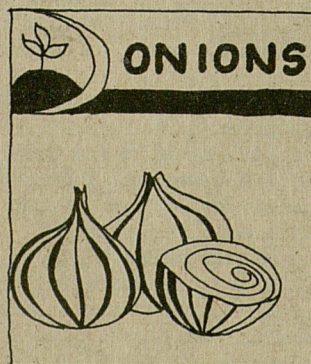
having had only one dinner from them. They were planted in very poorly worked soil and never grew over four ft.

1971 Twenty ft. of Stringless Green Pod Bush (1971) planted May 27 in well sheep manured soil. Ready to eat Aug. 9. Large harvest continuing until end of Oct.

1972 Sixteen ft. Black Valentine Stringless Bush planted May 17. These plants are sprawling all around and appear to be pole beans! Put up some chicken wire support for them to grow on. Ready to harvest Aug. 11. Finished end of Sept.

1973 Twenty ft. of last year's seed planted May 20 in rotted sheep manure. Most plants were eaten by something. A few made it, produced, and were finished by mid-Sept.

1974 Twenty-three ft. of Tenderpod (1974) planted May 15. Sprouts very susceptible to bugs. In a later planting I coated the seed with oil and more sprouts made it. First harvest Aug. 4. Very heavy producing through Aug. and Sept. Finished by mid-Oct. Dried the mature beans left on the plants.



1970 Onion sets put in around new pea plants as gopher fence Sept. 16. Not doing well in the wet Feb. 6.

1971 Thirty-six ft. of sets put in April 1. Soil was still wet so some were stuck in the mulch and others shallowly in the ground. All sprouted. Had to keep picking seed stalks off all season.

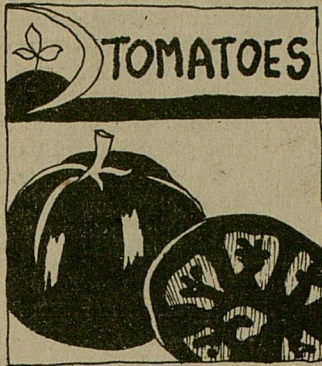
About seven doz. braided Aug. 9 and four doz. that didn't fall over for immediate use. These lasted until early March.

1972 Fifty ft. of large sets planted March 14. Planted by the dark of the moon and they still mostly all made seed stalks. Thirty ft. of small sets also planted and they made big bulbs which

dried off. About ten doz. braided for winter and 50 lbs. stored for immediate use. These lasted way into harvest of next year.

1973 Eighty ft. of sets put in March 26. This was one and a half lbs. of small sets. Began harvest July 21. About thirteen doz. hung up on Aug. 10. Most dried off.

1974 Two and a half lbs. of small white and brown sets planted March 24. Twenty-one dozen braided and hung in attic Sept 1. Still using the ones that made seed stalks in Oct.



1970 Twenty-four Sure Crop plants from nursery put in May 12. Pruned once a week all blossoms but those on the main stalk. Began harvest Sept. 1. Needed taller and stronger stakes. Tomatoes got blossom end rot and cracked tops from improper watering. Spray watered them a while and then left them

too long between waterings. Harvest slowed down after slight frosts Oct. 17.

1971 Forty-five Supermaster Marglobe plants from the hotbed transplanted end of April. Pruned to one stalk all but four plants. Their foliage is much healthier but production is less. First vine ripened tomato ready Aug. 21. Blossom end rot and cracked tops again from not watering enough. Lots of green tomatoes Oct. 28 but no big harvest.

1972 Two dozen Cherry plants and two doz. Early Wonder plants from hotbed transplanted end of April. Regular variety began ripening Sept. 1 but not many tomatoes. Cherry began end of Sept. and produced millions during early Oct.

1973 One doz. Fog tomatoes and one doz. Red Cherry put in April 24. Dug one ft. holes for each plant and filled with horse manure, dolomite and potash. Finally ripening Sept. 14. Too much foliage covering tomatoes, not many ripening.

1974 One and a half Red Cherry and one doz. Pixie Hybrid from nursery planted May 11. Pixie plants are compact and loaded with fruit (about 2 in. diameter), Ripening Aug. 18, the earliest yet! Red Cherry beginning end of Sept. Picked eleven qts. one day. Best crop ever. ♀



We have been raising rabbits for a year and are happy with them. Our main reason for doing so is that we like to be as self sufficient as possible. The fryers are mild flavored, rather like chicken. Compared to some other food animals, rabbits are pleasant, a small investment, clean, docile, easily handled, and beautiful. I can waste more time just hanging out in the rabbit house with them.

We try to feed them as cheaply as we can. In our cool climate, greens grow the best of anything in the garden. They get about half and half greens and a commercial "complete rabbit pellet" (18% crude protein). Rabbits are much fussier about their food than chickens. Ours don't care much for ferns, buttercup, willow, alder, huckleberry, or comfrey. They do like cabbage, broccoli, spinach, sunflower leaves, kale, mangel leaves, carrot tops, bean and pea plants, apple prunings, corn stalks, grass, vetch (not poisonous pods), scotch broom (not pods), dandelion, and plantain. Our rabbits don't care for the various legume seeds we have tried except for fresh peas. That's too bad because the books say they need some grain/concentrated feed and that an all-greens diet won't give optimum growth. We don't have much home grown grain and haven't tried to eliminate the store feed entirely. I have read that European backyard rabbits live on greens. They do like corn and whole sunflower seeds which are both easily grown by backyard farmers in climates warmer than ours. Root crops and fruits are easy

but high in carbohydrates and low in protein. Things like potatoes, carrots, parsnips, Jerusalem artichokes, mangels, and apples are nice and crunchy and the rabbits like them, but don't use them as a large part of the diet. Feeding greens makes the rabbit chores much more time consuming. The cages need to be cleaned of dropped leaves and stems everyday and several armloads of leaves picked. I easily spend an hour a day on those rabbits.

A warning about feeding greens: on adults that aren't used to them you should start them gradually. When the bunnies first start to eat, they nibble on their nest straw and their mother's droppings. After a couple of days of that they start eating solid food in earnest. Give them rolled oats for a week in a feeder their mother can't get into or she will eat it all. Let them have access to greens meanwhile. Check their asses frequently and wash off any gummy shit. We used to feed oats for only 2 or 3 days and then switch to pellets, and we had a lot of sticky shit problems. The last two litters have eaten oats longer and had no trouble at all:

The albino breed called "New Zealand White" is probably the best kind to raise for meat fryers. The adult females weigh 10-12 lbs. and the bucks 9-11 lbs. The young should weigh 4 plus at butchering age of 8 weeks. This medium sized breed was developed specifically to be fast growing and chunky, and it is almost exclusively what is raised commercially. If you are like us and don't like albinos and want beautiful col-

continued

ored furs to sew besides, there are lots of other sorts of rabbits. We have some mixed breeds which have nice rainbow litters. Our buck weighs 7 lbs. and the does 8 and 9 lbs. Their offspring don't reach 4 lbs. by 8 weeks, they are more like 3 1/4 to 3 3/4 lbs. If we keep them a week or two longer, they eat up a lot of food and don't gain that much more weight. Who needs 4 lb. fryers anyhow - that's just what the commercial growers' market requires. We have raised 90 lbs. dressed weight of rabbits so far and the store bought feed has come to 61¢/lb. The summer raised rabbits are cheaper than the winter ones.

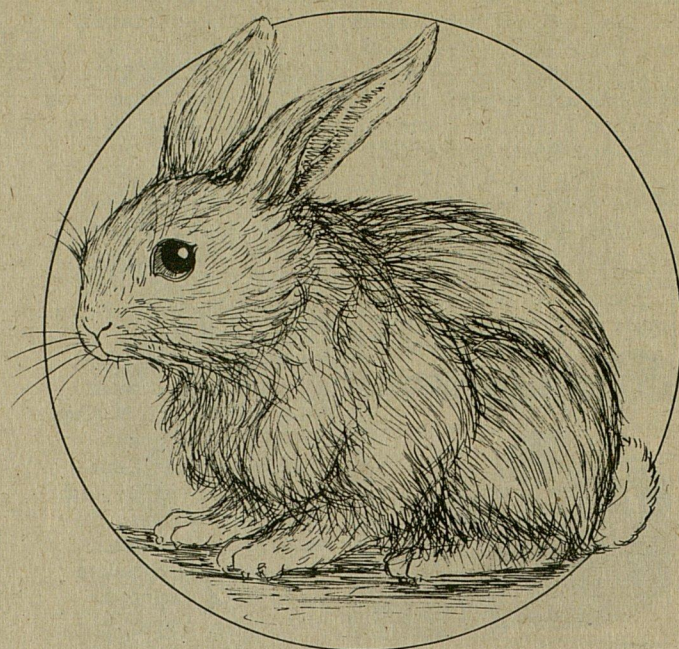
The fryer skins can be tanned at home. We have used a method with undried skins, battery acid, and salt which does well on the thin skins. Our first creation was a vest made from 12 skins.

There are various places to get rabbits. There are ads for pure breeds in "Countryside" magazine, Rt 1 box 239, Waterloo, Wisconsin 53594, 50¢ per copy. County fairs have rabbits and people to talk to and the rabbit owners' addresses. Some of the fancy breeds are said to be nervous and not good mothers. There are lots of rabbits here and there; ours came from a local 4-H member. Avoid somebody's discards. My brother got three cull does to use as breeders. One had her udder spoiled by mastitis, one was a skinny runt, and one was ornery and bit him at every opportunity. Get rabbits from big, sturdy, calm parents. Get healthy rabbits. Check out the sellers' other rabbits and their housing. Buying young animals 2-3 months old is cheaper than buying mature animals and lets you get used to them before they are breeding age.

