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SEXUALITY

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I WANT

MY HEART

BROKEN OPEN



# Country Women is all of us . . .

## Country Women is each of us . . .

.... who have worked on this issue, and each of you, female and male, who are sharing consciousness with us as you read the results of our collective effort.

This collective was made up of ten women, ranging in age from twenty-four to thirty-six. We live within twenty miles of each other, way out in the country: Julie, Weed, Tania and Judith have no children. Moon has three. Pamela and Harriet have two each while Sharon Leila and Bobbi have one each. Five of the ten of us have been sexually molested. Three of us were molested as children as well as adults. What data is relevant to sexuality anyway?! What have been your sexual activities in the last month? What did you do? We laughed a lot and began to see that our lives could grow through talking about and exposing that which is usually hidden.

When the energy was flowing, we felt intimate, relaxed and loving with one another. One night Bobbi said she had a vibrator. I asked her how come. She said that they got it so she could put it in her husband's anus while he was on top of her with his penis in her vagina. It was a fantasy they had talked about and they had sent for the vibrator but hadn't used it yet. I wanted to see it so she brought it to the meeting the next week. She handed it to me and said I could keep it for a week. I was embarrassed by it - a white plastic permanent erection in my hands - and said, "No ... here, take it back," and practically tossed it to her while everyone laughed. Because Bobbi is defined as the one who has been happily married for nine years, and I am labelled a sophisticated bisexual, the incident was more than just funny. It was an image breakthrough for all of us in a mood of support and affection.

As we discussed aspects of sexuality our mood of honest exploration would be overcome by our conditioning of shame and secrecy. This happened on many levels. We would argue about sexual identity as related to labels. Who we made love with and society's name for that interaction became a focus so important we forgot about the sexuality - the physicality and truth of our individual experience.

And "relationship" served as another smokescreen. As we tried to write, we found the material coming out less graphic and

overly concerned with the relationship. Of course, that is important too, but sex is physical, a graphic reality, and the words "making love" cover a whole lot of different actions and feelings.

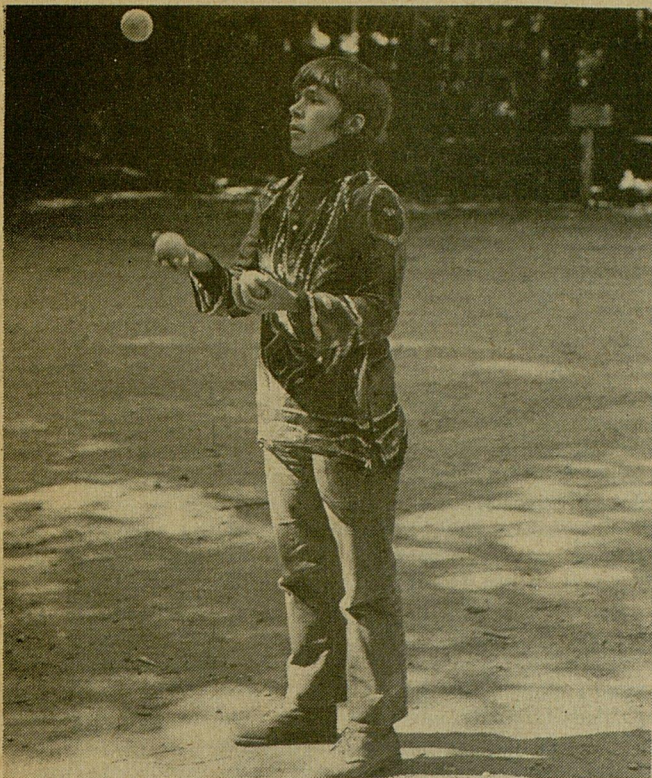
We wanted to deal with the sexuality itself and through this personal search and exposure, find our own identities. And we want that self-directed, self-actualized search to be the relevant political statement about sex. The prohibitions against dealing directly with sexuality are so great, it was a constant battle.

Trying to refocus, we would return to a graphic subject. We talked about what we were happy and unhappy about in our sex lives. I said that I was happy to be experiencing pleasure, feeling love with my partners in sex without feeling trapped by jealousy or possessiveness. I am unhappy that I am not clear about saying "no" to a lover, and that I don't know how to masturbate freely. I only stimulate my clitoris and the orgasm is usually very "tight", pretty automatic and patterned on years of secrecy and guilt. The idea of giving myself a vaginal orgasm and the relaxed pleasure of "real" lovemaking frightens me. Sharing these thoughts released me from a good deal of that fear.

As we passed through our personal paranoidias, we experienced and talked about our fear that this issue of Country Women might adversely affect our relationships to our local community. "Should we use our names?" "We've been using our names for years!" "But" ... We are still confused. We are hoping that by talking about sex we are helping to build a better personal and social life for ourselves and our sisters and brothers everywhere. We are afraid that some people feel so badly about themselves that exposure, even in the mirror of another human being, is too painful, and that their anger will be thrust outward.

But as we went on gardening, building, washing dishes, fixing the motor and coming to these meetings once a week, it became obvious that we had to do our best to explore sexuality and that we had to share that exploration. I don't know if we were able to get to any transcendent truths in the work in this issue, but I do know that it is important that the many different voices are speaking, and that it is important to us that we are speaking openly and together.





# Voices

## Harriet...

Sexuality - Shakespeare called it the "two-backed monster," but I have experienced it more as maze than monster as I continually seek the way back towards the celebration of self that I feel lovemaking can be. The exploration is not geared only to increase the size or intensity of orgasmic contractions but to further open the doors of cosmic communication between myself, my lover and the universe. Big words, yet I feel my struggle for sexual honesty is so connected with my growth as an individual as to be inseparable.

My adolescent sexuality began with a lie. At twelve, I was sticking Kleenex into a bra I didn't need so Alan Mart would think I was sexy. I wanted his attention and that was the fastest way I was able to get it. Tight skirts and three inch heels - L.A. in 1955. I couldn't run; I could barely walk - a perversion of girlhood. And the fact that I was a straight A student with a gentle nature who deeply wanted friendship and acceptance didn't change the fact that if I wiggled when I walked, boys whistled and I had a certain power. I played that card for a long time, through more and less subtle periods. Black mesh stockings, innuendoes, and always a thick layer of pancake makeup. What was I trying to hide?

I think that for the sixteen years following

that I basically remained the same. True, I developed an interesting personality, read the right books, became an ethereal existentialist, married twice, had numerous affairs, worked and taught school, BUT I still wore those sexy clothes and gave those smoldering looks. Come on, big boy, ten cents a dance. Only it wasn't ten cents; it was affection, approval, attention. I might have called it love, only it wasn't. It was also power, for the men I chose to seduce were my professors, bosses, integrity-dripping artists and poets, mad motorcycle actors. They were what I wanted to be but felt I wasn't. What I desired was not just glory by association, but a personality merger that would miraculously transform me. I wanted my identity handed to me on a silver platter or perhaps a silver cock. So from sixteen to twenty-eight, I don't think I went longer than two or three weeks without having a lover, husband, or both.

I feel like I was a victim of being born female in a culture that told me I was basically worthless, relegated to the kitchen and bedroom. My parents loved and supported me as best they could, but I played out the feeling of a fatal flaw for a long time.

What this all has to do with my sexuality is that for years the how it was supposed to be kept me from saying how it was. A part of me always pretended lest I hurt his feelings, not be supportive, lest he leave me. I was a "good lover", moaned and groaned, contracted my cunt, gripped with my legs and arched my back, panting and sweating. But I rarely said I don't have orgasm by just intercourse, would you kiss my clitoris again, please touch me more, now. I mean, he might be bored, after all he's already come and maybe next time and I get really high when he comes. I have imagined making love to a man, coming, and then stopping. Let me be clear here, for I do not want to oversimplify. It is not that I didn't often enjoy love-making or that there weren't moments of truth and sometimes exquisite beauty... I was relating the best I knew how. But, my fear of making demands, just being who and where I was, my ignorance and shame about my body, my smell, my breasts, was the basis for deception. I didn't trust my lovers and I didn't trust myself, and as long as that deception continued, it mirrored my gut-level lack of self respect. Real communication was impossible.

Steps on the path - consciousness raising, talking with other women, a year of celibacy - have all led me to discover a new honesty with my self. I have begun to stop lying in bed and out of it too. It's all connected. The way is not easy or clear, but it is joyous.

My sexual changes began with my last husband. Technically we became what I thought was pretty far out. With vibrators and verbal directions I was capable of greater pleasure, but because the emotional communication was so tied up between us, sexuality became another stage for me to enact what he felt was an invasion of his privacy. If I was the initiator he felt turned off. Finally we let go of the forms of husband and wife in order to try and live more really. I was ready to become who I wanted, to be rather than gain an identity

cont.



## Country Women is each of us...

by fucking someone or even loving them. After all those years of externally being considered a far out person and internally knowing it was only more frosting for the cake, I was ready to stop the paradox, scared but ready.

Becoming sexually open to women was a gigantic step in clearing away the shoulds and shouldn'ts, the roles so ingrained in my sexual behavior. This process wasn't easy and took two years of purposely experimenting with friends, tentative beginnings followed by awkward middlings, consciously trying to break down twenty-eight years of trained heterosexuality. It was not, however, until I fell in love that I experienced the full passion of what making love to a woman means. The imprint took.

Loving Judy deepened my sexual self knowledge. I could explore both the active and passive sides of my desire. It taught me that my body was wonderful and vaginas were beautiful. She was my first longterm lover who was also my friend. I could say no and stop and I don't want to as easily as I said yes and again and I want. It was a sexual soul flowering so sweet that I could ask no more. After a while, no lies. Moments of harmony with bellies pressed together that passed into a time warp of union. Sometimes it couldn't happen. Sometimes she became afraid of me, of her own sexuality, didn't want to trust. Sometimes I became insecure and clutchy. And when it became time for us not to be lovers, we struggled through the pain and hurt of unfulfilled expectations, knowing that the reality of our friendship was precious to both of us. We didn't have to step (or at least not for long) on that old treadmill of severing our emotions, closing, jealousy, that usually accompany "splitting up." The freedom I felt in loving her has changed my whole sexual perspective.

Now I want to go back a bit because before Judy, there was David. With David, sexual intensity combined with an openness on his part to create a powerful relationship for sexual exploration. David was vulnerable with me and tired of having to be a "man." I didn't want to become him; I was beginning to be happy with who I was. We made love for hours, often losing ourselves, not knowing if we were men or women. All parts of our bodies became relaxed and open to the other. Stimulation wasn't only genital, and waves of feeling did often leave us senseless. Sometimes it didn't happen like that. Sometimes it got boring, or too intense, or it hurt and usually I could stop it. Not always though. What I fought was the "romance" of it, a pretense I felt I had to keep up or else hurt him. It was the old "man-woman" thing that eventually separated us because the lies were too destructive to maintain and too difficult to destroy. Also, the fact that aside from David, the rest of my life was totally centered in a women-identified political structure produced an alienation that I didn't want to cope with.

Now fate takes us through many doors. During my eight months of relating to Judy, I identified myself as a lesbian. It made things easy and whole - no confusion for I felt I could never share as

much with a man - and that is probably true. But in creating the "as much" syndrome, I was creating a monster that had to be repeated. I was structuring my future feeling, something feelings don't like. Meanwhile, David and I had continued playing music together and I found my sexual feeling towards him opening as our friendship deepened. How politically incorrect. Was I going to use him until the next woman? Was this the path of least resistance because it was most familiar? I amazed myself by telling him all I felt had been wrong with our past relationship, all the little lies I had perpetrated, all my present fears. It was a new place. I was totally comfortable. I felt that not to follow my sexual feelings would have been a denial of where I was, yet at the same time, making love to a man didn't jive with my political reality. I spent several weeks going round and round the labelling bush. Straight? Gay? Bisexual? Woman-identified? None of the above? The confusion was too much and I was almost ready to go back to celibacy to silence my poor schizophrenic soul. I had gotten so blinded by the rhetoric - words, that I failed to recognize that behind each sexual label was a person and that the women who I loved and worked with were struggling towards deeper consciousness within all those sexual identities. Respecting the validity of other sisters' realities without compromising basic feminist values was the keynote for me in seeing a more unified women future and giving myself the freedom to express my own sexuality.

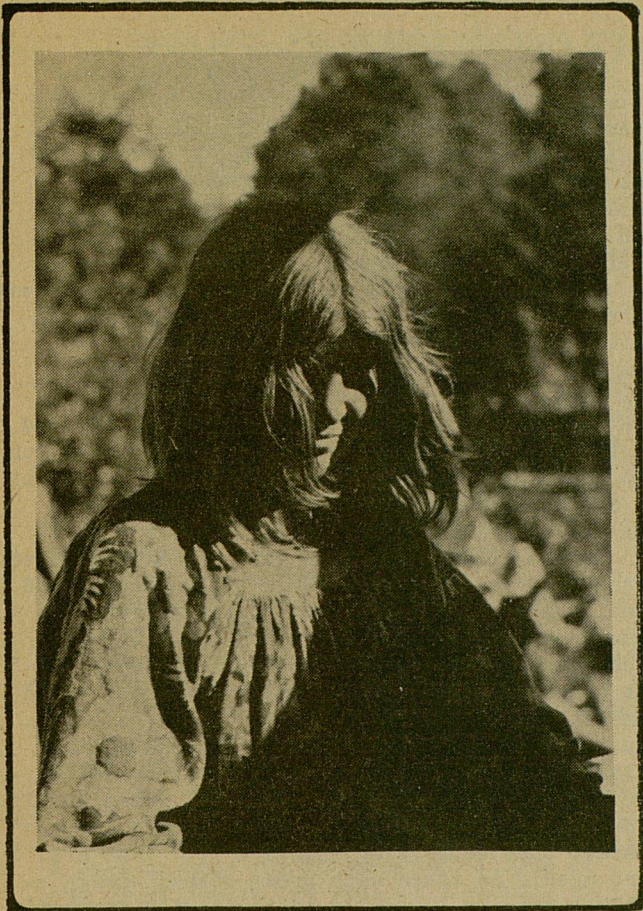
Thus David and I have become lovers again, with honesty in the moment as the only promise between us. Our lives are mostly separate, but the respect is deep. It is a new kind of loving for me, non-attached but secure, leaving us room to explore intimacy with other people. He is living with Arlene, a woman who I feel very close to. The three of us spend time together because we like each other, not because we are trying to prove anything. I would have liked all of us to be lovers because my love and sexual attraction has grown from my feelings towards them both. We have touched each others' lives, thereby enriching them. I am amazed at the non-possessiveness as we joyfully pass an evening together talking, David coming to my house for the night (or not as sometimes is the case), and the three of us meet for breakfast. I have never known this kind of freedom before, freedom from fear.

Sexually, I feel more attuned to myself than ever, and when I am open there is a flowing, a total giving of bodies. It's all different ways of entering each other and taking feeling beyond words, an incredible exploding exchange of energy be it two fingers pressed together, breath and tongue moving from mouth to mouth, to vagina, to anus, to penis, to heart, or a hand quietly inside me feeling the changes.

It's not all perfect, but I am learning. So yes I say to my sexuality, yes, I am glad to be discovering your connecting power. I am thankful for what I feel and would not be celibate now. I am also glad to know that it is me who is turned on and my sexual satisfaction is not dependent on one specific person. It is, however, dependent on my honesty. ♀



# Tania...



## Moon...

Though I hold myself separate and celibate and have for most of seven years, I define myself as a lesbian. I'm on an exploration into self love. I'm alternately creative and comfortable in celibacy and then bored and dissatisfied. I love myself in many ways I never did before. I look to myself for comfort, understanding, courage and healing. I masturbate more, I started at thirty, but my patterns of stimulating and manipulating myself are limited. So are my orgasms limited to my clitoris and vagina.

I feel ashamed of my sexual quietness, my difficulty in relaxing to sexual and clitoral stimulation. Shame has pervaded my sexual feelings and experiences. When I felt more sensual and was more sexual in Mexico, I got a vaginal infection. The infection raged. I couldn't get a consistent diagnosis. I retreated to a hilltop and douched and herbed and sunned myself. I wanted so often to let a dog lick my wounded vulva, but I felt bizarre and afraid. I also suppressed my recurrent impulse to ask a person to lick my soreness to comfort. Some of what I'm revealing is my difficulty to ask for what I need. I'm also expressing the shame and disgust I learned for my own genitals. ♀

Spending three years of my youth as a prostitute has left a powerful mark on my body and on my sexual energy. It is the mark of extreme physical armoring, which keeps my energy locked in my body -- the hallmark of a time when my soul huddled inside -- in fear of the world -- the world of men who had the power and the pricks and all wanted to get inside me.

I grew up as a sensitive child, protected by my mother against the world of men. Energy flowed easily in me -- love for her and for myself -- for All That Is. Anger flowed too, for I had a strong sense of my own rights and was quick to fight against infringement on them. And I felt sexual energy -- since the time of my earliest memories.

As I was twelve, changing from child to woman, she was dying -- as she died, she stepped aside as my protectress -- leaving me on my own in the world of men. It was a long horror story...

Still twelve, there was my first adult sexual experience with my cousin's husband -- who slipped his hand into my pants as we sat together on the basement couch -- I was overcome with guilt and disgust and very turned on. I was sleeping with his daughter at night, and he would come into the bedroom, pull up my pajamas and suck on my titties. Never a word was spoken -- my acquiescence was understood. I hated him.

Then there was my father, a Detroit police. He got me when she died. He didn't get me sexually and he was obsessed with making sure no one else did.

A lot of sexual energy was flowing in me then, but I was confused and oppressed. The anger -- which welled up daily against my oppressors, father step-mother, school -- had to be repressed for survival's sake. It started going underground -- filling up the deep well of my being with hate. And the love which could no longer flow out to my beloved Juny was held in my broken heart along with my breath and my tears. I contracted in incredible pain when she died. I held my breath for it to be over -- but it never has been. I couldn't cry.

So at fifteen, I fucked a punk. He was using a rubber with no lubrication. I knew nothing of raising my legs. The pain was intense -- I was crying -- "I love you" -- "It hurts". The second time was after a strip poker game with him and his friend. The friend thought he should get a piece too. I didn't. I wanted to stop in the middle, but Gary said something like, "Listen, bitch, I'm not going to waste a rubber."

A month later when I found myself locked up in juvenile, a captured runaway, those two fucks weighed heavily against me. The prison doctors, with their metal speculums, searched out my lack of virginity. My father's fears come true. I found myself locked in a Catholic home for wayward girls. Sentence: up to three years.

I ran, and in running slipped through a cosmic crack into the man-made world of prostitution. It started with fucking for a place to stay. He woke me up in the middle of the first night to fuck

cont.



## Country Women is each of us . . .

me again. The experience was still incredibly painful physically.

Within a week, I had turned my first trick -- for ten dollars that I never saw. James brought him home. I don't remember his name or his face -- I just remember that a radio was playing loudly in the next room and that I tried very hard to focus on the music and to take my consciousness out of my body so I wouldn't have to experience what was happening to me -- in me.

Still fifteen, I was initiated into anal sex by the next man I lived with. He was young and black and crazy. He was just out of prison where he had suffered away most of his own youth, and where he'd gotten into fucking his smaller, weaker brothers up the ass. Boys were his sexual preference, but I had an asshole too. He was always threatening to make me suck his dick but that didn't come until I entered the world of professional hustling.

I got a quick lesson on a sausage right before my first night out. My first professional trick insisted that not only did I have to suck him but his asshole too. It was degrading and horrible. Everyone could see I was young and freaked out -- so they ripped me off double.