Fat rabbits have troubles. Don't overfeed with the store pellets. Bucks and non-pregnant, non-nursing does should not have all they can eat. Separate does from bucks by 3 1/2 months of age or you will have surprises and no straw filled nest box ready. Gestation is about 30 days.

Rabbits vary a lot in disposition. One doe demands petting and it is easy to pick her up to clip her toe nails. One doe is very shy, she didn't mellow out any with her first litter. But she treats her babies just as well as the other doe does. Some does freak out easily and trample or eat their young. One doe we used to have decided to eat the bunnies' fur off when they were about 4 weeks old. She quit nursing them too.

Housing: Rabbits can stand cold but not great heat. They need to be protected from harsh sun, rain, and wind, but need some ventilation. Roomy cages for the does are nice since the fryers grow better if they stay with the doe and can nurse until 8 weeks old. Does can have as many as 12 young. Our cages are 2 1/2' x 2' high. The buck's cage is 2 1/2' x 2 1/2'. If you build your own, remember that rabbits chew all exposed wood, and droppings collect on all solid horizontal surfaces. If the floor is made of 1/2" x 1" welded wire or 5/8" x 5/8" wire mesh, the droppings can fall through. Larger holes as in mink cages injure the rabbits' legs. Make the door large enough and located so that you can get your shoulders through and reach all corners. Rabbits generally piss in corners,



especially dark ones. Locate greens hopper away from the corners so that dropped food does not get wet underfoot.

Give the adults a piece of rough (non-skid) and edible board to sit on. Even though you keep the cages meticulously clean, they can still get "sore hocks". That is due to the hair getting worn off by the wire, especially if they stamp a lot. The board helps. The breed called Rex is especially susceptible. Most rabbits need to have their nails clipped every month or two or they get caught and broken on the wire. Dog nail clippers work nicely. A tuna can with no ends gives single rabbits something to play with.

The biggest menace to rabbits is dogs. Dogs can tear up chicken wire cages or scare the rabbits to death even if they never touch them. We have heard more sad stories about "I used to have rabbits but the neighbor's dog got them." Our rabbits live inside a building that is locked at night.

Thinking about butchering rabbits must be the hardest part of deciding to have them for meat. I would have more qualms about killing a more intelligent, individualistic animal than I do about those anonymous fryers. We are socialized to the idea of eating chickens but not rabbits. You could rationalize killing them by considering that they lived a comfortable life without hunger or pain and died quickly without being terrorized. Grocery store meat can't make that claim. Killing and dressing rabbits is as quick and easy (or as hard) as doing chickens.

There are some things a beginner can read. "Commercial Rabbit Raising", Agr. Handbook No. 309, from Supr. Documents, U.S. Govt. Printing Office, Wash. D.C., 20402, Stock No. 0100-1376, 35¢ (in 1973). This is 68 pages and the best deal. There is also a hardcover book by G.S. Templeton called Domestic Rabbit Production 204pp. which "Countryside" magazine sells. "Countryside" has a rabbit section and letters from people with backyard rabbits. ♀

self defense

Going to court has been in the news recently and the trial of Inez Garcia has made great impact on the minds of people internationally. Public trials which are well-publicized, and strongly supported are positive events for both the actual participants in the case and those who take part as supporters and spectators. In the country we often feel that we have no real impact and that political action is not possible here, at least in any meaningful way. My experience in the court of Nevada County is that in fact the reverse is true: because we live in small communities our impact is felt, our presence recognized, our noise heard--and in a way that cannot happen in the large population centers unless there are spectacular issues at hand. There, things are too fast, too loud, and nobody knows who you are. Here, the people on trial, the witnesses, the jurors, are your neighbors or at least you've seen them in the market or laundromat. In all my involvements with self-defense and the problems of rape and attack I am always ending up frustrated and anxious for some kind of action. I have found that going to court satisfies some of that need and also that in a small community, visible public support for the woman in a rape trial seems to have a definite effect on the outcome.

About two weeks before I went to the trial I will describe, I attended a day's session of the Criminal Justice Committee of the California State Assembly. This was a day of mixed feelings for me: I was so proud to be a member of the 200-300 women in the room who had come to support active changes in rape legislation and I felt our collective power. I was overwhelmingly impressed by the women lawyers who represented our position, so well-informed and outspokenly feminist. And yet I felt so powerless, so ineffectual as I watched a few men manipulate the day's events; caring not for women, not for people or even for law, but for constituencies, and mainly concerned with being sure that men would continue to be protected at all costs from women in rape trials. Over and over they brought up the remote possibility of women framing men for rape. I had never considered this a possibility other than in melodramatic Southern novels (pardon my regional bias) and indeed, when asked they had no case material behind their fears. I was disgusted by them, and faced again my own reality: as long as we are operating from this system as it is defined, we will never really change anything and a few bills on evidence procedures do not stop women from being raped. We must change all of it--ourselves. I went home depressed.

Then I went to Elizabeth's rape trial and I saw how our solidarity can be effective NOW, within the system as it is. No matter what the outcome of the trial, we were winners: we achieved our main goal which was to support the woman who was courageous enough to go to court. When she spoke and answered questions, she could look out into a room filled with women who believed her, knew she was right, and would continue to be behind her no matter what she said or what happened. Her boyfriend, who was the only person with her until we came, was afraid of us. He said we shouldn't bring so many people here, call attention to it because "Her reputation is already ruined. She'll have to leave town when this is over." I believe that she learned from us that she was not responsible or guilty and that she could do whatever she wanted to do now. This gave us all a wonderful sense of strength and togetherness; we felt our power and projected it around us as the trial progressed.

This is a small community, and the contrast to the day in Sacramento was striking. In Nevada City twenty women packed the courtroom and we appeared as a multitude! The people on the jury were impressed by our presence and we all felt that we made it more important to them--that we raised the level of seriousness. In the Assembly, we were very quiet; in Nevada City when the defense attorney spoke to a juror saying "you wouldn't treat this as you would something serious, like a burglary," our horror was heard. We were also able to provide strength for the women on the jury who were in general annoyed at the tone of the questioning they received from both the prosecutor and the defense attorney--can your children get along without you? Will you be embarrassed by the sexual content? (Not asked of the men). We felt like a community of women when they answered that their children would be just fine thank you and that they were grown ups. One woman, when asked if she knew anything about motorcycles looked right at us as she grinned and said, "Sure, I drive a Honda 350." One question no one asked the women was if they had been raped. We knew one woman on the jury had been raped and had had her case dismissed for lack of evidence. I was glad she was quiet--later she said she didn't think it would influence her. But this raised questions in my mind about my own biases and how I would deal with them as a potential juror--could I be fair to the man? Do I believe it is possible he is innocent?

Soon my questions were forgotten as the jury was sent out and the defendant's previous rape conviction was discussed by the court. Nine months previously he had been con-

victed to rape and assault and sentenced to PROBATION. Later we were told by the DA that in that case the woman had been so brutally beaten that she had been unable to leave the hospital to testify--he described her as a "basket case." (My karate teacher, who used to be a Nevada County sheriff, was casual about it. "Oh, they finally got him," he said as he told us how many times in nine months that man had been picked up for rape, but how no one else had been willing to press charges.) As much as we all knew the statistics and were aware of how many rapists are at large, it was shocking to be told that a convicted rapist had been sent from the courtroom to the streets, that he had been free in our community for all this time, repeating his crime. At the break we made some plans for how to deal with him if the court chose to send him back to us, again. I was seething.

Courtrooms aren't very big here and neither are the buildings. We all used the same hallway for breaks and the same bathrooms, and it was plain to the women jurors when they came around the corridor to the bathroom and found Elizabeth crying and frightened after her testimony, that she was truly shaken and afraid. In a situation where the case would be decided on a judgement of honesty, this might have been the turning point.

Another thing we did was intimidate the defendant; and he needed it. Outside, going down to his cell with the deputy he stopped to look us all up and down and comment to the deputy about his victim; they laughed together walking down the stairs as we stood outraged and controlling surges of violence. But that was reversed when we sat in the courtroom and took notes on everything that was said and Susan drew incredible drawings of him which we turned into posters to hang all over town in the event that he was not convicted. I think he felt our determination to get him and got scared, as we didn't go away and didn't let up. He should have been scared. Later we compared the fantasies we had during the trial, including kinds of violence we didn't know we knew. I planned a dozen different ways to stomp him, it was all I could think of while I listened to Elizabeth tell how he had held her with a knife to her throat and told her what he would do with her body unless she stopped resisting. There was almost equal satisfaction though, in the poster which evolved as Julia added to the drawings his name, description, address, a record of his rapes and his method in committing them.

The defense attorney was more nervous about our presence than the defendant. He must have turned to look at us every four or five minutes, testing to see if we were still there, watching us intently. He was afraid of us, and perhaps he, more than the rest of the people in the room, knew how much impact we were having.

That first day we heard testimony from the defendant's parents who were establishing an alibi for him. It seemed so improbable to all of us and we were acutely aware of the physical set-up of the room. Just as we had provided a

supportive audience for the prosecution, so did we present a room full of disbelief for the defense. As we became aware of this we all began to look forward to the next day when the defendant himself would be there on the stand and have to look out at us.

That afternoon we spent nearly an hour with the DA discussing some questions we had about the trial and educating him about rape and attack. It threw him that we had statistics and current sources available by memory and that we knew things about pending legislation and existing law and precedent that he was only vaguely aware of. It was hard not to feel powerful and still be aware that it was he who held the real power when it came to what would be said in the courtroom the next day. One thing we did change: we impressed upon him the importance of his remembering his witness's name. He had forgotten it, stumbled over it, and called her by the wrong name nearly every time he had addressed her that day, and we pointed out to him how his unconscious was showing. He was shocked when I asked him if he would ask the judge to eliminate the admonition to the jury--it was pure provocation on my part but all he could say was, "Are you really LOCAL women?" We told him we'd be back.

We were back first thing in the morning in time to spend some time with Elizabeth and leave her with some literature on women, rape, self-defense and some contacts, and then to the courtroom to see the man himself. The day before we had all agreed that we couldn't pick out either the victim or the attacker as we waited for the trial to begin. All the women looked like victims and all the men looked like rapists. But on the second day he looked like the rapist, as he got up to talk. It was pitiful to listen to him, watch him try to avoid our stares of disbelief, hear him get caught in his own story over and over. He was a soap opera, they all were, the police who got up to tell their part, the doctor, the family, I couldn't get it right in my mind. At the break I talked with his probation officer--this is really a small town! The PO is the same man who is in charge of the building where I take karate, also I knew him from a drug crisis line of years ago, and the woman who was working with him is the mother of one of the kids at my son's free school--they said they hoped for conviction, that he had to be taken off the streets before he killed someone. The rapist was a little guy--5'6"--and yet he had the power to frighten, intimidate, attack and injure women who were bigger, stronger, but unable to act in their defense. It was infuriating.

It was over quickly and the jury was sent to deliberate. Most of us had to leave then but Virginia stayed and listened. In this county the walls aren't too thick and sitting outside the jury room she was able to hear most all of it. The women on the jury had to work at it, but they convinced the men to vote for conviction after a few hours. The newspaper story the next day gave about equal space to how slick he was (they called him charismatic),

how pretty she was (the pretty high school senior in her attractive blue dress), and how dramatic the defense attorney was. This was followed by a paragraph about the continuous presence of 24 women in the courtroom throughout the trial.

At the sentencing a few days later, the judge said that he was having the defendant examined by psychiatrists to see if he should be determined a mentally disordered sex-offender and sent to Atascadero State Hospital rather than to prison. I wondered what they'd call him if they determined that he wasn't--a mentally able/ordered sex-offender?

In this context we go to rape trials: to support the victim; to intimidate the attacker; to make the jury aware that we recognize the importance of the event so that they take it seriously; to make the District Attorney and the judge--elected officials--aware of our strength and our concern; to make the media take notice of women actively supporting each other, thus

the public. At this trial, we won. It was a victory for women in the country and we all shared the exhilaration of being winners.

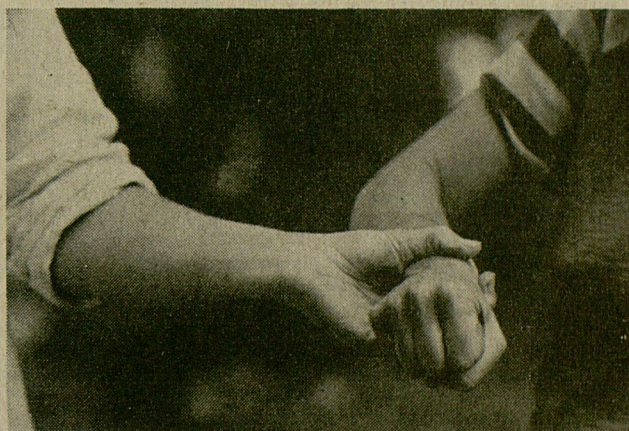
In an article on the place of reform measures in the Women's Movement, published in Quest-A Feminist quarterly, Charlotte Bunch raises some questions we must ask about our actions. Her third question is "Does working for the reform give women a sense of power, strength and imagination as a group and help build structures for further change? Women need to win. We need to struggle for reforms that are attainable. We need to act where it is clear that the changes achieved are the results of our efforts--not a gift from the system--but victories won by our pressure, our organization, and our strength. The greater variety and larger numbers of women who benefit from this victory and who participate in its accomplishment--the better." (P. 49, Processes of Change, vol. 1, no. 1, Summer 1974, Diana Press)

techniques

wrist releases



#1. This hold is on the same side - that is, if you are practicing, using your right hand, hold the wrist of your partner's left hand, with your thumb on top. This occurs with the two people face to face.



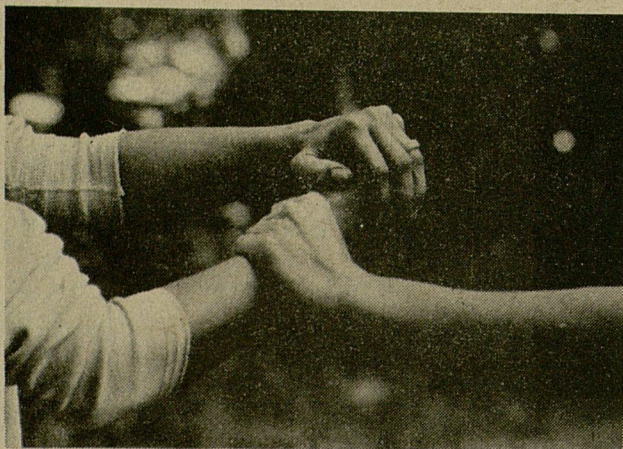
#2. Make a fist. This added tension makes your wrist harder to hold. Rotate your arm so the inner bone (ulna) is at the weak point of the grip: between the thumb and fingers.

Stepping forward, attempt to place your elbow against your partner's (the attacker's) elbow. Keep your arm in the same plane, not raising or lowering it. This action will bend the attacker's wrist backward, forcing release of your wrist.

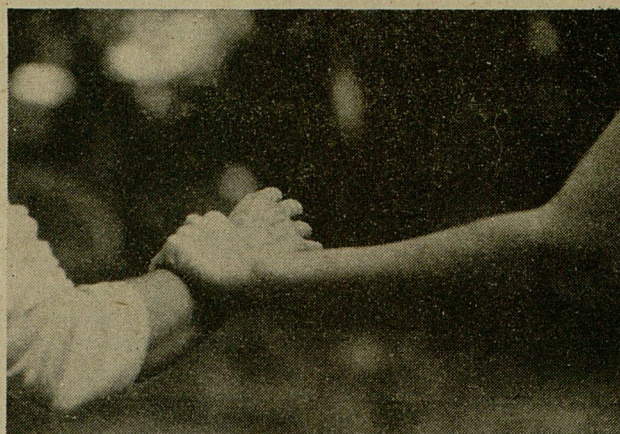
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#3. Using your free arm, grab the attacker's arm as you are released, pull him toward you as you smash your elbow into his face, throat, sternum, or solar plexus. Kiai as you do. Be sure to practice on both sides.



#5. Make a fist, then rotate your arm so that the outer bone (radius) is at the weak point of the grip. Using your free arm and hand, grab your fist. This gives added leverage and makes this release effective every time, even if you are being held by two hands.

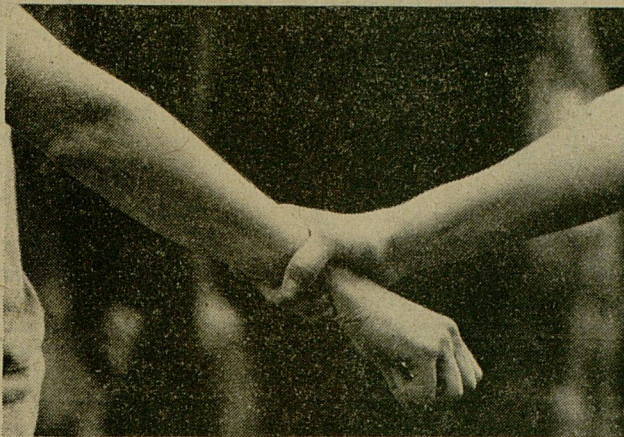


#4. This is also a same-side hold, this time with fingers on top. (Using your right hand, grab your partner's left wrist). This occurs with two people side-to-side as is the most likely grab on the street.



#6. Pull your hand free and return with a hammer blow (see article #1 in blue issue on Structures) to bridge of nose, throat, or sternum.

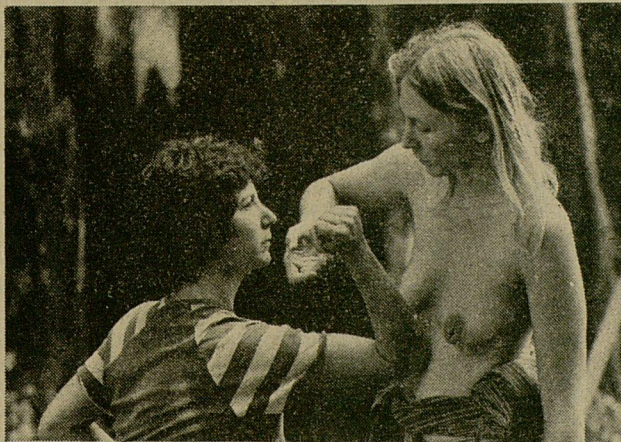
Practice on both sides and don't forget to kiai..



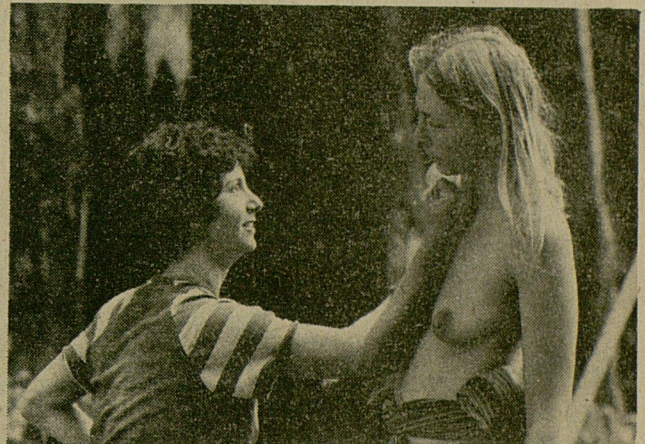
#7. This is a cross-handed grip. In practice, stand face to face and using your right hand grab your partner's right wrist.