So, at fifteen, I started fucking them by the hundreds. I hated them and I had to pretend I liked it. I cried a whole lot on the bathroom floor, bitter tears. Sometimes only my hate for my father and desire for righteous revenge kept me going.

I tried desperately to maintain my integrity. I wouldn't kiss them but my body would sometimes become aroused from their touches. It was torture -- fighting with all my will to cut myself off from the sexual responses which revolted and pained me emotionally. Sometimes I lost control and let myself be won over by these sexual feelings that were being brought out physically by men I hated. It was a constant power struggle.

Then, at seventeen, I had my first orgasm with a trick who had spent enough to buy the privilege to suck me for a long time. It was a real surprise and it felt great physically -- and I was quite disgusted with myself. I didn't plan on doing it again. Each time I would swear was my last, but about once a month I would get so horny that I would succumb to some trick with really good head. I could only come by retreating into a total masochistic fantasy, and once it happened I was overwhelmed with disgust and self-hatred.

The positive thread throughout this period was in my relationships with women who loved and supported me. Because I had already dropped out of the world of straight, white morality, it wasn't difficult to slip into sleeping with women. Most of my sisters in the life were bisexual and I found I could be incredibly turned on by women. At seventeen, I got into a heavy sexual trip with my wife-in-law. Not just when we were together with our old man -- but independently of him, too. I was discovering that I could come with women -- and be there. It was all very exciting.

At eighteen, a foxy young whore in New York City, I decided to blow off men entirely. I was legal! No longer on the run! I went square (got a

job) and gay and started my long recovery.

I got involved in a three year couple relationship with a woman. It was very butch/femme oriented, with my orgasm being the main focus. I almost always came. At twenty-one, I left her to move in with a man. He was a comrade in my new revolutionary career. I had spent the last year with Gladys celibate and horny -- fantasizing about men as well as women. But fucking John was the same old drag. However, over the next few years I lived with two men who were my friends and who politically supported women. My experiences with them were my first positive heterosexual experiences. I was sometimes turned on, sometimes came. But mostly I didn't come and was frustrated and found myself caught in the trap of identifying with their orgasms and resenting the inequality of the sexual experience. And -- every fuck always rekindles the horrible memories.

It was around this time that I got interested in the theories of Wilhelm Reich about orgasm and sexual armoring. I started to understand why the energy wasn't flowing in my body, and I began my continuing exploration of body work. Over the last couple of years, my sexuality has started to come out in some positive directions. I have actually been able to masturbate to orgasm, thus reclaiming some control over my own energies. I have been in a very loving and sexual relationship with a man who rarely came (our main birth control method), thus equalizing things a lot. With him, I found myself in touch with great sexual energy -- really breathing -- really in touch with another's soul through sexual love making. But I still rarely came and often found my own subtle sexuality overwhelmed by his.

Today I am really discovering myself as a lesbian, as a sexual woman. Making love with women can be so much based on the loving. I once again remember that I can come, and I love that feeling of peace and release with her still lying between my legs. I am learning to love my own body, my cunt, as I love my sisters. For me, women loving women is where it is at -- right now. ♀

## Bobbi . . .

My sexual past was quiet. I never heard the word "sex" as a child. In high school, I learned to turn boys on to my body, play the petting games and never go too far. I was a "good" girl and soon became disillusioned with dating. I then met someone who I became close friend and companion to, without sex. We eventually fell in love. We married, and at twenty, I had quit college to be mother and wife. Nine years after meeting my husband we are still together. My sexuality has grown over the years, as have we as individuals and as a family. My sexuality is no longer unknown and unenjoyed. I am both loved and loving.



I was a naive virgin and my husband was my first awakener. Our beginning sessions of heavy foreplay would end immediately if he thought I was being hurt in any way. After we finally had intercourse, my sexual desire and appetite increased steadily as I discovered this forbidden fruit was fun. Our roles were still basically that he was aggressor and I was passive but his gentleness and openness to my moods never made this a burden. Also, during this period, I discovered I could easily seduce him if I wanted sex.

Since then, my beloved and I have experimented with many different positions and now we are both passive and active, depending on our moods. Talking during our sexual acts has increased our pleasure tremendously.

The fear of hurting one another became surpassed by the security of our total relationship and sexual honesty seemed only another bond of our total love.

Even with our growing together, our sexual relationship had its internal stresses. At one point I had gained so much weight I could no longer comfortably look at myself in the mirror. Our sexual life was often uncomfortable and in our quest for honesty I asked if my weight had changed things. He said yes - it wasn't the same! My weight was too much on top of him, and I couldn't hold my legs up so much for different positions! Those words echoed through my head and no amount of kisses or love could change the reality I envisioned. "No one loves a fat blob!"

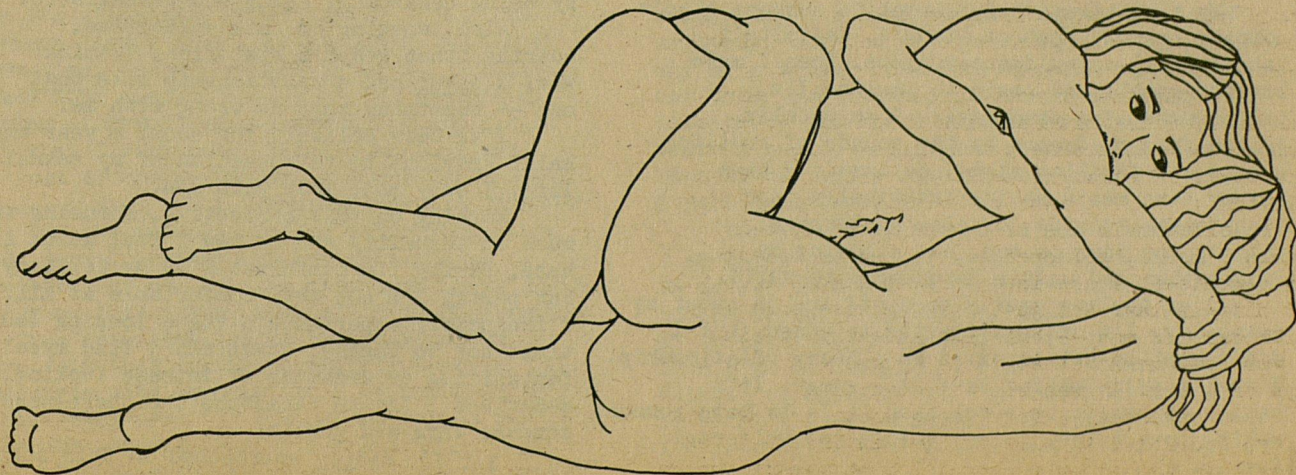
At 23, through encouragement from my women's consciousness raising group, and much talking to my lover for advice, I started masturbating. I discovered it wasn't the evil, sinful thing I had always heard it was but instead, just a means of overcoming my body fears and releasing my sexual energy when I wanted to. It was a tremendous feeling to be dependent on no one for my pleasure.

Coming to the country, I went through a lot of heavies about myself, our marriage, and what we meant to each other. The country gave to us a peace to open ourselves totally to each other and grow close to others. Our sexual life became active again and as we each became more together - independent - identities, our whole beings strengthened!

We have now lived a monogamous relationship for nine years. I still deal with my self-image of a "fat blob" but I am so busy doing the things I love, which boost my ego, I'm usually not even dealing with myself on a purely physically plane. I realize now I've developed bad eating habits I will someday overcome so that my physical body can become strong. I know the reality of our loving other people may someday mean physical intercourse with another. I hope I can understand that his having sexual love with another does not mean that I have failed, or that he is no longer interested in me.

Our closeness has given me a strength to discover myself, my body and my need for people's love. I have many other close love relationships which do not include the sexual, but do include my sensual self. I need to love and hold a person close, feeling their chest move up and down as they breath quietly, knowing that love is a circle enclosing us, tightly together. I feel I am independent, yet eternally tied to my love, my brother in knowledge, and my companion.

Our toes moving back and forth against each other, slowly our legs press together. Eventually our bodies rest side by side, sharing each other's fleshy warmth. Our hands begin to explore, you find my breast, play with it, tease it, moving my nipple sideways until it's hard with excitement. I await each new touch anxiously. My fingers move slowly over your body, enjoying the feel of your soft skin. I gently start playing with your penis, almost inquisitively. How will it respond as I rub you? I feel your hand move over my body, lingering on my legs. Then almost cautiously, I open my legs to your fingers. You softly explore my clitoris, gently, slowly, carefully. We arouse each other, awaken each other's desires. Sometimes your marvelous fingers make my breathing heavy. I hear myself gasping, becoming louder, screaming, holding you tighter and tighter. Then I ask you to join me. Together we are One. No longer separated by mere physical bodies, but off on a ride to another world, filled with ecstasy. ♀





*Country Women is each of us . . .*

## Weed . . .

Being a lesbian and relating to women gives me so much emotional and sexual pleasure. I can feel open about my feelings and desires before, during and after making love, without a heavy power trip laid on me. I feel with a woman I can be totally honest -- for women share socialization and clitorises, which makes a basis of sexual understanding.

I fantasize about women when I make love to myself. Sometimes I prefer getting into myself rather than making love with other women because it's a quick, easy release. Although sometimes I feel masturbating is like climbing a rope, only never quite reaching the top peak.

I love my clitoris to be caressed and stimulated much more than I like plunges into my vagina. I feel I can make love with women without really needing to feel an affectionate closeness, but from my sexual experiences, my highest climaxes and dreams have been reached when there was a feeling of love present. ♀

## Julie . . .

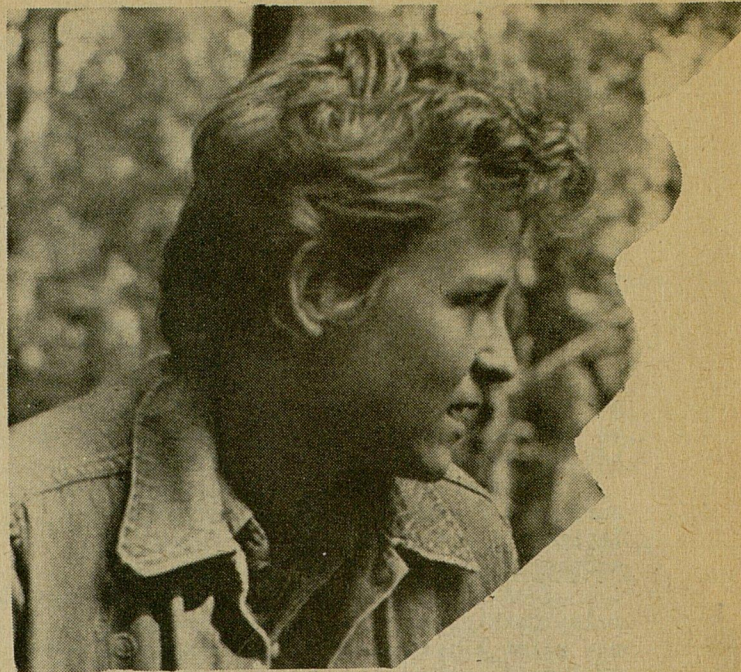
Well, Diana and I were lovers for a year and a half, but we both found that we'd stopped growing and no longer wanted to relate to each other as monogamous lovers. "How's about a 'tight friendship'?" "We could be lovers when we 'felt like it.'"

This idea is great in theory but rather difficult to achieve in the plush surroundings of a 12' X 12' cubicle, that more often than not feels like a closet.

My time always being spent in someone else's company, namely that of Diana's, definitely takes a toll on my fantasy space. When I make love to myself and begin to imagine I'm in the arms of a dandy dyke, I am usually jolted from my dreams by the sounds of rustling sheets and familiar sighs. So lately I have either been masturbating frantically once Diana steps outside, or else abstaining totally for days on end, and allowing my frustration and unfair resentment to build.

I am feeling pretty much off and on about my sexuality. I'm often attracted to women, but I don't want to get involved in a heavy relationship. I really enjoy making love to a woman. It's easier for me to be butch than it is to have someone making love to me. I feel almost too vulnerable.

Soc . . . ♀



## Leila . . .

When I look back on my sexual history, it seems like every time I began a relationship, immediately and in spite of myself, a whole set of expectations descended on my head: since I wanted love-making to be with my most intimate friends, when I made love with someone, I immediately wanted proof that that person was my best friend. Since I was afraid of being rejected, I immediately wanted proof that I wouldn't be; since I was afraid of being lonely, I immediately wanted the person to be available to me at all times. In other words, in the past when I had a sexual relationship, I fucked up.

Now, the above is not necessarily true. Rather it is a psychological representation of the way I view my own sexuality -- it is my sexual self-identity -- I believe that I am a person who fucks up her sexual relationships by being demanding, needy and unrealistic.

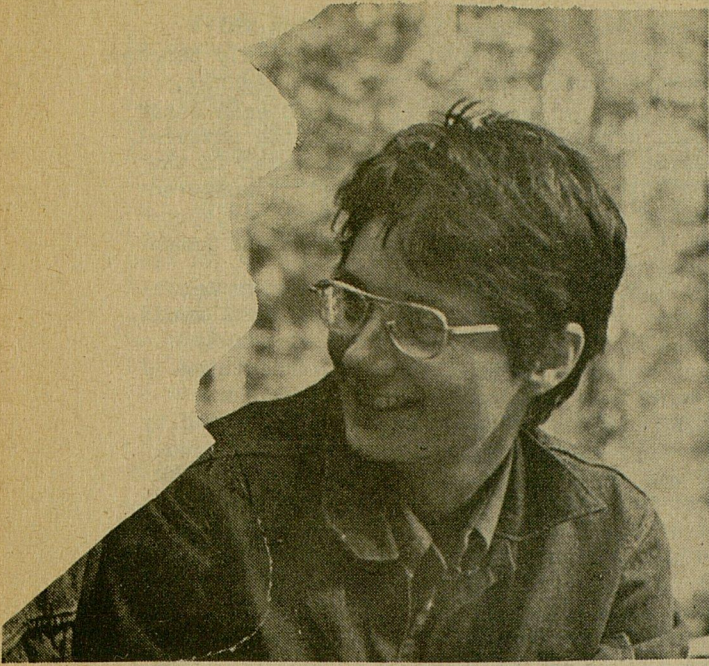
Also, working on this collective, hearing other women's histories, I think: Wow! I never had a relationship like that one -- something must be wrong with me.

I've been celibate for about a year and a half. Previous to this section of my sexual life, I only made love with men.

Working on this collective, focusing so much on sexuality and on how I feel about it is hard. Partly I'm comfortable in my celibacy, but partly I'm not very comfortable at all. I frequently experience a vague longing (sometimes not so vague); sometimes I find myself fantasizing or dreaming of intense fucking, sometimes I try to recapture the there-ness of someone warm and gentle.

Yet I'm deeply entrenched in this state of





celibacy, and I think there are several reasons. For one thing, I think that deep down, there's a desire to cleanse myself - I feel I'm dirtied by the sex I've engaged in. I remember the time when I lived in the city and would go to the artists' bar and pick up men whose names I didn't even know and take them home and fuck them. And I wanted it to be meaningful. I did it because I wanted a long-term relationship to develop out of the incident. I was desperate. I had to have a man. If no man would really love me, something was wrong with me. It's a long time later now, but I think

each sexual relationship I have connects to those feelings I had then, and some part of me feels ugly again - I need to cleanse myself.

This view of myself is very painful. I am in the process of trying to change it, holding my sexual activities in limbo as I try to build new images of myself and how I can and do interact with people, especially lovers.

I am using this time of celibacy to let go of another aspect of my sexual conditioning - the taboo against sleeping with women. I look around me, and the people that I care about are women who sleep with other women. I feel the different levels of my consciousness trying it on for size. It may be that my sexual identity, already much shaken, quakes at the thought of thinking of myself as a lesbian, but as I talk about what I want in a relationship, I see that most of the warmth and support in my daily life comes from women. Still I cling to my celibacy, and the safeness of not being vulnerable to any sexual partner. I have to begin to experience new perspective that came to me during working on this issue: sensuality as differentiated from sexuality. Until recently, I had always felt that any indulgence in sensual intercourse with someone would either lead to sexual intercourse (if the person were a man and became aroused then my refusal would mean I was a "cock-tease" as we used to say in grade

school), or that I would become sexually aroused and then left unsatisfied. Now, with the help of my women friends, I am realizing that sexuality can be a way of life -- a way of relating to people for the giving and taking of the pleasure of it. Part of what has driven me to sexuality is the need for contact -- psychic and physical, the need to focus on and be focused on intensely by another individual. Sensuality is a way for that to happen without me having to deal with my fears of sexual encounter, a way to reawaken my body to the pleasures of my body, a new way to exchange love. For someone in the throes of celibacy, it is a great discovery.

Within the context of my celibacy, I do sometimes masturbate, and I've begun experimenting with my sexual energy. To be specific: using what I am learning as I study Tai Chi Chuan, as I masturbate, I try to keep my back straight and my neck and pelvis relaxed. I find I cannot have an orgasm unless I tighten my pelvic area - presumably I have to close my sexual chakra to enable the energy to build to an orgasm. If instead I keep that area open and breathe deeply, bring my breath to it while I stimulate myself, the excitement is more diffuse throughout my body. When I finally do tighten up, I come quickly and the orgasm gives more pleasure and is more satisfying. So in this way I am learning to exert some control over my sexual energies in order to best enjoy them.

I am looking forward to a time when I will have an open enough relationship with a lover to experiment in the presence of someone else's sexual energy. At the same time, I'm realizing that if I want better relationships, I have to change my partners as well as myself. In the past, I seem to have been so caught in the trap that my expectations set for me, I paid relatively little attention to who my lover was, and wonder now if I really liked many of my lovers. Being celibate I've seen that I don't have much control over who I am attracted to and I am trying to use this time of celibacy to gain control over my sexual energies in this area also.

By working for the collective and talking and writing about my celibacy so much, I have really begun to enjoy exploring the state of celibacy. Until a few months ago, I just wasn't having a sexual relationship with anyone. It was by my own choice, but there was always the insecurity that if I changed my mind, and did want to have a relationship with someone, that no one would want to have one with me. I felt unsuccessful.

Now it's a whole new thing. I am CELIBATE - I am doing something, experiencing something. In my own eyes and in my presentation of myself to the world, I am sure of myself and what I am doing. I begin to explore it from all the levels at my command; I start to learn new things, to experiment. I'm changing, and I'm in touch with my changes. I'm doing something; I'm growing. I feel better and better about the whole thing. ♀



*Countrywomen is each of us . . .*

# Sharon . . .

From the time I was nineteen, through my first marriage and for several years afterwards, in the words of a dear friend, "The hungers of my heart and spirit were confused with the hunger of the body, and my sexuality expressed itself randomly, uncertain of the motives for those desires." I never went more than a few weeks between relationships and sometimes had several going at the same time. My sexuality was based on what the man wanted and expected of me but I also developed my enjoyment of the pleasure involved. When I had my first orgasm during intercourse I remember what a surprise it was. So that's what all the emphasis was on! It was with a man I didn't love and hardly knew.

Then I met Peter and we became lovers. We decided to live together and managed to work our way through the heavies of getting to know each other that come after the flash has worn off. We stuck it out long enough to learn to love each other with some help coming from the sexual part of our relationship. I had a vaginal orgasm every time we had intercourse. This seemed impressive to me as it had never happened before so regularly. We were still trapped in repetitive sexual patterns; we would always mutually arouse each other, fuck, come, and stop. The all-important shared orgasm made it easy to ignore the fact that we were somewhat bored.

After a year together we moved onto a piece of land with some friends and soon after made a decision to have a child. It was delightful making love with no concern for birth control. We had a baby and shared parenthood tied us closely together for over a year and a half.

We were living intimately with other men and women and despite our monogamy learning to love some of them deeply as we ate together, brushed our teeth together, raised each other's children and worked together year after year. I was strongly attracted to and unknowingly to myself falling in love with a woman, a sister I had known and loved for several years. I found myself visiting her daily, bringing her gifts, cleaning her house; which was my way of expressing love. It was quite a new event for me to be falling in love with someone I already loved and a woman as well! One evening I went to visit her and was discussing my troubles with Peter when she asked me why I had come to see her. "Because I wanted to be with you," was my reply, and she explained that since my whole consciousness in that moment was tied up with Peter who wasn't even there, she was a little bored. Bringing myself into the present with her and my feelings for her was scary. I realized that I wanted to spend more intimate time with her, and we decided to spend the night together. We lay in her bed talking for a long time and she finally said "do you want to kiss

or go to sleep?" I chose to try a kiss which aroused passion in us both. We tentatively touched each others bodies. We then embraced tightly, intertwining our legs, moving against each other to mutual orgasm. We were shy about the physical expression of our love. When Peter asked in the morning "Did you and Pam make love?" I answered "No" being confused about the definitions, since we hadn't stimulated each other with our hands or mouths.

My emotions began a merry dance with me, pulling me this way and that. One moment I would be a bold explorer, the next I'd shrink away from her and myself, much confusion resulting. I had a hard time feeling happy about what was happening between us as my mind was assaulted by all the implications of being lovers with a woman. I was afraid I would be rejected by my friends. I was afraid that other women would be afraid of me. I was afraid that women as well as men might regard me as a sexual object. One of the positive feelings I had was that of uncovering a giant hoax that had been played on all of us. We had been convinced all our lives that we could only be lovers with humans of the opposite sex and that anything else was abnormal and unhealthy. It felt very healthy to be loving my friend. It was exhilarating after years of closeting my feelings during love-making for fear of disturbing my lover to express them freely. To be honest about the ebb and flow of desire, now I'm feeling it, now I'm not, let's stop and talk, or hold each other, or whatever, till it comes again or we sleep. I was sometimes frightened by her passion, for I was only beginning to feel the passion that comes from one's own center rather than that which is responsive to another's.

Then Peter became lovers with Pam also and we embarked on a true adventure with each other. During the five month period that our triple relationship was going on, we only made love altogether three times, though we all slept and cuddled together many nights. We chose those times when our feelings were completely clear and flowing, and I then experienced the most free moments of my existence. The first time, after much laughter, we decided that two of us would make love to the one in the middle until they felt satisfied and that we would take turns being in the middle.

When it was my turn in the middle, I was already very turned on by having joined with Peter in making love to Pam. I was acutely sensitive to their caresses and kisses. Pam's hand lightly stroking my whole genital area, while Peter ardently sucked my breast. I felt cocooned in intense love. I came too quickly.

When Peter was in the middle, I was aware of the maleness of his body in a whole new way. I caressed his chest, reached down his belly and his penis surprised me. Pam and I touched and stimulated him, kissing each other at the same time. I then climbed on top of Peter and guiding his penis into my vagina began to fuck him. He and Pam were kissing, and we were all holding hands. I watched Peter caress Pam and felt deeply that the caress was being done to me also. I felt rich in loving them both.



Other times we would labor for hours trying to clear ourselves of the animosities, jealousies, and confusions created in our relationship. And there were fights often over, who was going to spend the night with whom? and was it being done consciously? and will I be left out? At first we gathered quietly in corners to discuss each evening's direction, feeling a little funny about working it out right there in front of the rest of our family. But we weren't really into living out our lives in corners and became quickly more open about doing what we needed to do in front of others, eventually weeping, fighting and kissing wherever we found ourselves.

One evening I was acting out some feelings of pain with Peter in the dining room. Pam was standing nearby, cool-eyed, watching me sobbing in his arms over the pain of marriage break-up. I felt anger at her lack of compassion for me but as later we walked to her house together she began to so comically mimic my classic behavior that I found myself giggling, willing to take myself less seriously than a few moments before. Soon we were roaring with laughter at me, us, all of us acting out these same silly games millenium after millenium. What a release it was to laugh, to let go of those roles. Later we lay quietly in bed facing each other, holding hands and looking deep into the mirror eyes before us. Time and form fell away and we became two souls floating in a vast universe. We were two points of light, connecting. That sharing was ecstatic, our retreat from it swift, covered by talk. It was terrifying getting that high.

The things I was learning with Pam in our lovemaking were expanding also in my relationship with Peter. We were excited about breaking with the old patterns and wanted to develop the momentary tastes of freedom we sometimes shared. Then there was the incredible luxury of defocusing on the orgasm, just relax and enjoy yourself and if it comes, fine; if not, fine. It allowed me to feel the pleasure of each moment for itself.

But old patterns have a tenacity of their own and Peter and I both found it easier to act out the developing parts of our sexual selves with others rather than each other. Through the year and a half since we started opening up to others, we have kept the sexual channel open with each other. We've been able sometimes after weeks of hard times to be once again intimate and warm, remembering that we love each other and are walking a difficult path together in this life, grateful that we are not totally alienated from each other as are so many ex-marrieds.

Pam and I lived through a series of changes with each other which astonish me with their completeness. We were friends, then lovers, stormy and ecstatic, then as I acted out my fears of homosexuality and of her, we hardly spoke to each other for a period of months. This was difficult since we lived on the same land and saw each other at every meal. All this time I was absorbing and incorporating into myself what I had learned and discovered in being lovers with a woman, dealing with the fears it

brought up and wondering if this was going to be a new part of my life or a one-time experience. My change made its full circle of discovery, fear, backing off, and then renewal of exploration. I didn't want to be restricted from intimate love with half the human race because they happened to be the same gender as me.

Pam and I again admitted our friendship and love as a part of our daily lives. I made love to her again at a time in which she was rather closed and cut off from her feelings of warmth for me. We talked and said we would each take care of ourselves. We could therefore feel free to do what we felt like doing. This simple agreement released me from the tyranny of fears such as "Is she/he liking what I'm doing, or hating it?", and "I want to stop what we're doing but dare I disturb the vibe?"

So I went ahead and made love to her though for a time she was completely passive. She was laying on her belly with her arms under her as I began to stroke her back and buttocks. After a few minutes I asked her if she would mind turning over. She turned and lay on her back. I was feeling good about my desire. I wanted to touch her and make her feel pleasure. I moved my hand over her skin caressing her breasts and nipples, belly and clitoris. I knew if she didn't like it she'd say so. I felt a surge of spontaneity in myself and began to touch her face and hair rubbing gently and rhythmically. She responded arching her neck, moving towards my touch. Her breathing deepened indicating the rise of desire in her also. I kissed her lips, throat and breasts, then her soft warm belly. I moved between her legs and began to kiss and lick her clitoris and the curling lips around it. I felt intense pleasure in the giving of this pleasure and deep satisfaction as I brought her to orgasm. Her inaction allowed me to experience action or "aggression" fully on my part for the first time. And my open expression of love for her helped her feel the closeness between us again. We hugged and lay in each other's arms, talking for a long time before we went to sleep.

Around this time I became sexually open with another man in my family. I was again pleased that I was attracted to someone I loved, as opposed to the old random patterns. We had lived together for several years and shared gardening, housework, childcare, prayer and song. We loved each other and were ready to explore that love more deeply by allowing physical expression of it. At the same time we called upon our inner strength to help us stay free of old man-woman patterns of sexual relating.

He welcomed and allowed further expression of my new found activeness in moments of his own passivity. We spent one evening together during which I was feeling sexual desire in myself. When we went to bed, however, I no longer felt that energy and recognized that I was in an old familiar state, that of waiting to be turned on by my lover. I felt pain in seeing this, and talked about what was happening with me. Then we lay quiet for a while and the energy changed again in me. I wanted to touch him. I caressed his face, hair, ears and lips, feeling a tingling in my fingertips.



## Country Women is each of us. . .

My hand moved down his body kneading his stomach. My fingers explored his belly button. I climbed on top of him, sitting on his legs, so that both my hands would be free to caress his body. I pulled gently at his penis and balls, and rubbed them against my legs and stomach. I felt loving of him, his body, myself and my actions. His hands lay at his sides. Only his breathing indicated response. His penis was alternately hard and soft. I moved my hands up his body, feeling the largeness of him, enjoying the warmth of his skin against my hands. I squeezed his shoulders, arms and fingers. I was becoming more excited and suddenly felt insecure at his lack of response. I lay down next to him, asking him to put his arms around me.

He held me and I told him that I wanted to be touched too. I felt exposed because of the boldness of my behavior and I needed the reassurance that he was enjoying what I was doing and that he desired me too. We lay silently in each others' arms for a long time. He was relaxed and it was obvious that acceptance was part of our sexuality.

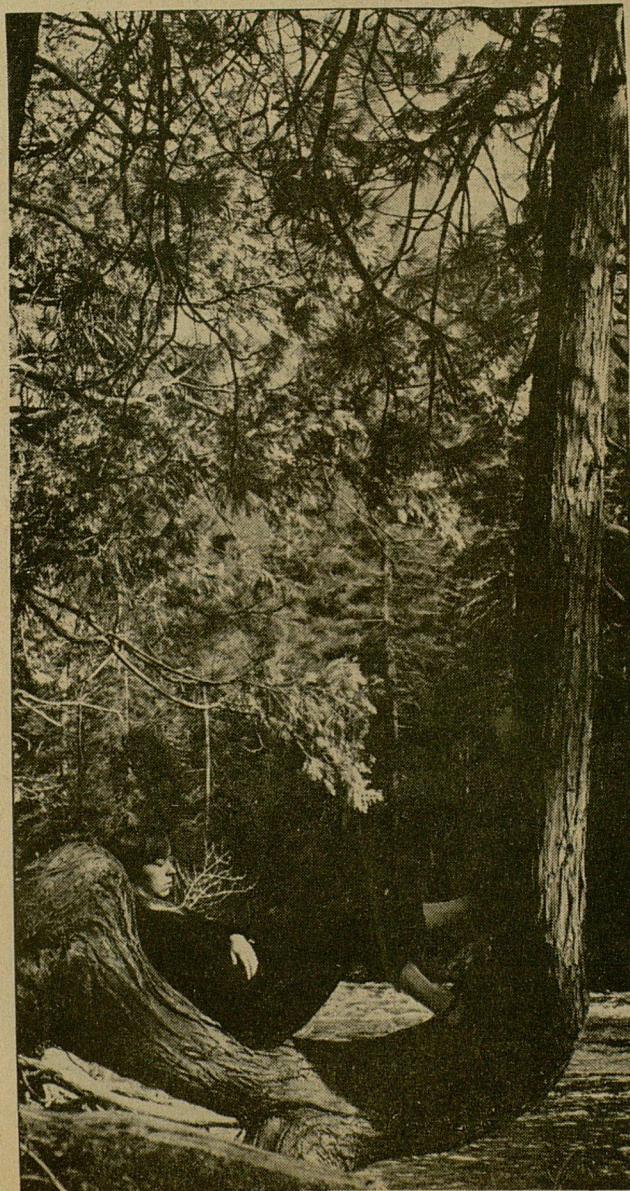
As I relaxed, I felt desire rise in me again. I began touching him again, stroking his side and hip. I curled my hand around his penis. He moved his hand to my hair and caressed my face, a movement I especially like. He reached down and kissed me on the lips, his mouth slightly open. We kissed deeply, warmly. His hand cupped my breast, he pulled at the nipple, exciting me. He began caressing my inner leg, my genitals, very gently; stroking the labia and clitoris. I was rubbing his penis against his body rhythmically, and gently pulling on it. He moved his fingers in and out of my vagina. We were rocked in the slowness and ease of our movements, the warmth and closeness of our bodies. We looked into each others' eyes. His penis grew firm in my embracing hand, my juices were flowing, our pleasure was intense and shared.

We have found in our lovemaking that there are many parts of the body that can be as erotic to touch as the genitals, sometimes more so. Intertwining our fingers, pushing against the sharp fingernails, caressing the face and ears, pulling gently at facial muscles, kissing the small hollow at the base of the throat where I feel life's pulse throbbing; all can be deeply satisfying. Sometimes I feel myself desire orgasm and then move out of that desire as I am filled up overflowing with warmth and full satisfaction of my sensual needs. We are both interested in obtaining freedom from orgasmic consciousness and sometimes make love without bringing each other to orgasm. I usually feel good after these times, and find my body awareness heightened for several days.

We do not fuck with his penis in my vagina, as he feels that particular action to be the most entrapping for him right now, trapping him into old patterns of thinking and relating sexually. Instead, we make love with our hands and mouths, making it easier

to remain sexual equals. We are both more attached to our continued growth towards freedom than to the sexuality between us.

One of the delights for me in making love with both a man and a woman is discovering the deep similarities in us, the peopleness of us. As Marshall and I were making love one night I explored inside his mouth with my fingers and was startled to find how much its soft wet warmth felt like a vagina. Freely caressing this "vagina" in a man, knowing and appreciating its "mouthness" too, for that was a new place of touch for me, was an opening experience. It felt like a reaching towards that future space we're working towards, where gender is no longer an emotional and political issue between people because we have truly learned to relate as equals working and living together on this planet. ♀





# Judith...

It sometimes feels as if I have been confused about my sexuality all my life. In reality, of course, this is not true; it is more the reflection of this moment at the end of an extended relationship with a man.

During the early part of this relationship, sex was not a problem, in fact it was a great pleasure. H. was the best lover I had ever had, gentle, imaginative, uninhibited, considerate, and I was very attracted to him. My orgasms were intense and happened fairly easily and quickly. Strangely, it was with the change from a sexual to a love relationship that the intensity, frequency and ease of my orgasms and our sex in general decreased. Before this, I could "take him or leave him" despite my attraction. I was involved in a lesbian community and saw my relationship with him as one which I would discard when "the right woman came along." My experience with "the right woman" was short lived and ended abruptly and inexplicably. Weeks later, the hurt having more or less passed, she told me it was because she didn't want the responsibility of being my first woman lover. Eventually H. and I were reconciled and became not merely sexual partners but lovers in the deepest sense. It was then, having made this emotional commitment to him that my sexual problems began.

The greatest confusion I faced within this relationship was the question of where does his desire/sexuality leave off and mine begin. Do I really want to make love or am I merely responding to his need and internalizing it as my own? I had learned that female lesson too well; you have an obligation to satisfy a man once you have aroused him. Thinking back over my life, I realize how often this has been a problem. When I was younger my need for affection was often interpreted by a man as sexual, he was aroused by it and I faced the problem again, often "submitting" to his desire.

My confusion about H.'s needs and mine was frequent as there was also a significant difference in our sexual "appetites." His desire seemed never ending, mine lessened as my feeling of guilt and pressure increased. It is hard to separate the feelings on both our parts and the pain that this caused. He felt cut off from his sexuality, desire and love for me and was anxious about pressuring me. I felt pressured, no matter how much we worked on it, and was constantly facing the dilemma of "do I really want to?" and feeling guilty about not fulfilling his needs. I wonder if it is possible to reconcile those differences, or does the lesser desire always "call the tune?" H. also complained that I was not as giving to him as he to me, which I am not certain about, but nonetheless was saddened by his feeling it. It is true however, that I initiated sex far less often than he, a fact which

understandably saddened him. Ultimately, I felt so oppressed by his desire and by the conflict it created that I would sometimes misinterpret his affection as sexual and resist.

Unfortunately the solution was not as simple as H.'s having other lovers. Although we had never considered ours a monogamous relationship, his sexual feelings were part of his loving me and could not be redirected to someone else.

My experiences with women were all during the time I have known H. Most of my sexual fantasies have been about women. I suspect this is because my heterosexuality has been more than adequately experienced and is also presently so problematic while my homosexuality is yet to be fulfilled. For a long time I have wanted to develop a love relationship with a woman, but I have been concerned about how a woman would respond when I was also relating to H. Meeting a woman and, in the simple body language by which people communicate, telling her I am interested is also a problem. The "rules" are so different than with a man.

I feel many changes happening in my life and within myself at this time. I still have a warm friendship with H. and, although the "lovership" is over, it will probably include occasional love-making. ♀

# Pamela...

My sexual self spends the week convincing lesbians that my bisexuality is authentic in both directions, and looking wryly at my heterosexual friends who tell me of the yin and yang of it all. I have felt the earth move through Kundalini rising energy, and lo and behold, I've felt it with male and with female. It couldn't have been just to prove a point. I mean, it's only happened three times in twenty years of love making -- the earth really moving!

The first ten years I pushed away pain to get to pleasure. My sexual awakening being shamed arousal of masturbation and further pained by kisses and caresses of a hated stepfather. I necked with girlfriends. I necked with boyfriends. I was trying to like sex enough to consider myself normal. I always liked it better with people I liked. But it was more permissible with strangers. I did it so much I got to like it. I got to like it enough to feel good about doing it with people I liked. I got to like it enough to consider it a gift.

It took ten years to figure out what was going on inside of me. Now, it has been another ten years of sharing and continued learning with beloved men and women. Sometimes with cosmic vaginal waves, sometimes with clitoral skyrocket, sometimes with childheld hands into desirelessness. Sometimes I engage in sexual activities every day, sometimes not for years. My sexuality is a part of the form my energy takes to express itself. It is innuendoes of emotions, vigor of movement. ♀



Sex isolates us  
we lie in bed all day  
shooting the smack  
of warm bodies  
nakedness  
building a thing that has no place  
for other people  
that digs no tunnels  
that does no work

# LOVE JUNKY

shoot me up again on love  
let me nod out

I dream dreams  
see visions of naked faces  
blind bare faces  
hurt past all hatred  
children in a burning village  
covered with burning plastic  
the burning bamboo roof cracks  
like a burning Christmas tree  
burning fronds fall  
like fourth of July snakes  
burned children run back and forth  
barefoot torches  
with burnt out eyes

shoot me up again on love  
shoot me up on love  
shoot me up on love  
let me nod out

I see a tunnel  
a long dark tunnel  
I close my eyes  
but it stays  
like a scratch on my cornea  
a long hollow scratch  
tunnel full of bodies  
rats, water, gas  
in front of a dead child  
a bowl of rice has been turned  
upside down  
outside a GI is throwing cannisters  
lobbing them one by one  
into the mouth of the tunnel  
his gas-mask makes him look  
like a giant wasp  
killing the dead  
over and over  
just to make sure

shoot me up on love again  
close my eyes  
touch my breasts  
tell me I'm not to blame  
make me warm

love me  
lay me  
fuck me  
erase me  
shoot me up on love again

shoot me  
please. ♀



"Don't play in the mud, Susie  
Don't get dirty now, Sara  
You look like a boy the way you roll in that dirt!"

Screeching mothers' pathetic words. Hear them hollering those words onto the streets, into my ears. Watching my knees to insure their safe and clean return to the house. Playing rough was dirty and sex was dirty. The dirt didn't show so much from the sex that I had then. But I knew that my mother could see it on my face when I came home after an experience.

Six years old, she and I would play in her basement. Her name was Carrie and we had a friend named Eileen, too. Playing doctor was usually the disguise of the little known sensation that we got. We had no idea of exactly why we felt the way we did when we played.