#8. Step in, bending your knees to get low. Use the same leg as the arm being held (in this case, right). Your object is to jam your elbow into your attacker's solar plexus.



#9. This movement will force the attacker's wrist to bend backward and release your wrist. The blow to the solar plexus should cause him to lose his breath and hurt.



#10. Deliver a hammer blow to the sternum or throat while you kiai. DIRECTLY IN HIS FACE. Practice on both sides.

* If you would like to contribute to a series of articles on women in self-defense and martial arts, please write to me: 12585 Jones Bar Rd., Nevada City, Cal. 95959. I am concentrating on why you got into it, what kinds of experiences have you had, how do you feel as a woman in what has traditionally been a man's art, what do you want to communicate to other women about your life in martial arts? BB ♀

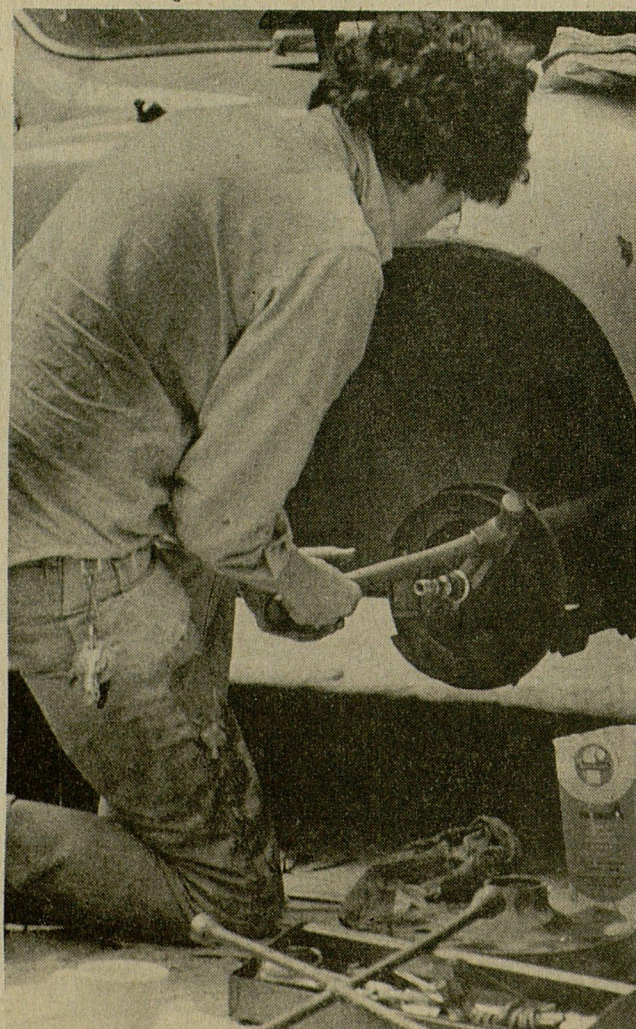
Mechanics :Tires

This article was supposed to be about brakes. When I started writing it, however, I discovered that I don't really know that much about brakes yet. So instead, let's talk about tires and driving on them. There are a couple of things that pertain to tires:

1. Wheel Alignment-

Is your front end aligned? Do your tires point the same way? If the wheels are cock-eyed, your steering control is going to be lousy. Also your tires will wear out a lot quicker. Uneven or unusual tire wear is a good sign your wheels are out of alignment.

2. Are your shock absorbers OK?



Try bouncing on the bumpers, front and back. The car should rock once or twice and then level out. If it rocks on and on, or feels loose and sloppy, your shocks need replacing. They will need replacing every 2-5 years, depending on how rough the roads you drive are. Shocks absorb bumps and bangs from the road. Worn shocks can yank the wheel right out of your hands. Shocks are expensive, but essential. Don't skimp here; get good shocks. Like everything else the price will vary, shop around.

3. Are your tires in good shape?

The California Highway Patrol says that 1/32 " is the minimum acceptable tread. Stand a dime on edge in the deep part of the tread. If more than half the diameter of the dime shows, you're illegal, not to mention dangerous. You will get a ticket for this. You can get good recaps for \$15.00-\$20.00. Get them one at a time if you need to, but keep the best tires you can on your car. A decent tire place will give you a guarantee. Do not deal with a place that does not do this. Have the tire balanced when you have it put on. This cuts down on wear and also gives you more steering control. Be sure you end up with the same size tires on the rear end on both sides and also on the front end. Two different tire or tread sizes on the rear wheels will eat the rear end out of a vehicle in a hurry, because the axles turn at different speeds. Since both axles connect to the same gears in the middle, the middle has a problem trying to cope. It can't for long and rear ends are darn expensive (like \$50 out of a wrecking yard, and goddness knows what new.) On the front end, different tread sizes screw up your steering, braking, and everything else. You can get different sizes on the front and rear, as long as both front ones are the same, and both rear ones the same. Mud and snow tires are thicker than regular tread, but make sure they match. Don't put snow tires on all the way around, unless you have four wheel drive, in which case you have to have all four tires equal, or it eats up all sorts of ghastly expensive things in the innards. All your front tires do on two wheel drive is steer, and the back wheels do all the pushing. If the road is so icy that your snow tires are slipping, it doesn't matter what you have on the front, your direction is going to be random anyway without chains. Tire chains

are a must if you live where there is snow or ice. (They also help in deep mud.) The Japanese ones are fine and cost about \$11.00. They will get you through snow and mud that foils even the best snow tires, and are essential when there is fresh, wet snow, especially when it falls on top of frozen snow. Fresh snow is incredibly slick. I found that out one time during a wild ride down a steep hill with a 20ft. drop off on each side. I got going down the hill a little fast in about 4" of fresh snow in third gear (4 speed truck), shifted down into second gear, and WHAM.. Off we went on an unintentional sleigh ride. Sideways. Shifting down and suddenly increasing the bite of the tires is a BIG no-no in slick conditions. DO NOT BRAKE AT ALL with brakes or gears if the road is slick. You will skid every time and a skid will blow your mind off, not to mention the top of the car, and quite possibly your head. Use your gears to adjust your speed before you get to going too fast. Odd as it sounds, use the highest gear you can (in snow, mud, or ice) even if you have to lug the engine a little and slow down to a crawl. Better a forward crawl than a sideways zip. Losing control is horribly frightening. If you do go into a skid, there are a couple of things to remember. Number One is DO NOT PANIC and start hitting the brakes. If you apply brakes, or shift into a lower gear, your wheels will lose traction and you will lose what control you still have (cars are lousy sleds). Depend exclusively on the steering wheel, the accelerator, and your own good sense. Being scared to death but not out of control mentally is OK. You will be unbelievably aware of everything you see and feel. That's good. Use this awareness and you'll survive fine. Sweaty, cursing, and pale maybe, but not broken into small, gory bits. Now this sounds stupid, but listen... TURN INTO A SKID.. If your front end starts to skid off to the right turn to the right and follow it out. If you try to turn out of it, (to the left), your back wheels will break loose from their grip on the road and you will have no control at all over what happens next. If you follow the skid, you will most likely either come right out of the skid in control of the situation, or spin around several times and stop. It's scary but pretty safe. A very light touch and great gentleness are essential. Very small steering movements result in large ornate swings on icy roads. I found myself driving down that bloody hill using only my fingertips. If I had remembered to steer into the skid, the loud frantic prayers would not have been necessary to stop me 4" from the edge of a 20 ft. drop. Sheer motherly grace saved me that time; I figure next time I better think. If you can find a big muddy field or some such unobstructed place, practicing skids on purpose can literally keep you alive. Start driving straight about 20 mph. and hit the brakes once quick and hard. The resulting skids can be played with until you

know how to handle them. Try it at different speeds and up to 60mph or so if you can. Skids are very impartial. Skids are not picky about the speeds you're going; nor do they give you any warning. Snow isn't necessary, sand, gravel, or oil on the road works just as well. If you have plenty of room, you can get out of a goofed up skid by simply taking your foot off the accelerator and letting it wear itself out. Wear a seat belt if you possibly can. An awful lot of people get hurt because the skid threw them away from the steering wheel. I don't care how strong you are; you cannot hold a car that wants to get away. If you are still in the driver's seat, you can grab and start over. If, however, you are tangled up with the other people in the front seat, or hanging out the window on the passenger side, you've got a problem. I seem to talk about getting hurt a lot, but I do it for a reason. Cars are machines; they do not plot, or think, or plan; the one thing that causes most accidents is the loose nut behind the steering wheel. You are taking a very large responsibility when you drive. If you blow it and kill somebody, or cripple somebody. (You? Me?) through not thinking, not keeping your machine or your mind together, or just plain stupidity, who's going to have to work out that Karma? Think about that. Cars are not toys. They are useful, fun, almost essential, lovely, potentially murderous machines, and you are quite literally holding a lot of lives in your own two hands when you drive. That's why I want all of us to know every single thing we can about ourselves and our vehicles. Besides, I love you. I'd miss you if you were dead. Every woman who dies unnecessarily is a warrior lost to the struggle, and there aren't that many of us to be begin with. Take care my sisters, we need each other. ♀

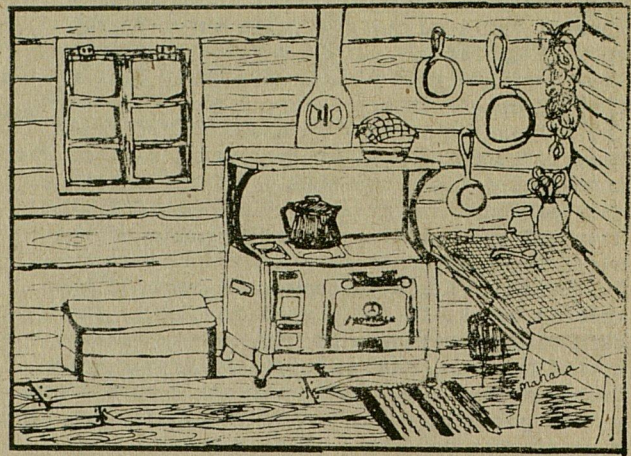


Food poisoning

You say you have never had food poisoning. Beware! If you don't feel well, your stomach is upset, you have diarrhea or a headache, you may have a mild case of food poisoning and not a mild dose of the flu. I'll tell you the four types of food poisoning and then some ways which you can avoid them.