It would be Carrie's turn to be the doctor:

"Now, what is your name?" she would ask. "Miss Star, Miss Denise Star," I would tell her with a sophisticated tone. "Now, let me see. Ho hum. I believe that I will have to examine you. Would you please get up on the examining table?"

The single bed in her basement served as the table and I would lie down on it. I knew most of her moves well as we had shared this game so many times before. She would begin to undo my pants. "You'll have to take these off for me. I have to check you out."

Off they came and they sat at my ankles with my cotton underwear rolled down there with them. I guess I lay still and quiet and let her examine me. She would touch my skin and sometimes ask questions as to if I felt any pain or what was this or has this always been here. Her fingers sent warm tickling feelings into my body. They were pink like party dresses and playful from their acts of jacks and crayons. We knew that for some reason what we were doing was wrong. Whenever we would hear someone come into the house or hear the steps creak, we would quickly pull on our clothes.

There was a definite sense of prized love that came through her fingers as we played. The forbiddenness of her touch made me shiver even greater as it crept through me. Slowly and softly she excited my small body. How pleasant. It was uneducated and did not have to know it's proper, learned response. How does this feel? she would say, as if interested in a totally medical sense.

Strange, we never stated aloud that she was a male doctor. It really didn't seem necessary. It wasn't the fact that she was another girl that made this game so evil and secretive; it was what we were playing with. Stop that! Take your hands away from there. My mother would take hold of my hand and bring it down from my panties beneath my dress as I

scratched the elastic. She looked around a bit to see if anyone in the supermarket had caught my horrid motions.

"I think that it is time that you learned to close the door when you go to the bathroom. I don't believe the whole world has to see you."

That damp, musty basement was just the place for Carrie and I to play; no one could see us. Carrie smelled as new and as laundered as her dress and the crisp white socks that were laced around the edges and cuffed at her ankles. The socks had marks on them from where the straps of her patent leather shoes crossed over to the other side. She would kick off her shoes and climb on the edge of the bed. I never told her what she could or could not do. I knew that she would never hurt me and that neither of us would tell anyone else about what went on in her basement.

"Did you have a good time playing over at Carrie's?" my mom would ask as I returned from around the corner for dinner.

"Yes mom, Carrie's mom gave us delicious cookies."

"Go wash up for dinner; you must be filthy from playing all afternoon."

I was sure that she knew when she said that sentence. I wanted to tell my mother that I wasn't dirty.

"Mom," I wanted to say, "I felt the greatest feeling today when someone was touching me. I felt so warm. Have you ever felt it?" ?





# CHANGING THE MYTH

"The heavy thing is realizing that our sexual drive is stronger than men's."

"Yeah. You know, like we need two men and a vibrator for full satisfaction," Loretta answered, laughing, when I asked for her ideas on sexuality.

What I want to examine here are some of the conditions that have created the myth of men's greater sexual needs and our lesser ones, using my own sexual history in the ways it has fed and been fed by that myth while, in fact, being a clear paradigm against it.

The conditioning is boundless and the only way to counter it is to develop an active philosophy of sex as opposed to our historically defensive one. Men are defined in terms of their sexual virility. Masculinity equals health. The teenage boys of my past, carloads going down to Tijuana whorehouses, the sexual drive driving them crazy. Rusty, in the back seat, his head in his hands staring at the car floor the whole 40 miles, was mythical (i.e., admirable). To be sexually potent (having little to do with babies) is the ultimate masculine condition. Femininity equals asexuality. Sexy, perhaps, but not sexual. A lusting female equals sickness. Sweetness, shyness, passivity, acquiescence and then at just the right moment, if we are one of the lucky ones, we will conveniently and politely "come." God, how it goes on!

Understanding women in terms of sexual needs so deep as to be still shrouded in mystery, repressed down through time for the power and depth intimated, is an issue so explosive as to be much of the reason for a sexist society in the first place. Similarly racial hatred has always been understood as sexual repression and jealousy: the whites' fear of a darker race's sexual superiority.

It cannot be repeated enough: there is no male concept in our society for "nymphomaniac." It is expected of men to be sexually promiscuous (and even this connotes female). Sexual promiscuity is the respected, culturally-rewarded goal of all healthy, normal men; sexual monogamy; that of the female.

When I was nine, my father began a sexual molestation of me that lasted until I was twelve when I "weakened" (as it seemed at the time) by telling my mother, who I knew would end it. He was never violent or forceful, except in the unstated reality of his physical and parental authority over me. But he was, it seemed to me, obsessed, transfixed, gently out-of-control. At nine years of age, I rose to an earth mother consciousness and "understood" him. "Daddy can't help it."

His behavior was gentle, sensuous in fact, if I could have enjoyed it, and the activity mild. He played with my early-blossoming breasts; fingering them, tongue-

ing them, pulling at the nipples, just staring at them, and he showed me his hard, ugly penis (penis envy? Ridiculous!) whenever he could trap me alone. I was not sexually turned on and he could not have thought I was.

I pretended that I didn't mind in order not to let him know that I knew it was "wrong." I was greatly uncomfortable and embarrassed by the situation, and many of my memories are of arranging avoidance circumstances so as not to be caught alone with him.

I loved him and believed - as a result, I guess, of my Mother's always explaining his moody, violent and eccentric behavior as love of us - that he loved me. He was moral, high-minded and in most instances a conscientious human being. Sex, I could only conclude, must be so strong as to leave him totally helpless before something I knew he considered wrong.

From the beginning, through a crazy sexual history of impositions, I refused to be imposed upon; that is, to submit psychologically to those impositions. As a result, in the free space I made for myself, I was able very early to create my own sexual being (rather than be created), an act which still seems to be the only key to sexual happiness. An act, more "masculine," in traditional terms, than "feminine."

All the while my father was secretly messing with me, my mother was on her obsessive campaign to teach me the Facts of Life: a horror movie in slow-motion of the Catch 22 of life: sex is good, but men will despise you if you participate or just appear, by the slightest flaw in one's public manner (and they are always alert for it) to be capable of participating. Or just appear, by the slightest flaw in one's private manner ... For men will go to great measures to "trick" you into being alone with them, to "trick" you into sex with them. But woe, if you submit: they will know you as a slut; worse than a slut; and they will never marry you.

The litany was daily for three years. When I got home from school she'd be in the bathtub and I'd have to sit on the closed toilet and be lectured to for an hour. These sessions were loaded with potentially erotic material and it seems probable that I could have forever confused it with the horror stories: my mother naked in the tub, the warm, sudsy water, the steamy room, the detailed facts of the sex act, of the male and female bodies, the sex lives of our neighbors (whose husbands never forgave them, never stopped torturing them), who was cheating on who, who was unhappily pregnant, or unhappily married because they had to get married, how it happens, so easily, it is so easy to be weak, to fall, to the wonders of sex, and, yes, of course, there's part of the key, for always at the core of the horror, sex was wondrous.



I've tried since to analyse her near-hysterical "philosophy" and can only come up with the fact that it was the early '50's, that she herself might not have been a virgin at eighteen when she married my father, and was subsequently being tortured and "never forgiven" just as she claimed would be my plight, should I succumb. And maybe she knew me in the way only a perceptive mother can: that I would love sex.

I bought it all and resolved with the kind of will that only someone with seven planets in Taurus in the house of Virgo can muster: TO BE A VIRGIN BRIDE.

Meanwhile, at the same time, men began freaking out all around me, exposing their hard, ugly cocks to me: the father of my best friend, other neighbors, bachelors in near-by apartments, men in cars, in parks, in alleys and vacant lots, in the doorways of their houses when I walked by. Old men, young men, men caught at my windows, awful men leering, saying obscene things and then fleeing. Strange men trying to get me into their cars, one clear, terrifying rape attempt, the common street corner crowd whistling and catcalling, the coming to puberty of my own male peers and their sudden violent behavior, and the early lovers and their blackmailing schemes.

My first boyfriend, at thirteen, fucked his cow everytime I wouldn't let him fuck me, an act that seemed to cause him a lot of grief and self horror, a view he assumed I'd share, if not find even more horrible. He thus blamed me. (In fact, I found it interesting and rather sexy. For what reason would you feel guilty? Who was it hurting? The cow?) ALL THIS FREAKY BEHAVIOR FOR MALE SEXUAL GRATIFICATION. I, who began having multiple orgasms at thirteen, participating in a sexual life as active and strong then as now, but who never lost my sense of responsibility or humanity even at sexual peaks, could only come to the conclusion, as nearly everyone else has, that the male sexual drive is stronger than the female's.

Later, when the husbands of close friends, devoted wives whom I clearly loved, approached me, taking what seemed to me the incredible chance of hurting their wives, destroying our friendships and their marriages, I felt wrath for their betrayal. HOW DO THEY KNOW, I used to think, THAT I WON'T TELL? But I never did. Should I have done this differently? Most of all, I think, I couldn't bear the chance of my losing the friendship of their wives, which seemed the most probable outcome. I never made love knowingly to a married man, husbands even of wives I didn't know, so much did it incense me, turn me off sexually, a very early sister-consciousness rule of mine.

But always I understood and "forgave." Male sexual drive is so strong as to render them helpless, certainly irrational. It's a wonder the world holds together at all.

I want to state here as clearly and as strongly as possible that these examples are not, as I can imagine some readers responding, cases of my leading men on. In every incident,

the shocking surprise always has to do with my innocence: the more passive, unsexual and least-interested I am, the more likely an incident of this sort will occur. The street cases of exhibitionists, molesters, neighbors, etc., has RARELY OCCURRED SINCE I GREW INTO AN ADULT BODY. That Lolita state of barely-puberty is the most delicious because it is most helpless, the least resistant. (Men are so strong and brave! The debate is always whether we like rape or not. The question is never asked, WHY do they like it?) In the past few years, in fact, I have discovered that aggressive sex talk, which I do a lot of in my constant effort to destroy the myth of our sexual passivity, is the way most likely not to bring about any sexual confrontation. It scares them right into their pants!

I now know that men's irrational, dangerous, narcissistic, immoral sexual behavior in our society has only partly to do with innate drive. Certainly it isn't greater than mine. In fact, it seems most likely that it is less. Our behavior, into the deepest places of our bodies and psyches, is socially conditioned. The rewards for being the assholes they are, are great. The reward is the Masculine Mystique.

My father was not driven by sexual lust, except in the sense that he was overwhelmed by the myth. My father molested me because I was female and a child, not so much for my genital construction as because I was his female child: his property, a handy victim, a lesser person than a male or an adult. He molested me because, for all his protestations, he did not love me, at least not enough; and he didn't love me because I was female and a child.

How could he have so little concern for his own future, for the fact that I would grow up and be a conscious adult with those memories? How could he have so little concern for my mother? How can husbands take the risks they do in hurting and losing their wives? The answer is simple: the risk is minimal, is not even a concern. For a quick fuck they will take the chance. What is important is to fulfill themselves as men (just as our passivity has been to prove ourselves feminine). Besides, they don't really believe they will lose their women. Their women are in their control.

My father molested me because he is human, unhappy, confused, a victim, too, of this society. In any final consciousness of him, or of any of us, I cannot and won't give up my first consciousness: compassion. It was my first superior weapon and it remains a powerful one, though often, admittedly, a hindrance to women in developing a feminist consciousness.

I became "sexually liberated" with my first genuine sexual experience at thirteen. In the park the first time, lying on my stomach, his fourteen year old fingers slid between the grass and my breasts; amazing the shock, the beauty of the feeling. I remember thinking, astonished: "I'm prepared mentally and emotionally not to be seduced, but I didn't know



that it would happen in my body." With that first necking in which I experienced strong multiple orgasms (without any concept of what they were, for my mother had only told me about men's), I understood with a clarity, amazing, given my murky background, that all those 'important morals' as Mama called them were bullshit as far as my consciousness and life were concerned. I understood the message of my body and I understood it in affirmative terms: that sex is clearly one of the most important, most beautiful aspects of living. I remember that I never "fell in love" with Ray. I fell into his body; I absorbed him into mine. Twenty years later and I can still smell his hair, his semen, his body in a way no other man has remained; see his rich, copper-colored, Mojave Indian cock. My whole desire had to do with the desire of close contact, of closing any physical space between us, of closing what was for me the enormous and boring space of childhood.

It was more than evident that men did have the sexual standards my mother had so frantically warned me of and, in fact, took them quite seriously. The tragic "bad girls" of the school, clearly only that because they were labeled as such; the boyfriend that broke up at fifteen with me when he learned of my experiences with Ray; my contempt for men that took these silly social structures seriously, and in fact, enforced them, was limitless. I could only figure that their intelligence was less than mine. And so in the manner that most men enjoy women they consider inferior to them, I set out on my life to do the same. What else could you do but enjoy them?

I've never gone to bed with a man that intimidated me. It's been suggested that that is cowardly. On the contrary, I believe it is life sustaining. Men can't get it up with women who intimidate them and that's considered healthy and normal. It's been suggested that I must never experience genuine female abandon. On the contrary, true abandon, I believe, can only occur where there is complete trust. Where there is trust and faith, it happens often.

That sexual penetration is a form of male domination requiring female submission is a thought that never consciously occurred to me. TAKING THE MALE PENIS INTO MY BODY IS NO MORE SUBMISSION, OR MASOCHISM, THAN TAKING FOOD INTO MY BODY.

In a book called Thalassa, meaning ocean, Sandor Ferenczi, a Freudian biologist proposes his theory of sexual evolution. With the drying up of the seas, we were thrown up on the shores, of neutral gender. The strongest of the species in its longing to get back to the ocean, developed a penis by which to penetrate the weaker, thus simulating in coitus a return to the womb, i.e., the ocean. The whole stance is from a male one of subjection. It never seems to occur to Ferenczi that the desire to be the ocean, the womb, could hardly be called the weaker one. Ferenczi and others say little about the evolution of the clitoris, the

desire to be/feel like the ocean. IT IS THE ONLY HUMAN ORGAN WHOSE SOLE FUNCTION IS TO GIVE PLEASURE. It has no other use. We can fuck and be fucked without it.

I have two distinct kinds of orgasm, "two systems" as Simone de Beauvoir calls them. They are both active and individual. I have had clitoral orgasms for twenty years: thrilling, violent, strong, lasting a long, eternal minute or so each, coming in groups of fours and fives (sixes when my heart can stand it), and they wipe me out with their intensity, beauty and physical and psychic involvement. Interestingly, the smaller the penis, the easier it is for me to have clitoral orgasms during intercourse. It seems to have to do with his sinking deeper into me, making closer pelvic contact.

I also have vaginal orgasms, and what can one say in the face of Masters and Johnson's clinical 'evidence' against them, and what has been propounded ever since as The Myth, except wait out for the truth to emerge as I've waited out so many other mistruths.

Vaginal orgasms are different than clitoral ones and to say one is 'better' or 'more mature' than the other is like saying one's hand is better than one's foot. Clitoral orgasm equates for me the breathless sweet high pitch of violin music, but higher, more shrill, a clarity bordering insanity, the color of intensely brilliant rose. In fact, of the two, the more yang.

Vaginal orgasms are deep; low, yin, like flying off a cliff and hitting the earth below, the sound the earth makes as it turns on its axis, the groan of all forms coming into being, the incessant moaning of a fog horn, the color of earth, brown dirt. It is not sweet; in the way the clitoris is, whose sweetness takes you to the screaming/singing angels in the hierarchical chain of creation Vaginal orgasm is so low, so deep, so broad, so guttural as to seem to be the actual feel or consciousness of the body's organs as they function - move, pump, spill forth, diastole, systole - deeply, darkly, independently in the body. Both orgasms occur with or without the penis. A hand thrust deep within the vagina can do a better job than a penis (unless an extender or tickler is attached) at reaching and manipulating that deepest posterior place in the vagina. When it happens, the whole sense is OPENING. The first time it happened to me was on the banks of the Missouri River and the experience was of that massive force and weight of water gushing from its source between my legs.

As a poet, sex is often my lyrical/divine key to the resolution of mind and body, the key to the riddle of so much of the universe. "Orgasm is a way of knowing the Universe/ the slow explosion of buds through the dry, dead wood of winter .../ Infinite seeds / and suns/work/for one long moment/in which I/ and all/will be born again." It can encompass all intelligence, material, spirit, god and animal. A desire that has to do with Space and Time and Earth and Union. With Seeing. ♀







## THREE THIN MEN, THREE FAT MEN

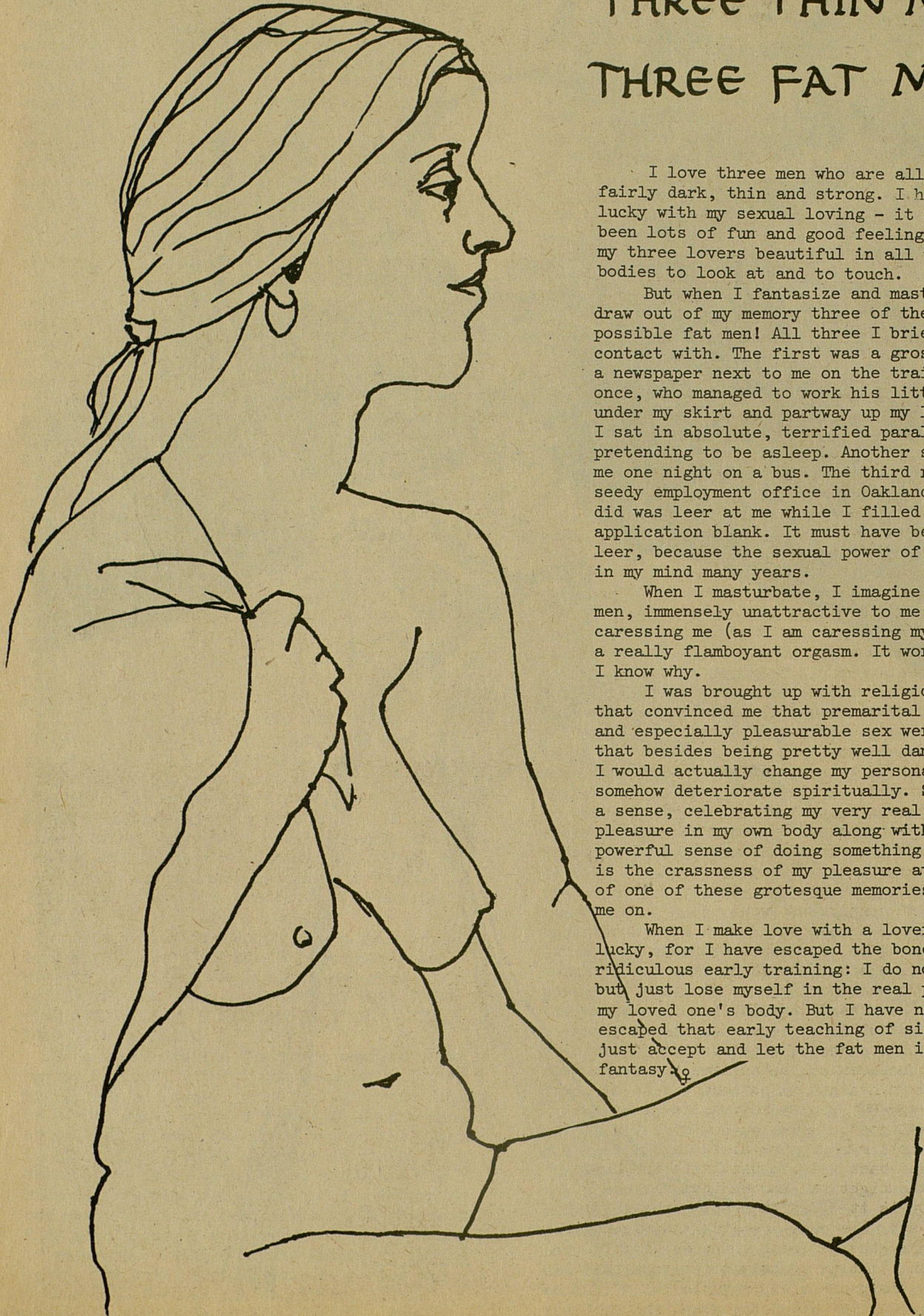
I love three men who are all tall, fairly dark, thin and strong. I have been lucky with my sexual loving - it has mostly been lots of fun and good feelings, and I find my three lovers beautiful in all their bodies to look at and to touch.

But when I fantasize and masturbate, I draw out of my memory three of the ugliest possible fat men! All three I briefly had contact with. The first was a gross man reading a newspaper next to me on the train to school once, who managed to work his little finger under my skirt and partway up my leg while I sat in absolute, terrified paralysis, pretending to be asleep. Another sat next to me one night on a bus. The third ran a seedy employment office in Oakland, and all he did was leer at me while I filled out an application blank. It must have been a powerful leer, because the sexual power of it has stuck in my mind many years.

When I masturbate, I imagine one of these men, immensely unattractive to me sexually, caressing me (as I am caressing myself) to a really flamboyant orgasm. It works terrifically. I know why.

I was brought up with religious training that convinced me that premarital intercourse and especially pleasurable sex were so awful that besides being pretty well damned for it, I would actually change my personality and somehow deteriorate spiritually. So, I am, in a sense, celebrating my very real sensual pleasure in my own body along with the powerful sense of doing something sinful. It is the crassness of my pleasure at the hands of one of these grotesque memories that turns me on.

When I make love with a lover, I am very lucky, for I have escaped the bonds of this ridiculous early training: I do not fantasize but just lose myself in the real pleasures of my loved one's body. But I have not completely escaped that early teaching of sin. Now I just accept and let the fat men into my fantasy.





# THE GIVE AND TAKE

I change as I grow. And I feel my sexuality the way I feel it now, knowing it's changing. So far, I have observed the polarity which creates the 'attraction' between me and other humans on the sexual level, generally manifests between me and men. It is indefinable, but unmistakable.

If I related my sexual history anyone would wonder why I continue to relate sexually to men, but the point is, I do, and in so doing learned something about liberating myself in the bedroom and finding out how to make love to a man. Having my demands comprehended and responded to is pleasurable, and as I have found the freedom to express my own sexuality and gratify it, I have also found the freedom to be responsive in turn to the desires and feelings of my partner.

What I want and with whom has remained relatively consistent the past couple of years. I usually want to make love to J. We have been lovers for some time and we move nicely together. We are relaxed together and share knowledge of each other on levels other than the sexual, so there is a mutual trust which enables us to be naked with each other. There is a facility we have acquired over years of sex, but the basic polarity forming the attraction remains strong and there is an in-the-moment creativeness to each sexual encounter.

The variations seem infinite. Lovemaking often starts imperceptibly - a feeling passes over us simultaneously, or one of us approaches the other. J. approaches me with respect and gusto - two attitudes I appreciate. He might burrow under the covers and kiss me softly on the clitoris. Then just start licking at it gently - so warm and wet, it feels so great! I respond.

After a while, J. works his way up my body. I feel his hair brush my skin and know the smoothness of my own skin on his. He knows my body as I know it, a soft place here, a beautiful line there. My body enjoys his kisses and touches. I feel feline. As he moves up besides me, I can feel his penis, erect and warm against my buttocks.

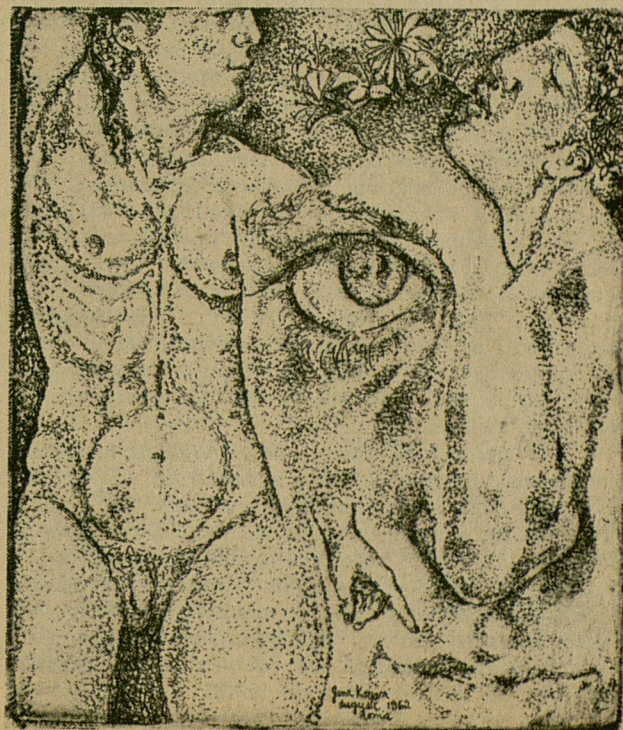
His response to my body and my pleasure makes me feel good. I come out of my cat-stupor and feel myself move close to him. I reach my hand back and cup his balls in them. They're drawn tight and smooth from his excitement. Or is it my excitement? Perhaps it's the excitement. His penis remains fascinating to me. I enjoy the hardness/softness of it. I arch my back, tilting my pelvis and from the rear, guide his penis into my vagina.

I roll onto my belly and a slow rhythm

evolves between us. By now, the inner panorama is psychedelic, with something going on everywhere. Images flowing with the rhythm, the warmth and vitality of J.'s lithe body, the sensation of the shaft of his penis rubbing, rubbing on my clitoris, his light kiss on the tip of my cheekbone; some are abstract, changing color patterns and patterings of speech in unknown tongues slide across my mind.

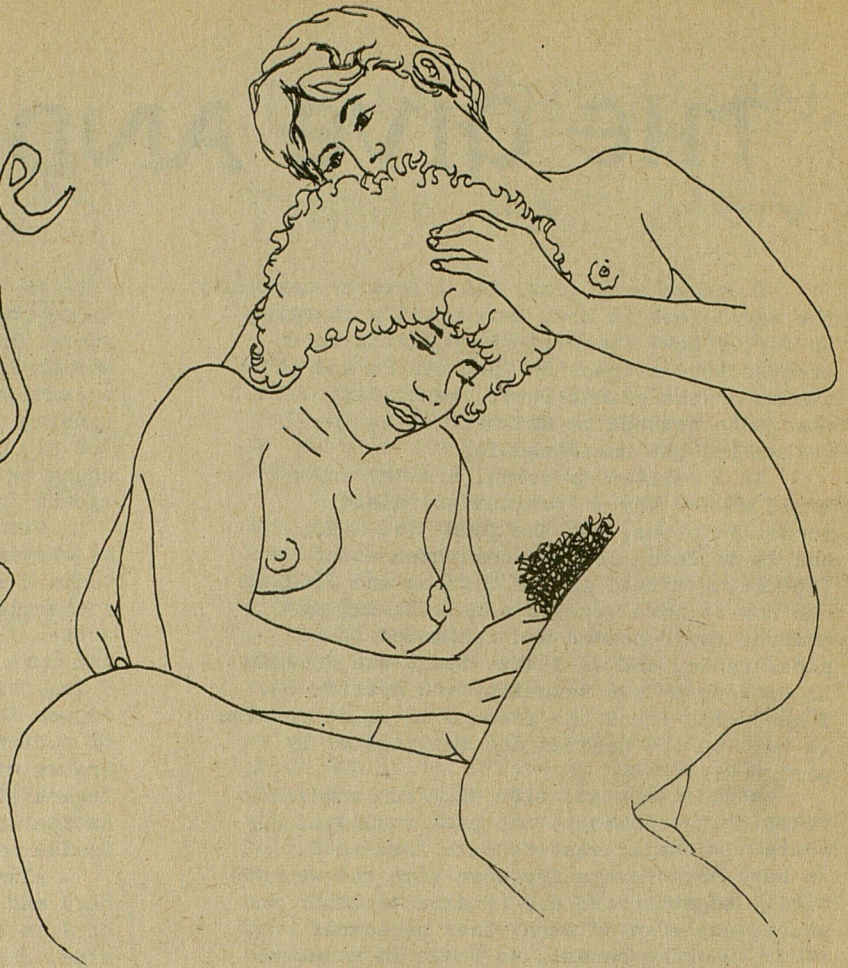
With care and attention, utilizing rhythms of varying intensity, we can make love for quite a while. My sensitivity to each thrust, its angle, its emphasis, its vibe, becomes acute. I become active, I feel like fucking and move in a more controlled and intense way. I feel his cock swell and get better and his orgasm is upon him, throbbing, drawing sounds of surrender and release. Though I had an orgasm way back when he was eating me out, I feel a ripple in my uterus and experience another orgasm, very different, with a penis inside me.

Always the miracle of the dualities, the hard and the soft of it, the desire and demand of J.'s sexuality and the surrender in him to mine. The same experience for me. Always the give and the take, the dance as two bodies and two spirits merge as closely as can be made possible and unity is experienced along with the joy of its discovery. ♀





"All we  
really  
are is  
open"



We became friends at meetings, something which doesn't often happen to me. She lived on the same road as I so we sat talking late into the night in her driveway or mine. One night, I spoke to her of my fears--that I couldn't be close to anyone, didn't know how to share, was afraid to be vulnerable or open. I was crying and she put her arms around me, kissed my forehead, touched me. The next week, we sat in her driveway and she told me about wanting to get close to women again, about a woman she had loved fourteen years before, about her children, about living without a lover the last two years. Our hands touched; we kissed, first tentatively then passionately. Later I laughed. "Two teenaged adolescents," I said, "making out in a car!" Then I started to cry. "Damn it, I'm afraid of you, of us. I'm afraid of getting close, of being friends, of making love. Go on, go into the house. I have to get home tonight."

The next week there was a meeting at her house. I arranged for someone to milk the goats the next morning, and left for the meeting early, driving alone. "I wondered if you'd have the sense to come alone," she said. "I'm glad." That night we slept together, touched each other's naked bodies, gently, feeling, testing. Getting more courage, she touched my clitoris with her finger, rubbed me until I felt pleasure and excitement. Following, I touched her there too.

"Why can't I make love to you?" she asked, nights later. "What do you mean?" I said, naive, embarrassed. "I don't kiss you; I don't touch you freely, unconsciously. It's all so polite," she wailed, "I don't know why I'm so inhibited." "I'm afraid I'll bore you," I answered, "You are older, more experienced, more free. I've never liked making love. I'm afraid I won't want you to touch me. I don't know how to touch you; I'm afraid I can't make love with you."

One day she said to me, "I try not to tell lies in bed." "I don't think I've ever not told lies in bed," I answered. "I only do what I really want to; I want you to do only what you really want to," she said. It sounds so simple, I thought. And with a momentary flash of confidence, I forgot that I didn't know how. Loving her, I loved her body. I touched her freely with my hands, exploring, caressing. I kissed her mouth, her ears, the curve of her neck, the hollow between her breasts, her cunt. I loved how she was all curves and hollows. My own body felt pleased and moved by our touching. "Oh, my dear," she said. (No one has ever called me "my dear", though I've wished they would.)

"I like fucking," she said. "I don't," I said. "It hurts and I feel alienated and I don't have orgasms." But I also thought, I will touch her wherever she wants. I put one finger tentatively inside her warm, good, home, womb. "You can put your whole hand inside me," she said. "No," I said. "You can," she said.



"It's because of all those babies," I said. "No, it isn't," she said and I slid two more fingers in. My hand moved, turned, plunged, wiggled inside her. I floated on ocean waves, rocked in the salty wet warmth of the womb. My body trembled all over and I cried. She sighed and laughed and cried out and came.

"I can only get one finger inside you, you're so tight," she said. I was tensing, making myself come. "Relax," she said. I did. I began to fly, loose, at peace, pleased; she kissed my clitoris, touched my cervix. "Do you want to come?" she asked. "Oh no, never," I said, flying higher and higher, not wanting to land. Later I thought, she said, "Relax," after years of tightening up. Tightening, a good tight cunt is what a man wants said Miller and Lawrence and countless jokes about obstetricians and episiotomies. Tight so I would come quicker, tense to get my orgasm and all that foreplay over with so we could get down to real business. "Relax," she said, and I flew.

One night I held her, kissed her; suddenly for the first time ever I wanted a penis, wanted to take her, to possess her totally. "Desire is not love," she said later. Tired, I still wanted all of her.

Looking at her beautiful breasts, her belly, her tiny thin body one night, I remembered how I used to envy men touching mine. I used to have fantasies that I was them making love to myself. Loving her, I love myself more. Together, I love our freedom.

"Only do what you want to do," she said . . . But I am learning that the hard part is not doing but knowing what I want. Do I want to touch her? hold hands? stroke her hair? kiss her? passionately? lay together naked touching bodies? suck her breast? touch her vagina? put my hand inside? excite her? excite me? Do I want to stroke her clitoris? Sometimes we lie together side by side, a half an inch apart, feeling the presence of each of us and both of us, feeling if we want to move and how. Learning to be honest with her is learning to know more and more what I feel myself, is infinitely harder than I imagined.

My lips at her breast, child lover, wondrous. "You've finally learned to suck," she said. I laughed. "My mother never let me nurse." "Let's see if we can suck each other's at the same time," she said. (We can.)

I wanted her, not to possess her, but for her to know all of me. I wanted to hold her inside of me. I was open and she entered me. Again, the ocean waves and the joy of them breaking through me.

My fingers inside her. I began to wiggle them, then changed to an undulating rhythm: - she vibrated with the rhythm of my fingers, my shoulder, my body. I tried all kinds of motions with my fingers; sometimes rotating, thumping against her vagina, its walls tight like a drum, sometimes plunging in and out like a penis, though I like that less. Sometimes deep, I touched and caressed her cervix. "I love your hand," she said, "it does so much."

My friend Carolyn wrote from far away,

"What do you do when you have a crush on a woman and you don't know if she's open and she doesn't know if you're open?" I remembered an old copy of The Furies with an article on coming out. In very large type on page four it said, "I'm feeling very attracted to you and wonder if you'd like to make love?" The article suggested that until you get used to making overtures and being aggressive, you could always keep that copy of The Furies with you and when the time was right, hand it to your friend saying, "Page Four!" I dug through my old copies and sent that issue to Carolyn.

As I thought of things, I wrote Carolyn letters. "It's terrifying to make love with another woman," I told her. "They tell you it's so natural, just do whatever you like." But the first time, I suddenly thought, "What if she doesn't like what I like? What if I'm weird? Do I even know what I like? With men there's such a gap, I can breeze through or fake any thing because he is never going to know what I feel, experience what I experience. With him, I can mystify my experiences because the gap, the difference, the distance is the whole point. It's the union of the completely different separate beings that is exciting. But with a woman, it's the opposite; it's the sameness that's the excitement. the perfect oneness." And suddenly I wondered, "What if no other woman is like me?"

Another time I wrote, "Don't be surprised if you hate yourself after you start making love with a woman. After the first time, I went through months of feeling like a failure--about my work, my farm, myself, my relationships. Everything I did was despicable. Finally a friend said, "Do you think it's connected to sleeping with Kathy?" Connected with being separated from my husband, unloved and unwanted by any man, 'perverted', in love with a woman, independent, myself? Of course it was.

"I wish we had a language," I said, "we are so awkward when we talk. You say 'eat me'; I say 'kiss my cunt'--neither is right. 'Cunt' is a man's word; 'vagina' and 'clitoris' are so clinical; 'eat me' and 'touch me' seem embarrassed into generalities. I want a language to love you in."

One night, curled together, each of us inside the other, moving slowly through infinite pleasurable space, I thought, "the joy of homosexuality is to be both receptive and active. Being entered is a state of total receptiveness--if it's not passive submission; Entering is an act of union. Together we can experience both or either, as we choose to. All modes are open to us, a thousand between each pole."

"Can you do that with a man--be both active and receptive?" I asked. "I have...." she said, then pausing, "No, not the same. With you I am uncovering my aggressive self. I don't know what it will be like when I sleep with a man again." For her being active was the place of growth. Though it surprised me, making love to her came easily to me, with joy and abandon my whole body pleased and excited by our sharing. But



being receptive was new to me, a revelation, transforming old patterns of submitting to another's needs into real acceptance of my body and her loving. In homosexuality, entering is an act of love; in any sexuality, it can be.

"Don't touch me," I said. "I want to be left alone." Lying on my side with my back to her, hunched against the pain and cold, every muscle tight, guarding against even the most gentle and innocent contact. I heard her crying and felt angry. "What have I done?" she asked. "It's not you, it's me," I answered, "I'm hating myself so much I can hardly stand to live in my own body and I don't want anyone else to touch me." "I love you, all of you," she said. "I know, but I can't bear to be loved." She turned away from me, sad and a little hurt. We slept with those three inches of badly needed space dividing us. I awoke less frozen, a little able to feel my fears. She awoke smiling, "It's far out that I could let go enough to sleep." Weeks later she said, "I'm going to sleep in the other bed tonight. I feel like being alone." And I could remember clearly that need for solitude and separation and could let that first impulse to feel hurt and rejected pass through me.



One day during one of my depressions, she asked, "What are you afraid of?" "I'm afraid you'll get sick of all my pain and fear and craziness and not want to see me anymore." "What I get sick of," she said, "is your shutting yourself off from me. You imagine what I might feel and then believe it's what I do feel. You judge your feelings and hate yourself for having them and me for seeing them. I want to be with you. It doesn't matter to me what you have to do, but do it! Let yourself be yourself."

"Do you want to come?" she asked me often. "Yes," I said unashamedly. "It doesn't matter," I said honestly. "Tell me what you want," I asked her sometimes, unembarrassed by my lack of prescience. "Loving is not being ashamed to be whatever I am," she said. "I love you," I said. "I love you," she said. "I know."

"Make me come," she said, putting my hand on her clitoris. "I don't feel comfortable with my hand anymore," I said, "I'm afraid I'll irritate you or I won't turn you on at all. It can't find the right place to touch; I don't

know what to do." "Will it make you feel bad if I masturbate?" she asked. "I feel so bad now, it would be a relief." "Stay close to me," she said, "don't go away." I felt strange there beside her, tense at my failure to give her what she wanted, twinges of guilt, but also relieved--that we could say what we wanted and that we weren't so dependent on the other for satisfaction. Lying beside her, my arms around her, I remembered furtively masturbating when other lovers had fallen asleep, to relieve the aching tension of my body. And I felt a flood of love for this woman, coming now to orgasm in my arms, for her ruthless honesty, for her tiny body and translucent rose-flushed skin, for the clarity of her spirit. My god, how I love her!

I had been making love to her for a long time. First touching her body, kissing her anywhere and everywhere; then sucking her breast and rubbing her feet; then licking her ear, kissing her mouth, touching her cunt. Then three fingers in her vagina, my whole body loose and free with pleasure. Then much later, my mouth on her clitoris, my hand inside her, both moving quickly, pressing deep. My breasts rub her belly and my vagina runs juices. She comes and I move my mouth away. Lying beside her, my body pressed tight against her, I move my hand slowly gently inside her. Later, my hand vibrating in waves inside her, my fingertips on her cervix, she began to come again. Then mouth on cunt, hand beating inside, both our bodies quivering with the rhythm, she comes and comes and comes. Tremors of pleasure run through my whole body--toes to head. And then in silence and peace, I kissed her eyelids and lips, gently. Curling next to her, already half asleep, I realized that she was crying. Hurt, frightened, not understanding, I finally asked "What's wrong?" "Being so passive makes me afraid," she said, "It's meant such bad things in my life and I start to hate myself." "I love you," I answered, "I feel such joy when I touch you and I want to give you pleasure." "I know," she said, "but I am afraid."