The four common causes of food poisoning are (1) Salmonella, (2) Clostridium perfringens, (3) Staphylococcus, and (4) Clostridium botulinum. Big names for simple bacterial organisms which multiply by dividing if given food, warmth and moisture. If treated properly they lay dormant and poisoning never occurs.

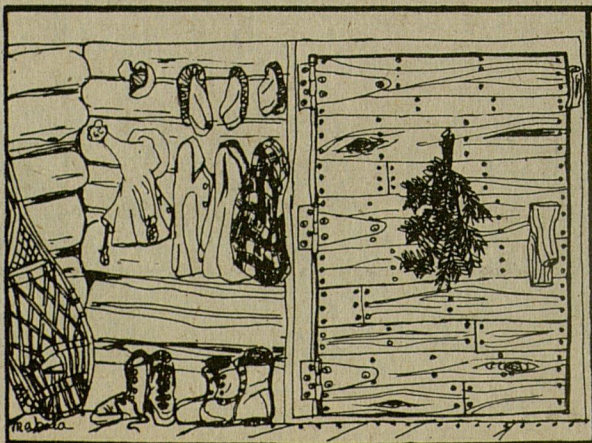
(1) Salmonella is most commonly found in raw meats, poultry, eggs, milk, fish, and products made from them. Other sources can be pet excrement, such as that of dogs, cats, turtles, birds, and fish. There is no way to tell by looking at, tasting, or smelling the food whether Salmonella germs are present. Be sure and keep all your foods, especially meat, at below 40° F. I have a thermometer in my refrigerator so I can check the temperature. Especially with our frequent power shortages, I want to make sure the temperature doesn't become warm enough for the bacteria to grow. Heat above 140° F. will destroy the germs. If you cook meat the heat will destroy the bacterial growth. Twenty-four hours after eating contaminated food these symptoms may occur: fever, headache, diarrhea, abdominal discomfort, and occasional vomiting. Most people recover in two to four days, unless they are already weakened by sickness and then it takes longer to recover. The next time you think you have a case of the flu, think about what you ate the day before and how carefully

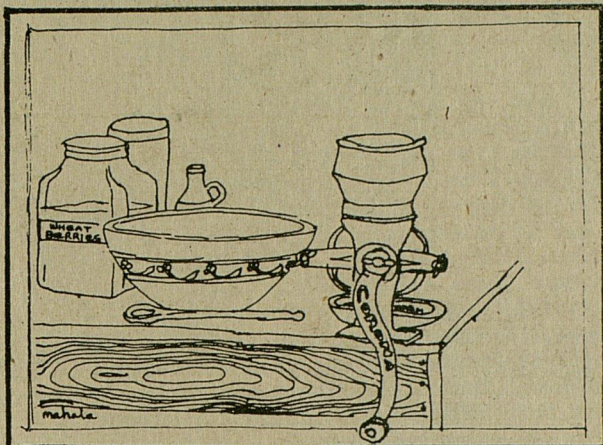


the food was handled. A common way to spread Salmonella bacteria would be by cutting up a chicken and then not wiping and washing off the knife and cutting board before you use them for your vegetables. You have contaminated the vegetables with the chicken's bacteria. It only takes a minute to wash your hands, the knife and the board.

(2) Clostridium perfringens exists in the soil, dust, on food, and in the intestinal tracts of humans and other warm blooded animals. If you've been sick after eating at a restaurant (no matter how cheap or expensive) this is probably what you had. If foods are held in large quantities at improper temperatures (not hot or cold enough) for several hours or overnight these bacteria grow and cause poisoning. Restaurants often hold foods for long periods of time on steam tables or other warming devices. You should remember not to leave foods out after dinner, or overnight on the stove. To avoid Clostridium perfringens, meats should be properly cooked, held hot and served hot. Take leftover meat, cool the meat rapidly in small containers in a refrigerator to 40° F. or below. Thoroughly reheat leftover meats or meat dishes before serving and bring leftover gravy to a rolling boil before serving. Maintain cold cuts and cold sliced meats below 40° F. and serve them cold.

(3) Staphylococcus (staph) is very common; these organisms are in your respiratory passages and on your skin. They usually enter food from a human or an animal. Staph germs grow in all meats, poultry, eggs and egg products, tuna, potato or macaroni salads, cream-filled pastries, and sandwich fillings. If staph germs multiply to a high level they form a toxin you cannot boil





or bake away. The symptoms appear 2 to 4 hours after eating and may bother you for 24 to 48 hours.

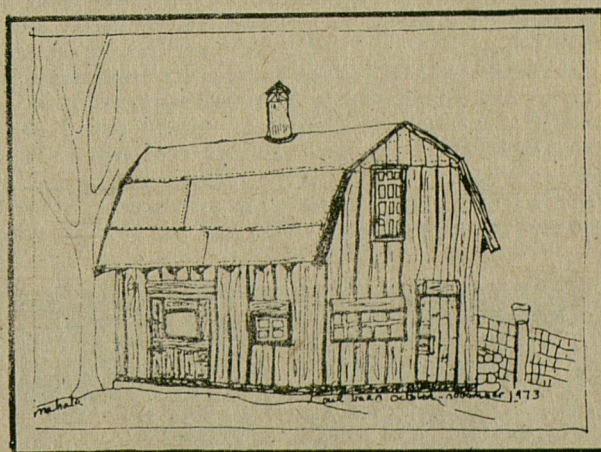
(4) *Clostridium botulinum* (botulism) is usually fatal. Botulism spores are found throughout the environment and are harmless. However, in the proper environment, and when not destroyed by heat, the spores divide and produce poisonous toxins. A small amount of these germs can kill you. Most botulism deaths have been caused by eating contaminated home-canned food. The proper procedures in home canning require special cooking pots and trying to keep everything sterile and hot. Under-cooking is one of the main problems in home-canning. In general, high acid foods may be canned by boiling; but all others, including meats and poultry, should be canned in pressure cookers at the appropriate heat level for the required length of time. Here I must say that I don't have the ideal situation, a pressure cooker, and I have canned vegetables and fruits and never had any problems. Botulism is not just a home-canning problem. Although less frequent, commercially canned goods can also be deadly. A few good don'ts which apply to any food in containers are: avoid leaky seals, and bent or broken or bulging cans. Sometimes, but not always, you have clues to botulism - i.e., bulging cans, an off color, unusual odor, or strange appearance. Let your nose, eyes, and common sense tell you - don't even taste it! Throw the contents away where neither child nor animal can dig it up. If it's commercially canned, take it to your nearest health official and have a check run on it. You might save someone else.

Let me say here that according to a local hospital doctor, no known cases of food poisoning have been recorded for the past three years in

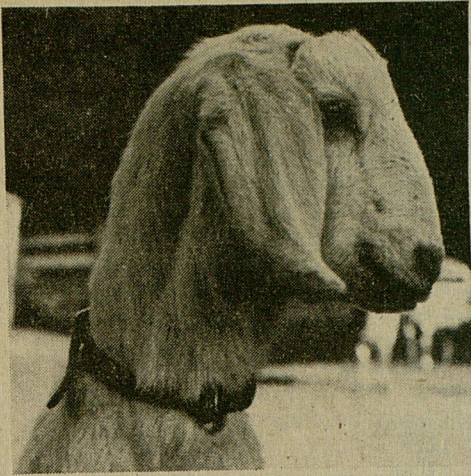
our Mendocino area. It would appear that we are being careful in both canning and most food preparation. I only wonder about all the sudden cases of food-poisoning symptoms which people attribute to the flu. I don't think people should have the flu as often as they do and I feel its because they are really suffering from mild food poisoning and just don't know it because the symptoms are basically the same.

Dormant germs are not harmful but not keeping food cold enough (below 40° F. in the refrigerator) or cooking it (above 140° F.) can cause germs to multiply. After shopping put foods in the refrigerator or freezer immediately as this prevents any bacteria from growing. I used to leave frozen foods on the counter to thaw during the day. Don't! Bacteria grow at room temperature. Thaw food in the refrigerator or cook it frozen. For thawing in a hurry, place the frozen food in a water-tight plastic bag submerged in cold water. Don't keep main dishes at room temperature for more than two hours or the bacteria will start to grow. Also refrigerate leftovers after dinner and place them in shallow or small containers so they cool quickly. Don't let pets climb over areas, kitchen counters, etc., where you are preparing or eating food.

Perhaps, as the practical non-existence of cases would indicate, there really isn't such a need for paranoia about these bacteria. It would appear most people use common sense and good judgement about their canning techniques and food preparation. However, I don't want to have any extra illnesses or possible death. I'm going to be careful, and keep a thermometer in the refrigerator for safety. I hope this basic understanding of food poisoning bacteria will keep us all healthy and safe. q







veterinary medicine: *enterotoxemia*

Anyone who keeps animals has suffered through or feared the nightmare of losing the to an unknown, unpredictable sudden disease. We went out to milk our goats one morning and found one of our best young Nubian does on her side in a pool of diarrhea. This doe had been fine the night before. She was in beautiful health, fat and sleek, her coat shiny. Her appetite was excellent and two weeks after kidding she was already milking ten pounds a day. When we found her she was only a few minutes from dying. She could hardly move or lift her head and her body was cold all over. She died with little struggle. This was the beginning of a really heartbreaking experience for us, and one we share here in the hopes that no one else will have to go through it.

The sudden death of this healthy, top-condition goat was a shock but not a mystery to us. There is a common disease which affects goats, sheep, cattle, pigs and even foals. We had read of it many times in livestock magazines and veterinary books, and talked with other goat breeders who had lost animals to it. We even suspected that some newly purchased kids we had lost the summer before had died of it. The disease is called enterotoxemia. It is also known as pulpy kidney disease, overeating disease, and struck. It usually affects the very best animals - prime lambs, animals on excellent pasture, kids that are growing the fastest. The course of the disease can be as short as an hour or two, it is not uncommon for animals to die overnight. All of this led us to believe that this was what had killed our doe. We knew that she had no access to anything poisonous and in all our goat-keeping experience and reading there was nothing else we'd heard of which kills a healthy animal so fast. We decided to call in a veterinarian to do an autopsy, send in lab samples, and confirm our diagnosis.

The other ten does living with this one all seemed normal, rambunctious, and hungry. We cut down a little on their grain that morning and gave them a little oat hay with their alfalfa. We knew that enterotoxemia can literally be caused by overfeeding or by an overly-rich diet. It seemed strange that the same feed (quantity and type) the does had been get-

ting for years could suddenly be toxic. We were careful not to cut down too much, knowing that a sudden feed change can cause ketosis in a pregnant doe or milk fever in a just-freshened doe. The does were all young (the oldest was three) and most had either just kidded or were due soon. There was one milker who had been fresh a year and was not rebred, and another doe who hadn't taken and was long dry. These variables were to confuse us in later attempts to pin-point what had triggered this disease.

The veterinarian who came to autopsy our doe had very little experience with goats or goat diseases. We told him what we thought, asked him to have the lab check specifically for the Clostridia perfringens bacteria that cause enterotoxemia. The autopsy itself revealed very little - besides the excellent condition of our goat. There were a few minor ulcers on the intestinal lining but everything else looked fairly normal. A little fluid in the lungs and some odd-colored pinkish fluid in the intestine were unusual. The veterinarian took samples of liver and lung tissue; sections from the intestine, and so on for laboratory diagnosis. We asked him to order antitoxin (for immediate use on affected animals) and toxoid (for long term protection) if the laboratory confirmed our suspicions. In the meantime we began reading up on enterotoxemia - really thinking about our goat feeding program. We spent a lot of anxious hours with the goats themselves but they all seemed fine - too fine, we thought grimly. We looked appreciatively at the two does who had really lost weight after kidding - we'd been trying to fatten them up; now it looked as though their poor condition would protect them.

Enterotoxemia is known all over the world, and occurs under all sorts of animal keeping conditions. It is one of the most common diseases of feed lot lambs in this country. Most references stress the susceptibility of young animals to this disease. Foals, for instance, die in their first few days. Calves under ten days old are especially vulnerable. Lambs and kids are very susceptible when they begin eating grains and hay (or good pasture) in addition to their milk. Kids and lambs nursing on very heavy-milking does or ewes are likely to be affected. Older animals that are being especially well-fed, grazing lush pasture or being fattened up for slaughter are all susceptible. This disease may be seasonal, occurring mostly in late winter and spring. All the factors which cause

continued

animals to get enterotoxemia are not understood. But generally it seems that if your animals are well taken care of and fed you should take preventative measures before you have to deal with an outbreak.

There are a number of types of enterotoxemia. Type A has been found in lambs in California, though it is mostly confined to cattle in the United Kingdom and sheep and cattle in Australia. Types B and C affect lambs, calves, pigs, and foals, causing dysentery with a great deal of pain. The animals frequently die, though some may recover after a period of general debility. Type C causes "struck" in adult sheep and enterotoxemia in goats - both are usually fatal. Type D causes what is commonly called "pulpy kidney" disease because of the rapid degeneration of these organs after the animal dies. This type is very common in this country in feedlot lambs and probably in well-fed young goats. All of these types of enterotoxemia have similar symptoms and run a similar course in the affected animal.

The simplest description of what actually happens when an animal gets enterotoxemia is as follows: Clostridia bacteria are found everywhere in the soil and are part of the intestinal contents of normal animals. Usually when the bacteria are ingested, they are destroyed in the rumen (first compartment of the ruminant stomach) and abomasum (fourth compartment, or true stomach). A few that survive may reach the duodenum (small intestine) where they can multiply and produce toxins. Normally the movement of food ingested will keep these bacteria (and their produced toxins) down to a low level. If something interferes with this normal movement, the bacteria have an opportunity to multiply and produce enough toxins to, in effect, poison the animal. A heavy feeding of milk to kids or lambs can cause this slowing down. Ruminants need a bulky, fibrous diet. A feeding of lots of concentrates and/or grain could slow down normal digestion. Once the digestive system slows down and the clostridia bacteria begin to multiply and produce toxins, the animal will show outward signs. These signs - or symptoms - vary. Our first common sign is a profuse diarrhea which has, as one reference puts it, "a peculiarly evil smell..." This diarrhea may have mucous or blood in it. Animals may have a "less acute" form of enterotoxemia which lingers for days or even weeks. Diarrhea or dysentery is chronic and the animal, if young, fails to grow normally. It may or may not recover. A common secondary effect of the toxins is a stimulation then a depression of the central nervous system. Lambs have been observed to stagger about; older sheep grind their teeth and stagger. Older animals will refuse to eat; lambs, calves and kids refuse to nurse. The affected animal may have colic and be in obvious pain, or it may bloat. Animals may die in convulsions or may be depressed and just lie down. Some cases show respiratory symptoms - rapid, shallow breathing, fluid in the lungs, and so on. An animal's temperature may remain normal, as no fever per se is involved. Sometimes the temperature will rise slightly then fall.

Because of the variability of the signs, enterotoxemia is sometimes difficult to diagnose. It may be confused with other diseases or with bad feed, etc. Usually in the case of sudden death of healthy strong animals you should presume enterotoxemia as a probable cause and work from there. Autopsies may give definitive diagnosis but not in all cases.

The lab results on our first doe came back negative for Clostridia bacteria. We were advised not to bother vaccinating the rest of our does. A week later another doe from the same group was listless and depressed at morning milking time. She had severe diarrhea and was swaying on her feet. We called the veterinarian at once and on his advice gave her a large injection of penicillin and an oral dose of sulphamethazine. She seemed a little better a few hours later, though she still refused to eat and was obviously unhappy. We kept her on the penicillin sulphamethazine combination for about five days - she seemed to recover, began eating again and went back up in her milking. A week later she relapsed with the same signs - depression, vertigo and profuse diarrhea. She died within a few hours - in great pain, crying out and struggling. A second autopsy was done. Again we said "enterotoxemia" and again our veterinarian assured us the bacteria would show up in the lab tests if indeed it was enterotoxemia. Two days later a third doe died. This one was an Angora who was kept in a separate pasture with our sheep in a totally different area of the farm. The only contact between the two houses was some grain that the milkers had left. We had taken it down and fed it to the sheep the night before. This doe was dead when we went out in the morning - she was bloated, her head was bent back as though she had died in convulsions. She was surrounded, as the other two had been when they died, by a pool of diarrhea. This doe was not autopsied, but a sample of her feces was sent to be analyzed. The results on her and the doe who had died before were the same: all samples showed strep bacteria and coliform bacteria, no clostridia. Both strep and coliform are very common. We asked the veterinarian if they were found in abnormal quantities. He said the lab reports didn't say this, only that they were present. By now we were dreading the ordeal of going out in the morning to chores. I remember talking with an old-time goat breeder in Connecticut who had lost almost half her herd of fine registered Toggs. before enterotoxemia was diagnosed. She said she hated going out in the morning because she would invariably find one of her best young does dead or dying. Like her, we were losing our best - our biggest, healthiest best producing does.

We lost two more of our does before clostridia bacteria finally made a definitive showing in the lab. It had taken almost two months to establish the diagnosis we'd suspected in the beginning. If we had trusted ourselves more and vaccinated the herd in the very beginning, we might have lost only the first doe. Or if we'd had antitoxin on hand, we could have established a diagnosis with the second doe. Her response to antitoxin would have been dramatic, positive

proof that what we were dealing with was enterotoxemia. Now we are vaccinating all does, kids, bucks and sheep regularly. The cost is minimal compared to the loss of even one animal. The effort is nothing compared with the stress and sadness and loss of actually going through an outbreak of this disease. In retrospect, we can only wish that we'd believed the warnings in the goat books that; "Enterotoxemia is the worst goat-killer". It is indeed.