Her hand was inside me, drumming hard, beating wildly, my body loose, flowing with her. The pleasure became intense, up my vagina, through my belly, to the top of my head, to the tips of my fingers. Waves and waves of contractions flowed through my vagina, held her, united us. Then I was relaxed, at peace. "Will you write that there are vaginal orgasms?" she asked. "I don't know," I say, "it's not the same as a clitoral one." "An orgasm is a climax and a release," she said. "You felt that didn't you?", "Yes," I answered, "but completely differently. My favorite coming is when you touch me inside and out. But the more we make love, you know, the less I want to come at all! It's the being there I love."

One day, the father of her younger child came to visit, bringing his current lover and his mother. This visit was to introduce the child and his grandmother, an unfamily reunion fraught with all kinds of love energy and tension. As he entered he bent and gently kissed her, I felt pain at the perfect beauty of that image, their fine boned semitic faces, their clear, clear blue eyes. They were two of a kind. On the floor



sat their child, looking like each of them. I suddenly felt intensely jealous of that child, who I lived with and was friends with and loved, because he was a tie between them that would last forever. They have a child. I felt a terrible mean desire to possess her that way too, to make her have my child. The intensity of the jealousy and the desire to bind her, to hold her shocked me. Yet all the while I was at best anonymous, in that cozy, difficult family scene. To his mother I was "a friend"—one can present ones unmarried heterosexual lovers to one's mother (maybe) but definitely not one's homosexual lovers. Though he knew me and knew of our relationship, he never once looked at me directly, concentrating on the difficult communication between the child, his mother, his former lover and himself. His new lover was as jealous and as pained as I but more obviously possessive. Finally she turned to me and started chatting. We sat in the corner talking, like two wives. It took me a long time after they all left to remember clearly that her love and mine was in the present moment strong and clear, making past and future and possessiveness irrelevant.

Another time, "I'm leaving; I can't stand it anymore!" I shouted, grabbing up my coat and the nearest sleeping bag. "You'd better not run away; I'm not going to come get you," she said,

"I don't value pleasure any more than I do pain. What I care about is what's happening right now, not how it feels. You want to cancel me out—you want niceness, not ME." "Yes, I value pleasure more than pain. I don't want any more pain," I yelled, crying. "I hate you!" "I know," she answered, "I hate you too right now. So what?" I stood there angry for several minutes, caught up in the drama and unwilling to give up the role. Then I couldn't help myself: I smiled and put down the sleeping bag. "You tell me why you hate me and I'll tell you why I hate you," I offered. And we did.

Our friend Maureen said, "I just don't get turned on to women." "No, you won't 'just get turned on' to women." I answered, "until you've begun making love with a woman." It takes a long time to break down the patterns and images we've been taught forever. One day after I'd been making love with my first woman lover for several months, I realized that I was seeing women with new eyes, aware of their bodies, aware of their sensuality, aware of their whole beings. I wasn't the nymphomaniacal rapist that heterosexual women sometimes imagine lesbians to be. I was just very much alive to the possibility that sometime I might love one of my friends, or a woman met at a meeting somewhere, or a woman who was still a stranger on the street. cont.





She touched my anus with her finger. "It's just another hole, you know," she said. One night, three fingers inside her vagina, pushing deeply, deeply, my fourth went in her anus, pushing deeply. I felt an anguishing, tearing kind of pleasure run all through me. Forbidden territory; deeper union. Desire and love were all confused within me. I wanted her. I wanted her to know more pleasure than she ever had. My thumb rubbed her clitoris too. "Oh honey, honey, honey, baby!" she cried out.

We were making love one day and I felt her finger go in my anus, very deep. The excitement in my vagina, in my whole body intensified. "Oh my god," I thought, "I'm going to shit." Then I realized I was just feeling her finger. Later I wanted to laugh - it felt very perverse and very funny to finally acknowledge that shitting can be pleasurable. "Oh no!" she said. "What?" I asked. "Fucking in the ass! We're like a couple of male homosexuals!" "Whatever feels good...: I said.

"Are you writing everything down?" she said. "People are going to think we're weird." "All we really are is open," I answered. "What's going to happen if we stop liking to make love?" she asked. "Do you only love me for my body?" I asked. And we laughed and hugged.

One night we went to bed exhausted but too full of nervous energy to sleep. I tossed and turned, tried counting sheep. She talked intermittently. "You know," she said, "it would be better if we just tuned into what we need to relax and did it, we can just fuck and go to sleep." We've got such exalted standards of lovemaking we've forgotten how to be simple when we need to be.

"Reading your journal turns me on," she said. "I want to go to sleep tonight," I answered. "What are you doing?" she asked, "Protecting yourself from the future? Changing what you will feel then, by what you fear now? I didn't say anything about making love; I'm just about to go out and milk the goats." She's right, I thought as I built the fire. I still fear that my being honest will bring anger or rejection from my lover. So here I am, building walls between myself and the first person I've ever been honest with, in case I won't be honest when we go to bed, separating us over something that's happening only in my imagination. As it happened, after we had cooked dinner and gotten the children to sleep and spent several quiet hours talking and reading, I wanted very much to make love with her, to be as close together as we could. Staying clear in the moment, not projecting into the future is something I have never done before. But within the moment there is infinite freedom to be anything I am.

Lying with her head in my lap, she said "All my images are changing. When we were first making love, if I felt turned on, I would think 'I want to be fucked.' Now, I think 'I want my cunt kissed; I want your hand inside me.' I'm afraid I'm becoming a homosexual!" "I don't mind if you do," I answered. "I do", she said, "I want this freedom to lead to being more open, not more closed."

During a restless night, we woke several

times to talk. "It's so hard to be near you, to touch you without it becoming sexual," she said, "I wonder if that's why it's hard for lesbians to be affectionate - because we make love with our hands; our hands are sexual objects!" The next morning, I said, "It hurts me that you said we're not affectionate. I am. I love to hug you, touch you, rub your back." "I know," she said, "I was wrong about that. But the hands, what I said about hands was important, You love the thing that makes love to you- I love your hands, your arms, your mouth."

"I have something to tell you," she said, "What?" "You asked me to tell you," she said. "What?" I said. "I made love with Laurie last night," she said. "Well, I'm glad you can touch and love each other again," I said. "Is it really ok?" she asked. "When we are clear with each other, it doesn't matter what you do with any one else," I said, "You blow my mind," she said.

Sometimes I like the taste of her cunt, sometimes it scares me. When I like it, I cover her whole cunt with my mouth, sucking, licking, kissing. Mouths and cunts feel somehow the same, united in wetness and pleasure. I like to explore with my tongue the edges of her lips, the inside of her vagina, the tip of her clitoris. I like how she comes beneath my tongue, moaning and crying and laughing. I like how I come beneath her tongue, with a pleasure which is almost too much to bear.

We are both a little afraid of menstrual blood. Sometimes we feel desire and intimacy that makes a period irrelevant. Other times that knowledge that one of us has her period seems to inhibit us, to lessen desire. The first time I found her blood beneath my fingernails, I felt a deep tenderness and love for our union. Another time, I felt excited at the feel and look of all that blood. "Blood sisters is what what we are," I thought. "A tampon is like one more finger in the vagina," she said while making love to me. "Feels good," I answered. The first time I tasted her blood I felt scared, neither clearly excited nor repulsed, just scared. I still feel confusion now, as though my intellect fears what my body does not.

Away from her now on a trip, I'm finding it hard to be a celibate again. Walking down the street, I catch a smile from a man or woman and have a swift fantasy of making love. A little shocked, I have to laugh at my secret nymphomania. I feel happy about it too; having been frozen for so long, it's good to be a whole body person. One night I put two fingers inside myself and felt surprise: this doesn't feel familiar. I've come to know the feel of her vagina so well. I'm aware of all the differences in mine. I remember Sally telling me about a woman who photographed hundreds of women's cunts and no two were alike! Then forgetting thoughts, I felt those fingers inside me, moved them in waves, thumping them against my vagina. Oh joy! Learning to make love to her with abandon, I'm learning to make love to myself with more freedom too. No more "masturbation", this is love making. My whole body relaxes. ♀



Blessed  
 because you allow me to touch you  
 you move under me  
 and I am neither woman nor man  
 it is neither yesterday nor tomorrow  
 but now  
 your nipples like full moons  
 and I the sun.



We rhythmically stroke  
 each other's heads until  
 I am you and you are me  
 no end and no beginning  
 no skin no bone no words  
 an infinite drop into an infinite ocean.



# TOPLISS

How strange it feels to slip back into the ME of eight years ago. City jives and rhythms shoot through me and feel unnatural as I conjure up the atmosphere and some happenings of North Beach, San Francisco, 1967. For the last few years I've wanted to unveil, so to speak, my impressions and reflections of topless dancing days ... What's a sweet girl like you doin' in a place like this? Well, what's someone like you doin' in here, Pal? For the most part, the patrons repulsed me. They came to look at my titties and my G-string and my ass and fantasize. It reminded me of something depraved or perverted: no touch sex. I used to try to get into the dancing and forget there was even an audience out there. A good band, with musicians who could keep a beat and hold a tempo, was a groove.

I often used to wonder what women, aside from the employees, were doing in that cold, de-sexed den. For whatever reason they came, they would immediately compete with the dancers and the cocktail waitresses (who wore Fredrick's of Hollywood type uniforms) for the attention of their male companions. Some women came in, perhaps, to accompany their dates. Others came because they wanted to dance topless. As it turned out, these women were often dancers on their nights off. I belonged to that group of dancers advertised as college coeds and we were often in sharp contrast to the professional dancers who were career oriented. While we were interested in getting paid for our dancing at night so we could go to school during the day, the latter were mainly interested in public exposure. On their nights off, the waitresses and bartenders, who often marry one another, would frequently come to the club to socialize. Their whole waking lives apparently revolved around the clubs and bars. It used to blow my mind that employees actually chose to come to the club on their nights off. Their lifestyle, in general, seemed limited and depressing. I took solace in the knowledge that I could observe it without becoming part of it.

Every once in a while there would be a special night, full of excitement and electricity and ecstatic moments: Mystical happenings on Broadway. Every once in a while an old friend would appear or a new friend would be made. Every once in a while something outrageously ironic would happen.

One night the STAR of the show, whose act on stage was making it with a pink feather, was swept spread eagled onto the ample neck of a reveling patron. She was carried out of

the club and halfway down the block before the hulking bouncers were able to stop him and liberate the STAR, whose eyes always reminded me of those on a Barbie Doll. She used to wear some kind of fur G-string, guaranteed to get 'em hard everytime.

Then there was the time that the gay bartender, on a drunken night off, got on stage and did an imitation of the STAR, to the delight of the club's employees.

There was a master of ceremonies at the club, an ex-schoolmaster for some exclusive boys academy, that had a voice in the tradition of Ronald Coleman, and a sense of humor that changed with his many moods, from sadistic to ridiculous. He set the tone for the audience. If he got down and funky, so did the audience. If he got silly, the patrons followed suit. Although sometimes amusing and sympathetic, the fellow could be a real gross out. One night the unhappy man kept calling for the dancers to 'take it all off,' and 'let it all hang out,' and of course, the audience followed. Toward the end of the evening, the club was bawdy and the atmosphere was humiliating, and some of us refused to dance the last show. The other dancers followed, and, surprisingly enough, the management was sympathetic with the dancers. The mc soon left the club.

My most grotesque recollection is of a woman named Dolly, an old trouser and veteran of the striptease. Dolly was about sixty. She had an obese and pallidly skinned body which was in sharp contrast to the blue-black wig she wore. (Although she often wore her blonde or red wig; in fact she alternated wigs nightly; still, I always visualize her in that stark, black headpiece.)

She would pretend she was just someone from the audience who wanted to perform. The mc would interview her; she would go back stage and strip to her slip and come out dancing. She was a weird figure on the stage, painted face and flacid flesh. She symbolized the pathetic woman to me. Sometimes the audience would hoot with delight for Dolly. Sometimes it would jeer and boo. The pathetic thing was that Dolly really cared about that audience reaction. She was renewed and happy if she were praised; depressed and alcoholic if consistently put down.

One night a patron told me that I was dancing dirty. So what did you expect, honey? What did you come in here for, anyway, little daddy? Did you believe the barker's unsubtle hints of the carnal pleasures within? Was it a letdown that this icy den offers nothing but looks? You can see it, but ya can't touch it. Those are the rules.



I am a physical person and have been conscious of my natural sensuality for years. But in those days, I was struggling with my sexuality because I had been raped more than once. Those experiences changed my outlook on life. I had to build a protective shell. The psychedelic child-woman of the sixties, filled with visions and love, got put down. Perhaps it was my openness and exuberance that got me into trouble. "Lord knows I paid some dues, gettin' through."

What kind of sexual vibes should I put out anyway? I became cautious. As a dancer, I preferred to keep a distance between myself and the audience. When I started working at the club, I felt comfortable without much on, as I had spent the glorious summer before camping at a 'free' beach where my friends and I had lived in various stages of undress. But as I continued working at the club, I lost that comfortable feeling.

In retrospect, I can say that I became negative toward my sexuality while working in North Beach. Sometimes I have periods when I feel totally sensuous. I am (in the state of becoming) aware of the energy I generate. I have since equated these energy phases with the waxing and waning of the Moon, and my own moon cycle, but in those days I had not grasped the metaphor. On those nights I would go out onto the stage and dance and feel alive and exhilarated. I tried not to think about turning on the audience because this had an inhibiting effect on me.

My usual attitude toward the audience was aloof. As the months passed, I began to believe that any man that looked at me was only interested in me sexually. I became extremely cautious and distrustful of men.

I would walk around campus with my eyes lowered, afraid to look people in the eye. I would wonder about some of my professors. Had any of them patronized the club? My world was becoming seedy, and after ten months, I quit.

It took me a while to relax and unwind and relate to myself as a sexual person. It took my leaving the Bay Area and moving to the North Coast. The introspection that hindsight eventually brings leads me to say that getting paid to be a sexual object was a frightening experience. It was similar to being raped.

I am no longer inhibited by being (self) stigmatized as a sexual object, and am free to revel in my high energy phases and understand and cope with the low ones. To me, sexuality and sensuality are interrelated. My sexual feelings are related to what arouses and delights my senses. In these five country years, I have been learning about and tuning myself into this relationship. As a result, the aroma of the early spring irises that fills my house delights me. The ceaseless pounding of the surf arouses me. Sunsets are visual experiences that fill me up. Sensuous experiences are an extension of my sexuality, in the same way that nursing a baby is an extension of my sexuality.

I wonder if writing about this experience has been some sort of exercise in exorcism for me? The glare and neon and flesh of North Beach seem so far away to me now. I relate to the Seasons and the Moon and the Forest and the Ocean. My bearings are no longer street corners and mesh tights. My lifestyle now is greatly influenced by natural cycles. The result is that my sexual nature can develop peacefully and consciously, and evolve without fear.

cont.





# TABOO OR NOT TABOO?

When three six year old boys climb to my loft, shed their clothes and announce, as one roughly pounces on me, that they've come to fuck me, I am stunned. I speak to their roughness, tell them and show them gentleness. I don't let them fuck me but I hug them each and stroke them softly. In time they leave. I'm still wondering what they wanted. To emulate adult loving the same way they want to learn other skills like chopping wood or riding a horse? Are they after pleasure or only performance? I know they feel easier approaching me because I've struggled to free myself from unnecessary adult power over them. We are not equals, but I respect them and I want them to have more pleasure with less guilt than I grew with; but I feel uncomfortable when they involve me in their sensual/sexual exploration.

We lived in a free school, a free-for-all commune where sexuality, from celibacy to pan-sexuality, was discussed and acted out, though heterosexuality was the most prevalent. The children had not been shielded from our adult gropings to sexual freedom. In familial, inter-familial, and large communal sleeping rooms they'd watched it all. Were they too stimulated? Or are they naturally so aggressively curious?

When my five year old boy friend comes to me, eyes wide shining with love, and whispers in my ear, "I want to fuck you," I'm complimented and uncomfortable, more uncomfortable than when an adult man approaches me. I don't want to turn off the child's budding sexuality. Still I feel he doesn't understand what he's asking. What does he want? To be close to me? Valued by me? When I said I loved him but I didn't want to fuck with him what did he hear? That he and his penis are too little? Time after time he asks to fuck me. My discomfort doesn't lessen nor does the weight of my responsibility.

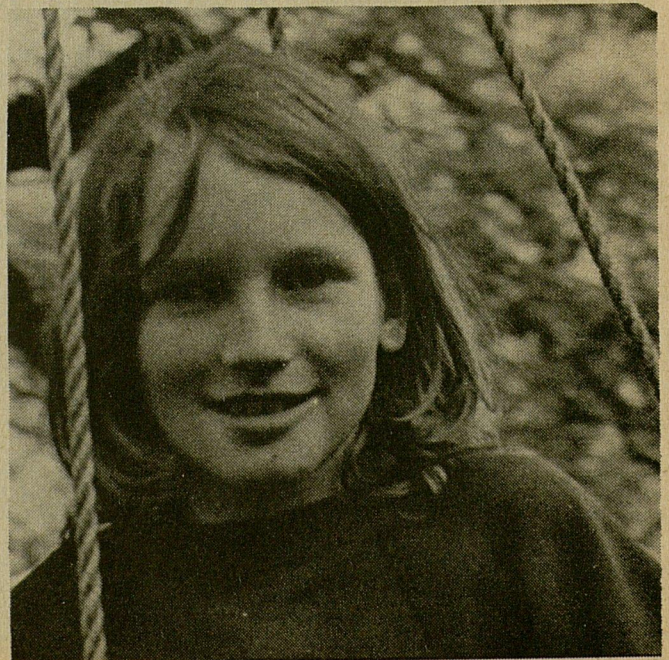
I recall a blatant lesson my son received. I was in a man's mountain house. Acid in the morning had freed our songs and sexual energy. My eight year old son entered, shy at first. He approached me tentatively, then possessively and finally began butting his head against my belly. I protested physically and verbally but he continued trying to ram me, spurred on by the man's exclamation of rape and by the man's laughter and clapping.

Relievedly I turn from those days to thoughts of daughters, our sisters. How will they learn the pleasures of their bodies? Who will teach them, touch them?

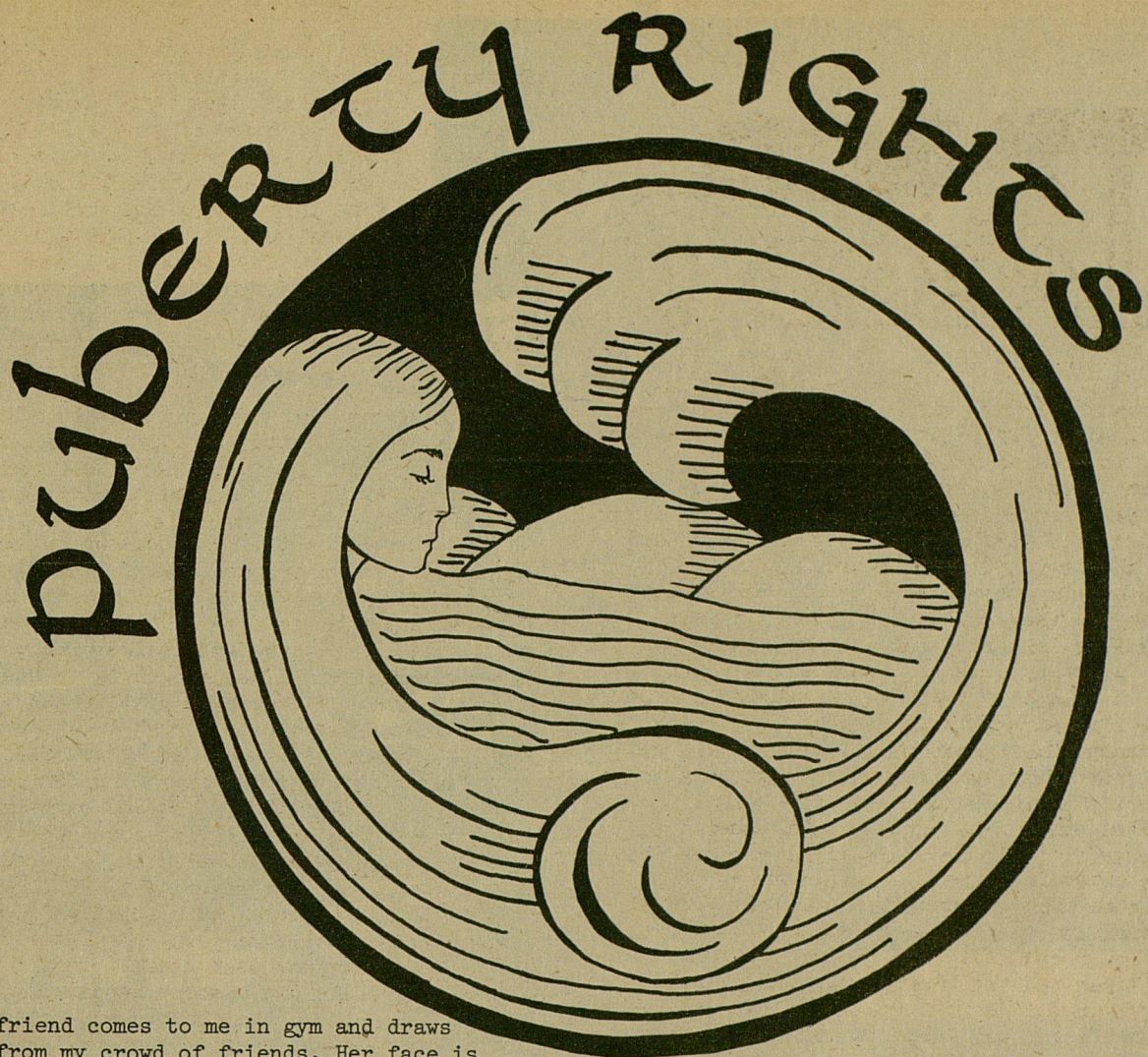
As my daughters grew out of infancy, I stopped touching them as much. I felt it was an aspect of weaning. I've been learning to show my love more. Once, after kissing my daughter, I asked her how my kiss compared with others. She answered that I was the only person she kissed. She left me feeling very responsible, pondering the question of incest again. I thought of the times we've slept together, when I've wanted to touch her sweetly rising breasts. I've stopped myself because I didn't want to make her uncomfortable. But does my paralysis and silence leave her waiting for a boy to uncover her bounty of pleasure?

I resent that, knowing that boys are ignorant of women and, on a deep level, despise them. So I think on incest more. Children are born completely, helplessly, hopelessly in love with the adults who care for them. I fear increasing their dependence on me by touching them more sexually. I also fear overwhelming them with my feelings and needs. Somewhere inside me I agree that would be wrong. Would it? Where does that voice come from? I've glimpsed myself dependent on my daughter for pleasure. I criticize that fantasy as horrible and unfeasible though I may be dependent on them in all other ways in my old age.

One night while I was caring for our communal three year old daughter I rocked back in the Yoga plow. My skirt slipped down revealing my vulva. She stroked me, giggled, covered me and rocked me down. She moved away. I rocked up and over again. She came and touched me, again giggling and rocked me down. A little while passed and I rocked over again. This time she stroked my vulva and asshole repeatedly. Gone was the giggling. She chanted an ageless ancient language and rested on my buttocks. It felt like a good interaction and I thought that maybe it's children who will lead me from guilt, confusion and shame to a clarity of how to share, in a healthy way, the sensual/sexual energies which arise between us. ♀







My friend comes to me in gym and draws me away from my crowd of friends. Her face is expectant and smooth, I know what she has to tell me. I can feel my friends' eyes on me as we walk away from them for private talk. And when they ask me what it was she said, what can I tell them?

I was right. That "big" day. Lori has her period. Be careful now Lori. I can almost hear her mother saying it. My good friend Lori, wants a dime from me. And when I join my friends again and they ask me why she drew me aside, what can I tell them?

In my purse is the wallet with the dime in it, but it is locked in the locker room. We must find the teacher and get the key. But no, Lori is embarrassed I am too. I, as all of us, have been taught to be ashamed. When the teacher asks what I need the key for, what can I tell her?

The teacher heard me say I needed a dime. She seemed to understand. I am roughly handed the keys and told to hurry up. I round the corner and there is Lori, thanking me for getting the keys for her. When she asks me how to put it in, what can I tell her?

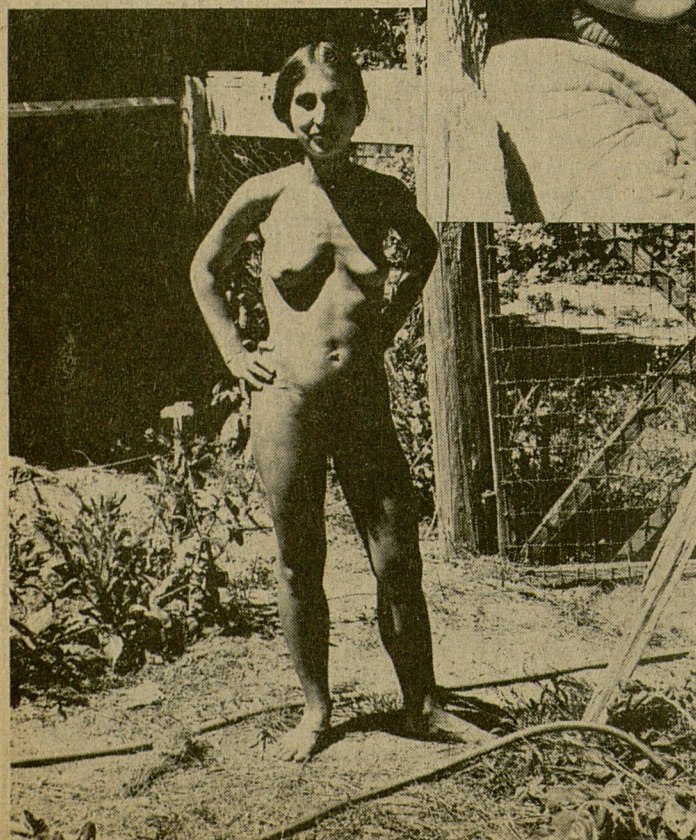
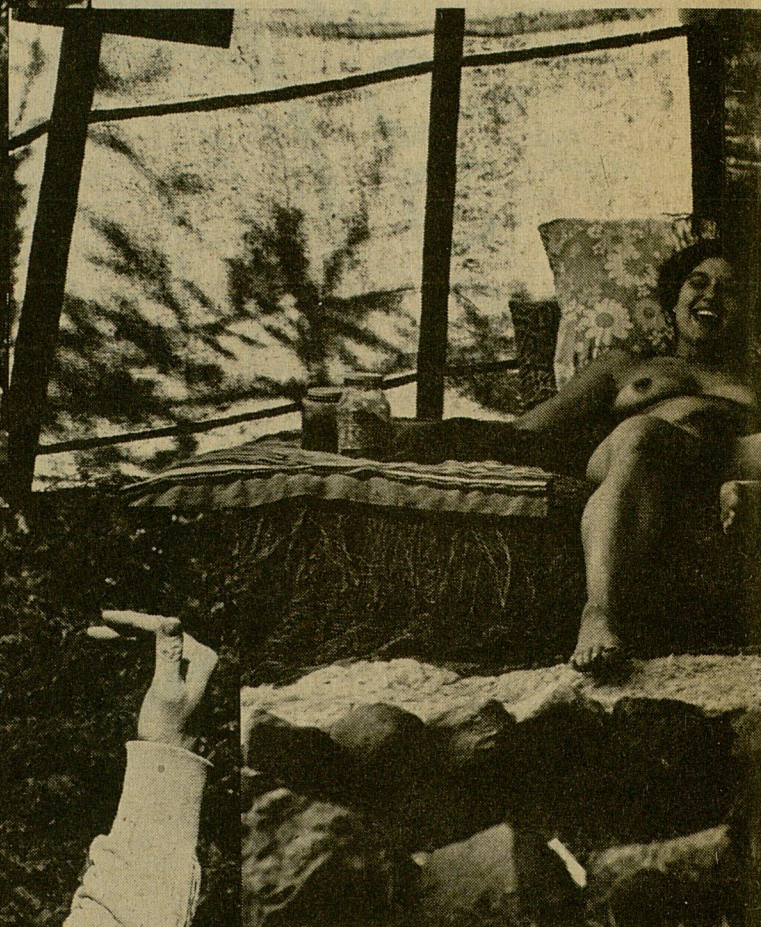
The bathroom is quiet and I hear the wrapper being torn off. Should I leave or should I stay? My friends have all picked teams for basketball now, but I don't care. I really don't like that game. And when they ask me what took so long, what can I tell them?

Lori comes out of the stall. There is blood on her fingertips, and she quickly washes her hands. She turns and looks at me, and is a woman. She asks me what is wrong, she knows my every expression. And what can I tell her?

To feel her blood and not hurry to wash it away? To take the keys with pride? To take the time to read, really read the directions on the tampons, and not just laugh and throw them away? To tell the crowd, the class, the world, and be proud of it?

None of these things can I tell her. And none can I feel either. I wash my hands fast too, I laugh too, I draw closest friends aside. I hurry so I do not have to ask for the key. All these things I know I have been taught to do, and yet I still FEEL them! I can not feel the blood if it seems gross. If the others laugh, I can not read the directions. I would like to, I think. Someday I will. Someday I WILL! Not in a grim, determined flash, but slowly, as that ceremonial blood drips from me, slowly I will change. And yet, now, while the changes are barely started, now, what will I tell them when they ask? What they want to hear. Yet they will all know the real truth. And so knowing that they know will form a warm feeling within. A silent protest to all we have been taught. It is a reflex. What will I tell them? Maybe they are wondering what to ask. ♀

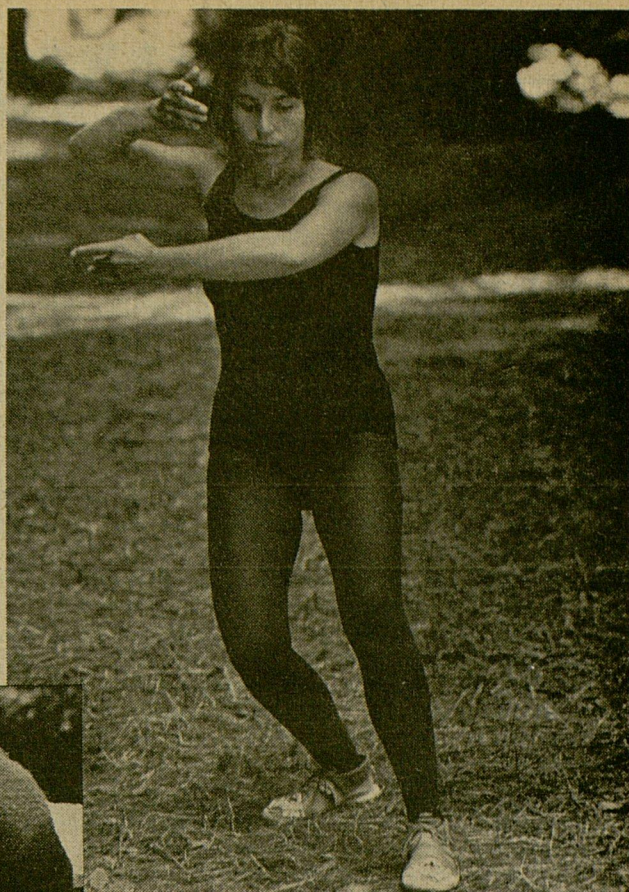




*Our faces belong to*

*Our bodies*





*our bodies*

*belong to ourselves*



# FIRST TIME

In my immediate childhood neighborhood--ugly, crowded, lower class, rapidly becoming a slum--there were no women to be friends with. So, almost daily, from age 13 to 15, I clenched my fists and girded my all too well developed body against the jeers, cat-calls and kissing sounds of Puerto Rican men who gathered on the crowded streets between the apartment my family lived in and the park. There, around the handball courts where I rarely played was my week-day social life--all males, none too interesting, a number of whom I had "petted" with, meaning they had touched my breasts, also meaning--in the social/sexual nightmare that was the mid-50's--that they didn't "respect" me, that they were warned by their mothers to "stay away." Here it was that I met Lenny.

I was 15, he 23, a "veteran" of life's experiences--in and out of jail, an artist, involved in a drug scene long before it was popular--when it happened. We were friends. We met in apartment house hallways in New York winters, huddling against the cold, and in secluded corners of Claremont Park in warm weather. He was forbidden fruit--my parents were against my having anything to do with him--but he taught me about art and music, took me to the "Family of Man" exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art and was far more exciting than any of the other men around.

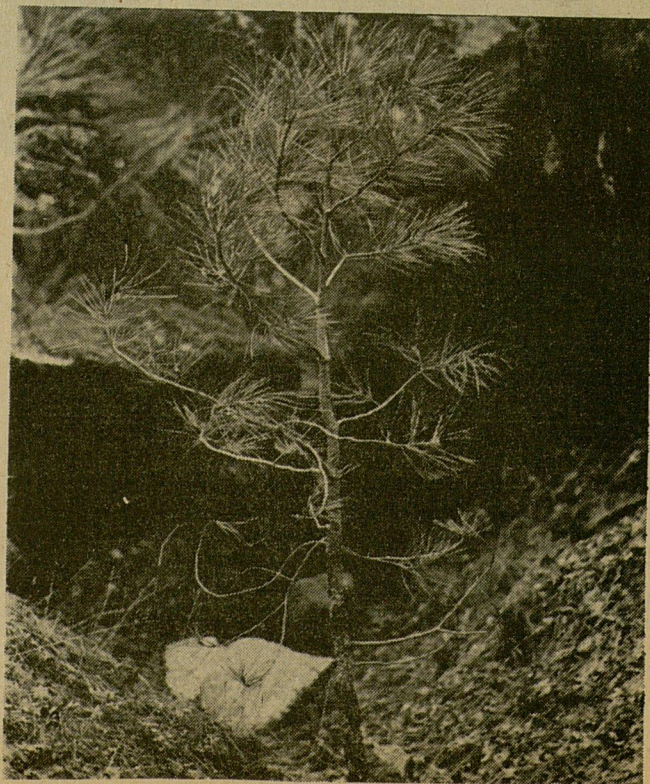
Why it became important to fuck I don't know. I don't remember kissing or even touching him though that may well have happened in our clandestine meetings. It almost seems that a decision was made that he was to fuck me. One night I went with him to babysit for his sister. There, in a double bed in a horribly cluttered, ugly room, he tried and failed--I was too tight. This was only temporarily discouraging--it was to be done somehow.

Days later it happened. Here I will describe the scene as an outsider: a balmy early summer night in New York, on the grass in a park ("our" park), beneath a tree, hidden in its shadows, beautiful and romantic. But that is not how it felt to me. I remember describing it to a school friend as feeling like a weight was on me; that was my full description of the experience. It was quick, to the point, in and out, a fuck. I walked away with a strange feeling between my legs and slowly became conscious of a sense of defiance toward my parents. I had done it and with a forbidden friend.

To all students June's arrival means the end of school. To high school students in New York, however, it has additional significance: state-wide regents examinations, pressure. Trying to study for my regents and for final exams, all I could think of was that I might be pregnant. I was panicked. My period was late. It had been expected the very day we had fucked. I had called Lenny often but each time reached his sister whom he lived with. He had never returned my calls. I went to the park frequently to find him, frantic

for taking time from studying. Finally, one day he was there. My period was then almost three weeks late. Standing at the bottom of the stone stairs leading from the park, he at the top, I told him I thought I was pregnant. He looked down: "If you are it's not by me; and stop bothering my sister." I heard his words with disbelief. There was nothing I could say. I walked away. I have often thought of the incredible cruelty of his words, even of the fuck itself--cold, calculated, almost brutal. Why? Years later I met him unexpectedly on what must be one of the most crowded streets in the world. We spent a few moments together. He apologized. I never saw him again.

Eighteen days late; sitting at a desk cramped over a geometry regents thinking, "How can I be doing this when I might be pregnant?" 95 degrees, so humid I could barely breathe, sweat dripping down my armpits, soaking wet beneath my breasts, between my legs. Is it sweat or blood? Has it happened? I wait for the "pass" to the "girls' room". There, in one of the row of institutional green stalls, I check: red! blood! I remember that as one of the most ecstatic moments of my life. Now I would only have to deal with the emotional pain, easy by comparison to getting an abortion in 1956. How intimately I, we, women are connected to our menstrual cycles: marking our calendars, checking, worrying. How many times in the following years I would go through that again hoping, hoping it would happen--that this time I would not have to deal with the consequence of pregnancy. But then, at 15, once more slumped over my geometry regents, still unable to concentrate, I felt I had won. I was almost right--I did not know then the power of emotional scars. I know now. ♀





# PAIN AND PLEASURE

I have a hard time finding my writing voice. "What tone shall I employ while discussing sex?" Harumph! If women spoke in poems ... I seem to be talking about writing while trying to write about sex. "The better to communicate with you, my dear."

So here I am, trying to see and describe sexuality, and share that energy. But instead of doing it in bed, behind closed doors, I want to transform, transmute, make it acceptable, respectable, to do it through writing, through consciousness. I am trying to share with you the state of consciousness we call intimacy, vulnerability, love. A state of consciousness in which I expose my innermost feelings. The state of consciousness sometimes associated with the physical feeling one has after an orgasm. A state of trust, appreciation and acceptance - among other things.

Because I wanted to share pleasure with you, and because sexuality was and is an area of pain, and, as such, demands attention, I decided to talk and write about sex in these terms.

Pain and pleasure are the poles of all physical experience. The unity of pain and pleasure is usually experienced unconsciously. From my viewpoint at this time, the sensations of sexuality are felt all along that continuum, rather than confined to the area of pleasure. Because sexuality is an acting out of desire and satisfaction (i.e., pain and pleasure), it can give a clear view of that continuum. This can be observed from the most subtle through the most passionate situations. The sexual realm being a communicator of the physicality of life, and an integrator of the various energies which make up a whole human being.

This difficulty I am experiencing about "how" to go about talking about sex is because of the remnants of self which are pained at my desire to talk about it. In other words, I am still partially ashamed that I even think about sex, never mind indulge in sexual activities, or, even worse, talk about it with my friends. Because, after all, I may have a sexual experience for various reasons like a cosmically compelling love attraction or because of biology, or chemistry, or in order to reproduce. But I can only be talking or writing about sex because I want to. Just because I, myself, am thinking about it and want to talk about it. To accept that, I have to accept my own sexuality as my motivation and take responsibility for my own actions in relation to that sexual awareness.