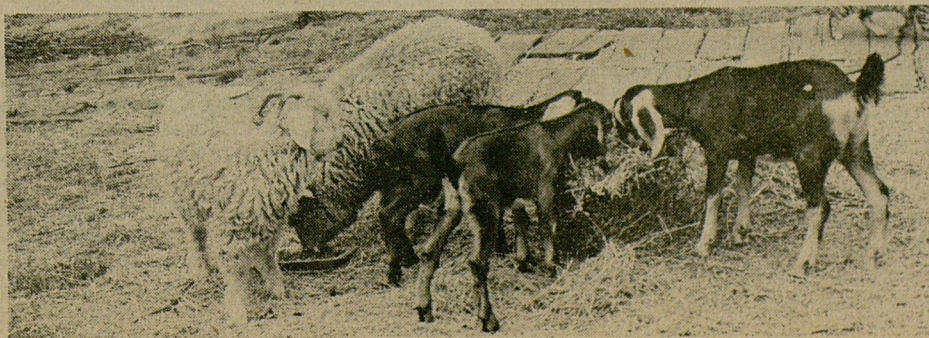
Control is the best way of dealing with enterotoxemia. If you have never had an outbreak of this disease, you can vaccinate your animals with Toxoid or Bacterin. These may be purchased from a farm supply, a vaccine company or from your veterinarian. You can use type - specific (ie. Type A; Types B and C; Type D) OR multivalent vaccine (Types B,C,D-usually) OR a multiple vaccine (to protect against enterotoxemia and other clostridia-caused diseases). Mature breeding animals should be vaccinated twice initially. If your ewes or goats are pregnant, vaccinate them six weeks and two weeks before they are due to lamb/kid. The colostrum from these vaccinated animals will give their offspring temporary passive immunity. Mature sheep should then be given an annual booster - try to plan to vaccinate the ewes about two weeks before lambing to give their lambs maximum protection. If you have had problems with this disease or live in an area where it is prevalent, you should vaccinate your goats every six months. Otherwise, goats should receive an yearly booster. Plan one of these vaccinations to fall two weeks to a month before kidding. Lambs, calves and kids that have received colostrum from vaccinated does will be passively protected for "a few weeks" (one source) to "six weeks" (another source). They may be vaccinated with toxoid when four to ten weeks old and again at two weeks to a month later. (Veterinary books, animal husbandry books and veterinarians themselves vary considerably on the age suggested for vaccination of very young animals. I am choosing four to ten weeks as the period when the animal will respond well to the vaccine and needs the protection the most.) Immunity develops about ten days after the first injection; after the second, immunity is stronger and takes three to four days to develop. Don't forget to vaccinate your bucks and rams. They are as susceptible as your does and ewes.

If you haven't vaccinated and have an outbreak of this disease, you may give antitoxin

or antiserum to all sick animals and all those susceptible. Antitoxin may save an animal who is already suffering with enterotoxemia. It may recover dramatically if the antitoxin is given as soon as possible. Antitoxin may be obtained from a local veterinarian (if she/he treats large animals) or possibly from a farm supply store. It is also available from mail order veterinary supply houses. Further care for the sick animal involves administration of broad spectrum antibiotics. Penicillin and/or sulfa-methazine seem to have good results in goats, and probably in sheep. The sulfamethazine is given orally in the form of ob-lets, or large pills. The penicillin is injected intramuscularly. These drugs should be given for three to five days. Dose according to directions on the medication bottle or insert. Unvaccinated animals being kept under the same conditions as stricken animals should be given antitoxin as an immediate preventative treatment. They will be protected at once, but only for about ten days. You may give these animals toxoid injections at the same time. Protection will develop about the same time the antitoxin protection wears off.

Whenever you give toxoid or antitoxin, watch the animal carefully for allergic reactions. An animal may go into shock - the antidote (epinephrine) is something you should have on hand just in case. It is available from the same sources as the toxoid and antitoxin and is very cheap and an important precaution. Other cautions I encountered were against using Type D Toxoid in "sick or recently sheared animals" and special care in giving antiserum to Saanen goats (they are "very prone" to anaphylactic shock).

Animals given enterotoxemia toxoid injections often develop swellings or firm lumps at the injection site. These swellings are apparently caused by the adjuvant in the toxoid given. This is a substance which holds the toxoid in a localized area and helps stimulate the animals body to produce the desired antibodies in response to the injection. The animal will probably have a small area of permanent scar tissue at this site. Occasionally animals develop an abscess which will become quite large and may either burst or be reabsorbed by the animals body. If the abscess bursts, clean it well and treat with Tincture of Iodine (three days successively). I believe these abscesses may be injection abscesses - a result of unclean injection technique or getting alcohol under the skin - or may be a slight allergic reaction. They usually heal up well and do not re-occur. The material from these abscesses is probably not infectious. ♀



FLYING

Flying, Kate Millet, Alfred A. Knopf (N.Y. 1974)

A copy of this mammoth (545 pg), expensive (\$8.95), and hot-off-the-press book was sent to Country Women by the publisher in hopes that we would review it in the magazine. The publisher didn't know, of course, that this one precious copy would have to make the rounds of our extensive women's community first. Finally now, five months later, it has come back to me. The cover raggedy and the pages well read, and I will attempt the hoped-for review.

Briefly, this is a journal, re-worked, of a year in Kate Millet's life. A year sometime after Sexual Politics, after the unbearable media assault upon her and somewhat after a period of insanity resulting from this assault. The book is about how she puts the pieces of herself back together. Now, finally, we have a chance to see what the real pieces are that make up this heretofore fantasy woman. She is no longer hiding behind a wordy thesis, no longer the unoffending "spokeswoman for Women's Lib." Now she has given us an incredibly honest view of herself in one of the most out-front autobiographical books I've ever read.

I loved the pace of this book. It is written in the notation kind of style of a journal, but when a description is needed it is there in full. Kate's life centers around her interactions with people. In quoting some passages here I hope to give a taste of her style and a look at some of these relationships.

Celia...an old lover, never quite grasped, still tempting. The following passage also gives an example of the media nightmare. "Sitting in the dark before her deserted house I relive the last visit. Drove up from New York in a rainstorm. Local television. And I was late. Numb with embarrassment at having forced them to go on the air without their advertised "guest." Warding off the hostility of Connecticut housewives trapped in their split-level ranch styles with chores and children, and a fiery distaste for Women's Lib. A shrieking horde, they telephone the station to denounce me. A few begin calling in support, then more. A battle of suburbanites. The gentleman interviewer, type of genial humorist who presides over all women's programs everywhere, aglow at the "response." Hot topic.

Good show. Leaving the station I know already I will be taken there to stand in front of that big house in the rain. Her car not there that day either. Fatuous enough to ring the bell and wait in terror. Then lingering on hour after hour on the chance she might be out shopping. No one came. Tonight in the darkness no one will come either. I wait on in a depression rather like relief. Spared the final exile. Saved too from a lower order of bondage. I do not want Celia back on these terms, loathe slaves as much as she, am as arrogant."

Her mother...her only parent when she was growing up, still wielding that awesome parental judgement. "I cannot write that book. It would have to say that I'm what? And what am I anyway? I hate confessionals. Bless me father for I have sinned. A whinny form. And then there's Mother. I hear her on the phone: 'What does it mean to be a bisexual, Katie?' 'Well, I guess it means to love both men and women, Mother.' 'How terrible.' 'What's wrong with it, Mother?' The first time I had ever challenged her, actually said, what's wrong with it? So she told me: it's dirty, filthy, disgusting - and I heard her."

Fumio...her husband, described so sweetly so patiently so calmly as to be almost unreal. Non-monogamy wouldn't be the stumbling block it is if all lovers were like Fumio. Or does he not take Kate's women lovers seriously? Whether she's leaving him or returning he's always smiling. "He waves goodbye to me in the driveway. 'Have a good vacation.' 'Work lots.' 'Give the Claire a hello for me.' 'Good-bye.' The slight figure waving its arms as I turn the corner."

And Claire...the woman she meets and loves in this book. Their conversation is too literary, smooth and witty. "In bed, in her arms, in her softness, and she asks me how irony deals with this situation. 'It searches out a witty phrase to explain the Tampax you are destined to find anyway.' 'I have pre-science and knew it was there already,' she replies serenely. Smiling at me: 'We are now incorporated, the flesh of one actually assimilated into the other,' her eyes so fine and green they hurt. A good day on planet earth." But the description of their love-making at the end of the book is the most beautiful yet written in the meager records of lesbian love.

At the time I was reading Flying, and I read it non-stop for three days, I was keeping a journal for a month. Here are the entries concerning the book.

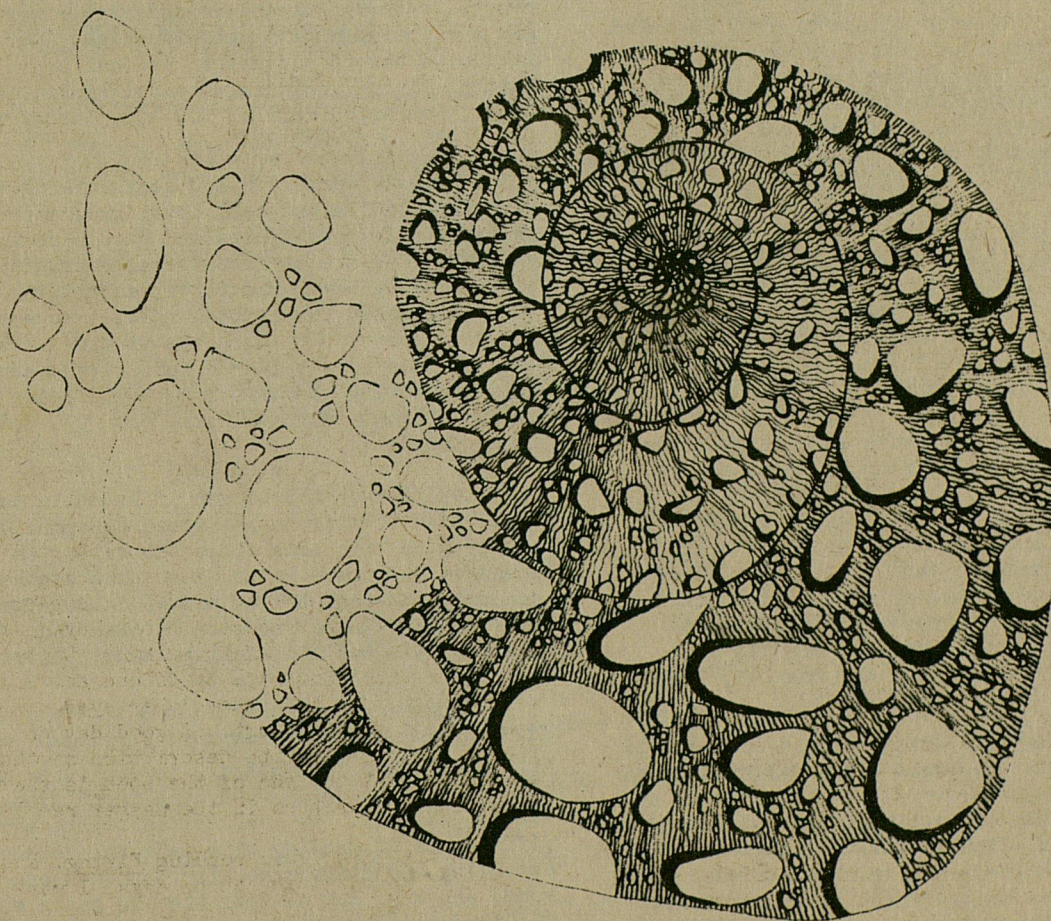
"July 7 - The rain turned very real in the afternoon, a seemingly endless winter rain and I curled up on my bed all day with Flying. A personal view of the women's movement by another big name but much more real for me than Small Changes (another review copy we received). I feel she did so well what she feared she couldn't do, wrote honestly and clearly who she is, how she thinks and acts. The right-nowness of it, like a journal, even the way she uses sentences, is fascinating me. I always felt I needed distance to make my everyday into understandable events to other people. But I see that a journal, notes to oneself, can be written to make a strong and immediate statement. In this case about media, women's liberation, lesbianism and the artist. Women's books just keep coming, each one better than the last. Finally women are speaking to women and getting published by the big publishers. Distributed everywhere. To subvert the patriarchy some more.

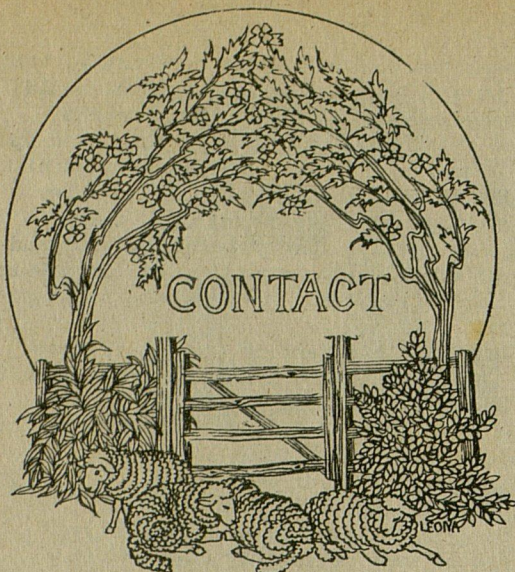
"July 8 - I've read more Kate Millet. Sometimes she speaks so clearly about the cause of her insanity. The cause was us - you and me - the unknowing public pressures. Karen told me one day about how awful Kate was at the L.A. Lesbian Conference. That she

was drunk and couldn't speak coherently, that there were a lot of other things that could have happened instead, like Judy Grahn's She Who Theatre. But that Kate just used up her time anyway. Now I hear the message of her book so strongly - her sisters use her as a calling card, put her name on their conference agendas and then don't understand when she's not ready to perform at the appointed time. Or not give the show she was supposed to give.

"July 9 - Have kept my journal fifteen days. Knowing tonight I have to write, can't lose it now but feeling completely drained having just finished Kate's book. The ending is so eloquent that I feel a fool to be writing here. But, of course, so did she, in turn, feel presumptuous to be writing. It must be done at least fifteen more days."

And it must be done by more and more women. The writing, I mean. For if there is ever to be a record of who women really are, not men's fantasies and not sweet moralistic tales of timid women, if this kind of literature is ever to exist then women such as Kate Millet, unafraid to show her real self, must write it. Perhaps having studied English literature so thoroughly, for Sexual Politics was what made her come to write this book. ♀





The newly formed LESBIAN HERSTORY ARCHIVES is now in the process of collecting books, magazines, journals, news clippings, bibliographies, photos, historical information, tapes, films, diaries, poetry and prose, biographies, autobiographies, notices of events, posters, and other memorabilia and obscure references to our lives. If you have lesbian materials that you would like to donate to us, please send them to: Lesbian Herstory Archives, PO Box 1258, N.Y., N.Y. 10001

We're two women living in Ourey, a small mountain town in Southwest Colorado. Very isolated from other feminists, lesbians, and would like to meet any living in the southwest or any who are passing thru. We have lots of room. Women who are thinking of moving to this area can get in touch with us for information. Gail Fitzhugh and Kathy Semple, Box 373, Ourey, CO 81427

We are a loving group of women dedicated to providing a Retreat from the sexist pressures of the culture. We have 23 acres in the Adirondacks, a 15 room house, 4 cabins. We need strong women with skills and/or money to join us in creating and maintaining A Woman's Place. Write: Marie Deyoe, A Woman's Place, Athol, N.Y. 12810

I have a 20 acre farm with room in my house and a private cabin I'll fix up. I have a partner (male). His thing is his job in town, my thing is my land, hogs and next year's garden. I am a trained gas and diesel mechanic and will help teach any women who want to learn. I need some help with farming and my four active children, ages 6 months to 6 years. I'll also provide room, board, a small salary, and use of a truck. Please write: Ms. Douglas, Box 147, Carlton, Washington 98814

I am a 54 year old artist with a 15 year old daughter. I live in the Cheat River valley in the Monongahela National Forest. It is my hope to recruit one, maybe two other likeminded and resourceful female artists. Shared living expenses could be quite low and there's native clay and wood for the taking. We are in the midst of rare plants, moths, birds and Mountaineers, ideal for film, photography and recording. Write: Patricia Rodionoff-Peck, St. George, West Virginia 26290

We are a Communitarian Village and we publish Communities magazine. We are buying equipment to set up a small printing business. Profits will accrue to a communal coffer. We have a house in Oroville that rents for \$125 per month, plus 5 or 6 people to do the business. We are looking for some feminist women to join us. The first people to respond would decide whether to make the group all women or not. The long range goal of this venture is to eventually integrate with other communes and small businesses into a village sized community of about 500 people on 1000 acres of land. For more information, write: Licorice, Rt. 1 Box 191, Oroville, CA 95965

Our women's farm in Arkansas is open to feminist visitors and potential residents. We have 130 acres, a pond and spring, chickens and cats, and a large house with a splendid view of surrounding mountains and valleys. Because we live on a minimal income, we ask visitors to share food and maintenance expenses (small). We are interested both in preserving the land and in establishing a women's community. For more information, contact: Suzanne Pharr, Huckleberry Farm, Rte. 5, Huntsville, Arkansas 72740

We're looking for women and children to join our rural family. We are leasing a farm north of Garberville, looking for land to buy in this area. We participate in a cooperative community school, ages 5-13, and share in preschool activities for the youngsters. We have facilities for arts and crafts, typesetting and a good winter garden. Our men are into feminist consciousness. Our orientation is toward education, radical social change, natural living and community building. Contact: Wendy, Companion Family, Box 406, Garberville, CA 95440 707-943-3325

Fantasy Farm is a 160 acre working farm where we raise alfalfa and beef cows, grow most of our own vegetables and fruits and have bees and chickens. We are an intentional community working towards being non-competitive, equalizing work, and diminishing traditional roles. We are seeking new members and encourage visitors. We would like to have more children here with a school and separate living quarters for them. Please write before coming. Fantasy Farm, Box 207, Enderby, B.C., Canada

We live on the island of Kauai in Hawaii and would love to start a gay women's community. You are free to live here since the valley is a forest preserve and there is no rent. The weather is conducive to tent living and wild fruit grows everywhere. Write for more information: Lydia and Deborah, Box 150, Kealia, Kauai, Hawaii

A group of gay men in Iowa have published the first issue of RFD, a magazine for rural gay people. We want to address the magazine to all rural gay people, but in order to do that we need input from our Lesbian sisters. We realize that there are basic differences in dealing with male and female homosexuality and differences in consciousness between women and men, but we feel that we share much of the same societal oppression. If you would like to contribute to RFD, please write: Stewart Scofield, R.D. 2, Malcom, Iowa 50157

Future Issues

Foremothers: our spiritual and historical ancestors, including black, chicano, Indian, and immigrant country women. We are looking for interviews with old women about early days, remembrances of grandmothers and greatgrandmothers, letters, diaries, photographs.
Deadline: January 15.

Sexuality: an exploration of sexual feelings, experiences, fantasies: childhood initiation, sexuality and age, making love with men, making love with women. We want to focus on graphic reality rather than theory. Scheduled for March - April publication.

Projected Future Issues:

Women and Work
Feminism and Men
Women's Separatism

**Box 51
Albion, CA**

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Carmen: 3, 11, 46, 47
Mahala Greenberg: 56, 57
Kathleen Gerd: 63
Leona: 1, 4, 31, 32, 33, 48
Sue Sellars: 12, 34, 35, 36
Ellen chanterelle: 44, 45

Photographs:

Yvonne Aufrance: 55
Sally Bailey: 14, 19, 42
Louise Dorn: backcover
Alice Flores: 17, 29
Melanie Gifford: 16
Lynda Koolish: 22, 23, 24, 25, 28, 51, 52, 53, 54, 59, 61
Laura Lengyel: 20
Ruth Mountaingrove: 45
Carol Osmer: 15

Country Women Special Editions

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 to Albion.

Country Women's Poetry - this will be published
first and graphics are also needed
Box 511
Garberville, Ca. 95440

Fiction for Children - short stories or excerpts from
longer works
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
Box 90
Philo, Ca. 95466

Country Women's Fiction - short stories or other short fic-
tional prose
Box 508
Little River, Ca. 95456

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