And that's hard to do. Our whole culture has been taught to be ashamed of sexuality, but women in particular are supposed to be so unaware that they wouldn't even speak of

such things. Well, I feel a desire to get rid of this pain which appears to be caused by a holding back of something flowing right through me. I have to look through the various images of a "supposed to" woman and glimpse myself with a puzzled look, saying, "I want to talk about sex with you."

In the nitty-gritty physical world, automatic patterns of behavior begin in situations in which sexual awareness is entirely within myself, or in subtle attractions in which there is a desire to smile or embrace affectionately. There is a conflict having to do with recognition of desire to express something, to be or not to be conscious of what my body is saying. For example, rather than asking, "May I hug you?" at the moment of impulse, I have waited and hugged a friend "Goodbye" instead. Sometimes I was aware of what I was doing, sometimes not aware until after the entire event, that I had caused myself pain by inhibiting my consciousness. At these times it is not a question of whether or not we hug, but a question of being aware of what I am feeling. I think that the awareness is the means to physical relaxation, and that the lack of awareness causes disharmony and tension which, if enough moments of desire and unconscious inhibition accumulate, will force awareness by a signal of pain.

This is a common process. Sometimes we get sick from it. This can occur simply because of the difficulty with speaking honestly. Here we are concerned with sex. In the middle of physical intimacy, I can inhibit a desire to speak to my lover and thus 'disintegrate' myself, and switch from a state of pleasure to one of pain. Or I can say, "I have to move my arm, dear," and stay in the moment. Sometimes I am clearly 'paralyzed' concerning speaking, and this is clearly painful.

The social and personal image systems about how to approach sexuality can cause pain and confusion in another way also. This is in relation to definitions of attractiveness. The physical idols, female or male, are supposed to take pride in their sexual energy, while the 'unattractive' person is left with the shame and guilt. Since I am skinny and have a bumpy nose, not to mention curly hair and little breasts, and since we all have either curly or straight hair, or pimples or brown eyes instead of blue, or big hands or crooked toes; since we are all alive, ever-changing physical entities and not dolls, it takes a tremendous amount of strength to feel that we have the right to sexual feelings. We must like ourselves as we are, consciously, or we will be unconsciously repulsed because of the mixed messages we give ourselves of attraction and inhibition of the awareness of that attraction. We will feel we have to



pick an image or style in order to approach sexuality at all.

A very direct way to relate pain-pleasure and sexuality is when sexuality is related to healing. Another exploration I have done which is most directly connected with eliminating accumulated pain, or sickness has been connected with sexual arousal and physical sexual release through orgasm. My first encounter with consciously healing through sex was with a healer named Karmu. He is a black man around sixty years old, a mechanic and ex-prize fighter, who has been a healer all his life. He works with massage, herbs, psychic and physical energy.

When I met him and the group of people who work most closely with him, we had a strong and exhilarating affinity for each other. Karmu declared, "She's going to be one of my wives," and I amusedly and silently agreed. We made love, had sexual intercourse, all in the context of his healing and teaching. I was not sick in any particular way, just traveling through, interested and attracted, and willing to take all the help I could get. I had enjoyed making love for many years and enjoyed it with Karmu. We loved each other, to put it simply. I felt with him all the depth of emotion I felt with more personally attached lovers and this was a pleasant surprise. At the same time, he loved many other people and I loved the people I had already loved. He was intent on my experiencing deep orgasms and in feeling satiated. The openness of the whole relating was fun and I felt loosened up on deep levels, orgasmic levels. I tried consciously to tune into the healing aspects of this lovemaking for future reference in keeping my body well. I also tried to learn what I could about reaching through the body to deep energy levels in my own style, in order to work on healing other people.

Even then it was clear to me that it would probably only be lovers I could try the Karmu type healing on, because of the trust necessary in the person being worked on. He sometimes punched and pinched pretty hard. Also, I didn't trust myself about where to really zap someone else's body unless I felt very close to the person. Months later, back at home, a woman friend and lover had a sore throat. It seemed the right time to try curing her. I massaged her whole body, varying gentle and rough touches according to the intuition of the moment. I worked a lot on her head, eventually massaged her vagina and made love to her with my hands, consciously drawing a vaginal orgasm from her. She fell asleep in my arms, on my body. I had a moment of uncertainty when I felt I was "done" about whether to get up and move about or to be the 'considerate lover' and stay there as she fell asleep. I stayed there and went to sleep too. The next morning she was really well, but I had the sore throat. I was sick for some days. We both thought that had I followed the healing process through, gotten up and perhaps shaken the energy out of my body and hands, the channels would have been clear.

Another friend was sick and staying with me. We sometimes experimented with similar energy just by my making love to her when she felt no physical desire. The orgasm, the depth of feeling, the ability to feel pleasure "under" the layers of illness, reprinted her body on health and feeling.

I have also been interested in the tantric approach to sexuality and healing, in which the sexual energy moves but is not physically released. I have had some more or less spontaneous realizations of tantric movement with lovers. Once holding hands, lying naked together, a female lover and I shared a non-verbal, non-physical ecstatic union. Another time a male lover and I were lying together, his penis in my vagina and without orgasm, felt we had experienced "one blood stream."

Recently, I felt myself becoming ill. This time it was connected with a pattern of too much openness. I was in a continually desirous space with a new lover, working on many projects, generally overtired. I was also happy and high. I thought that to take care of myself, I had to close off to my pleasures and I didn't want to do that.

My lover and I went to bed, my body was alive with desire. My mind was active and concerned about staying healthy. I wanted to be able to go to sleep and wanted to make love simultaneously. Making love seemed foolish due to my tiredness. My mind and body appeared to conflict. Then I realized that I was afraid to let my mind accept the state of consciousness equivalent to the amount of energy my body was expressing as desire...In accepting it within me, my mind relaxed, my body relaxed, I felt no desire. My consciousness was focused inside my body. I could feel the energy circling thru my body up and down my spine. The areas of congestion and pain felt very eased by the flow. Then I moved into internal healing space. I consciously constructed a tiny personification of myself and sent her through the inside of my body to cleanse and heal. I then fell asleep. I felt fine in the morning and not afraid of becoming ill.

These experiences held a tone of something new and were revitalizing also. If there is a blockage on any part of the body, movement or release of energy will shake things up. The integration of sexual energy with other bodily sensations can help to get sex out of the mind and back into the body and thereby create a healthier person.

The pain and pleasure continuum remains in effect on the emotional levels that seem to go with sex. In other words, what I call loving is pleasurable and what I call being in love I now recognize as a painful feeling. The warmth of loving which I have felt towards many different people, has been the same feeling, no matter the differences in the beloved. It is an active, open feeling which includes many people, sometimes feels like it includes the whole world.

Being in love, on the other hand, is a state of desire for the beloved object and, as



such is painful. The vacillation between the two is rapid and if consciousness lags because of shame or any kind of dishonesty, confusion ensues. But the gift is in the feeling, doing, loving. That's what feels good. To be loved is meaningless if one does not love in return. Whereas loving someone always feels good if you are aware that desire is not love.

I have learned that if I can really express sexuality honestly, it is a pleasure for me. And if we are sharing the desire to express it, then it can be a pleasure for both of us.

When I am in a state of being physically and emotionally closed, my eyes burn and my muscles ache. I shrink away from stimulation and sensation as all touch is excruciating. I feel no desire to reach out. A friend wanted to make love to me at the same time I was feeling this pain. Everywhere she touched it hurt, but I felt no desire to move away. She moved all through the layers of pain. I can't say they dissolved entirely, I was too contracted for that. But we did move through to the acceptance of the pain, into a relaxation and then to the recognition of pleasure and deep relaxation of orgasm. My pleasure suffused through my body coming up to meet the pain and push it out. I was able to cuddle closer and go to sleep.

All these experiences are vague beginnings but they have been convincing. Sexual energy can be revitalizing as opposed to draining, even with or sometimes especially with orgasmic release of the sexual energy. I now feel that, among other things, the entire sexual act is made up of a series of vacillations between pleasure and pain.

Desire is a painful state. If you have ever been intimate with a two or three year old child, you have observed clearly the nature of desire. "I want a piece of candy," leads too readily to tears for, "Two pieces!" as it does to satisfaction with the one piece of candy and the pleasure of eating it.

Satisfaction of desire is a pleasure. And importantly, so is awareness, expression of the desire experience, pleasurable feelings. It is only when awareness is inhibited that the organism is forced to the more drastic means of pain to signal itself. That last sounds kind of abstract, but what I am trying to say is that what seems to be so important about sex is that you are 'healthier,' less in pain, if you are aware of your own sexuality.

When I am free to be aware of my own thoughts and feelings, no longer subject to the intense 'mind control' of our society, the tone of the content of my relationships can change. I can grasp the events of my life with a sense of 'nowness.' In making love, I can feel the pain of desire give way to exposure of itself through emotion, or passion, and feel satisfaction at achieving the object

of the desire or pleasure at the passing of the desire. Desire is an active state and with awareness of the fact that I create my own pain, I can accept it, feel it as a sensation, sometimes called excitement.

Lying in bed with someone, my sensations can be confused. I "want" but I don't know what I want. Do I want to clasp and unclasp my hand on her breast, on his penis. Do I want to breathe quickly, move my mouth up and down, sing to myself? To find myself at times like these, I have to act and thus am exposed to my lover.

If, on the other hand, I feel desire as 'need,' then I am in pain and someone else must cure me - an old and familiar theme to women. In fact, if I am not conscious of and responsible for my own feelings, no one else can cure that pain.

Emotional and physical relating between people is often driven by the pain and pleasure cycle. Through awareness in the moment the patterns are broken down and true choice is a reality.

When I was celibate for a period of two years, there was a time when I perceived the physical body as a suit of clothing and I had no desire to express my love for people by pleasuring in the beauty of their clothing. For myself I said I should take care of my body and appreciate it. I saw engaging in sexual activity as getting into a canoe with someone and "shooting the rapids" and I had no desire to do that. I was content on the shore.

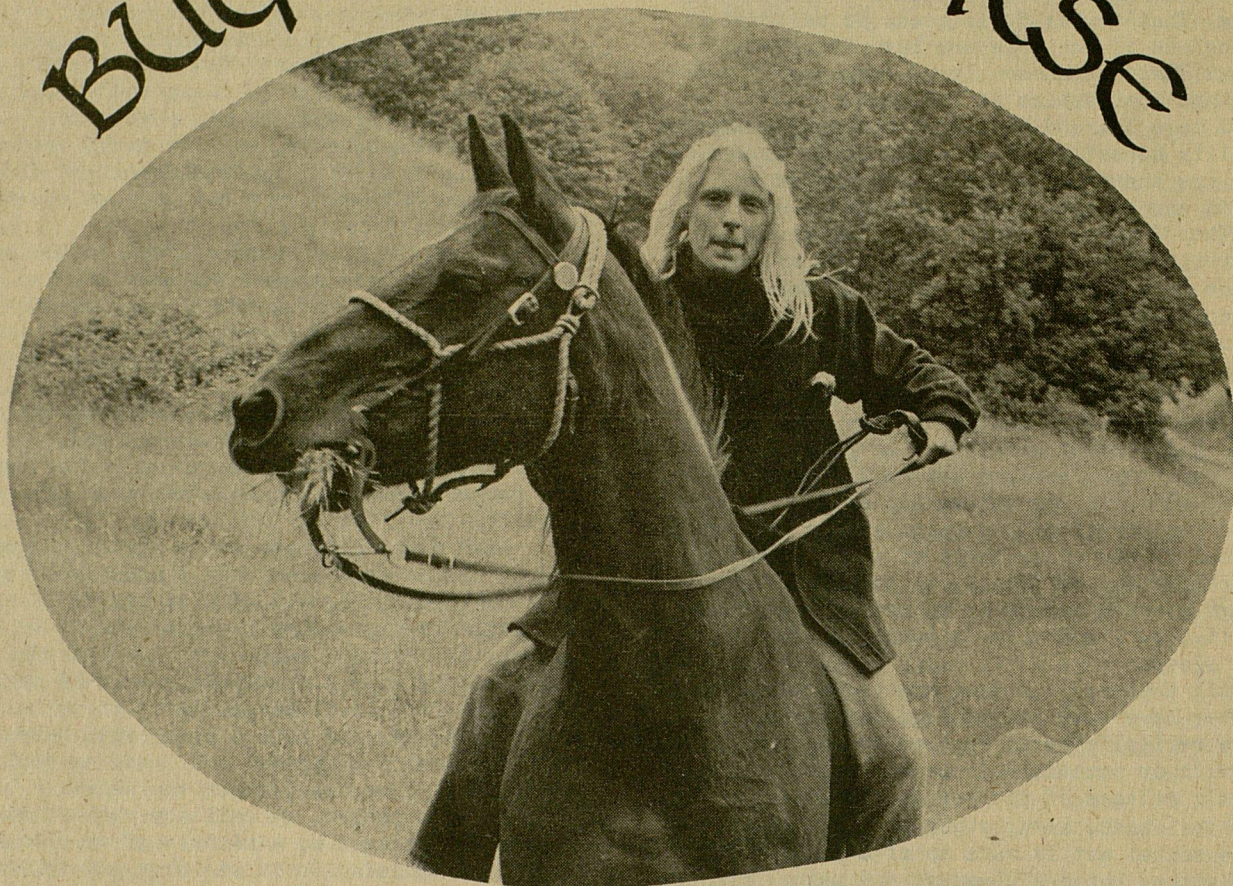
As time passed, my celibacy was no longer a flow. It changed to a mixture of repressions, fears and beliefs. So it was over and I was into relation "ships" with other people. But to "shoot the rapids" you have to be alert, not unconscious. If you are unconscious, you can drown. So I am now wanting to stay conscious of what I am doing, where and why, through my explorations of passion, even through orgasm.

This sometimes leads to 'bizarre' behavior, as my actions are sometimes faster than my awareness. I have kissed someone, felt repulsed and pushed the person away during the kiss. This can be heavy or it can be funny, and the all-important factor is that each person is responsible for her/him self on every level of interaction. There must be a commitment to honesty with others in order to stay honest with oneself. In watching and feeling the pain-pleasure oscillation in oneself, the sense of sexual direction often falls away so one must be unattached to 'satisfaction' or orgasm. It is a question of feeling pain and pleasure, attraction and repulsion, without valuing the one more than the other. For some 'mysterious' non-dualistic reason this whole business feels good to me and the people I make love with. I think it is because of the integrity of mind and body consciousness we are starting to experience. ♀





# BUYING A HORSE



If you've moved to the country and decided to get a horse you need to give thought to what you'll have to provide in terms of time, work, knowledge and equipment for your new critter. He or she will be your responsibility with no handy stable help to feed, clean and doctor him, or even recognize when something is wrong. Since horses are no longer free roaming souls, yours won't be able to move to different ground when his feet hurt, travel to cool up-country to avoid the flies, water and feed himself when he needs it, or just get the exercise his mind and body require. You'll have to know how, why and when to provide for all his needs and be committed to doing it right when it's called for. That old cowboy didn't take care of his horse before himself for altruistic reasons. Horses aren't as adaptable as humans and need much more urgent physical consideration.

O.K. You're ready for all that. How do you find that horse who's just the right horse for you?

First, think about how you'll be using the horse. Do you want a horse for transportation? A horse travels at about four to six m.p.h. at a good walk, six to nine m.p.h. at a trot, and ten to fifteen m.p.h. at a lope or canter. A fast race horse can develop a speed of thirty m.p.h. for short bursts, but don't count on a horse to get you there fast. If transportation is going to be important to you, you may look

for one of the breeds developed for a particularly smooth gait, such as a Tennessee Walking Horse, Peruvian Paso, Paso Fino, Missouri Fox Trotter, or just a plain old nag with a good amble. Your horse could also pack equipment for you, carrying two to three hundred pounds, depending on his size and ability, the shape of the load, how it's packed, and the terrain and distance to be covered. Of course, he can pull a lot heavier load than he can pack. Know of any old buggies or wagons? Bicycle tires and a good reference book could fix you right up. Horses also make mighty fine tractors. If you're interested in competitive equestrian sports, you could look for a horse physically and mentally suitable for: horse shows, gymkhanas, play days, rodeos, endurance rides or competitive trail rides.

If you want to breed your horse, you'll need either a mare (a mature female horse) or a stallion (an uncastrated male horse). Registration papers for a particular breed become more necessary if you hope to re-coup your expenses by selling the mare's foal. A baby horse is a "foal", called a colt until he's four if male, a filly, if female. Of either sex, a horse is a weanling, a yearling, a two year old or a three year old at the appropriate times. After four, a female is a mare, an uncastrated male a stallion (or "whole" or "entire") and a castrated male of any age is a gelding. A stallion

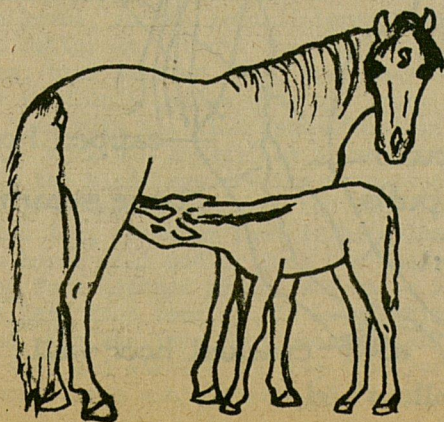


used for breeding is a stud.

A gelding will have a more stable disposition than a mare or a stallion, not being subject to the urges and whims of sex. They are most often used where day-in and day-out dependable personality is important, such as riding camps, working stock, etc. A mare will sometimes present as many behavior problems as a stallion, being inclined to bite or be bossy to other mares during her heat cycle. I'm convinced that much of the prejudice against stallions in this country stems from our puritan heritage. In Ohio when I was growing up, a woman was not allowed to enter a stallion in a horse show. A stallion is an extremely proud, strong creature, very much into his role as herd boss. But throughout history, and in many places today, stallions are used to work cattle, carry children, run races, and ride the trails in the presence of other stallions, mares and geldings. I don't recommend a stallion for a novice horse owner, since continued training is an all important consideration in owning one; however, personality varies widely in all three sex categories. There's some mighty rank geldings around and many gentle mares and stallions.

You'll undoubtedly find yourself using whatever horse you buy for most all of these endeavors as the years roll by. To say nothing of long, quiet walks through the woods, in communion with other natural life; and wild gallops over rolling meadows, feeling your bodies' muscles surge as one.

Where to look? A reputable professional horseman or woman will be your best bet. This person has the horse-knowledge to help you make a good choice, listens to the local horse grapevine to know what's for sale, and has his or her professional reputation at stake as added inducement for getting you a good deal. The ten percent he or she will charge you is a sound investment towards a horse that's right for you. Local advertisements will offer a wide variety: some fantastic deals, some fair, some absolutely worthless. It'll be up to you, your veterinarian, your knowledgeable horsefriend to know the difference. Breeding and training farms usually have registered stock of various ages for sale. You'll pay more from a "name" stable, but it may well be worth it to you to be certain of the horse's training, breeding and care up until then. Horse and stock auctions often offer good



horses at low prices. However, since the butcher buys most horses that don't sell for over a certain price (per pound) at an auction, ask yourself why this horse is being sold there. You'll have limited opportunity to inspect and ride the horses before the auction starts. Moral compunctions have been known to disappear in the auction day fever. Recently, a beautiful mare was sold at a good price at auction. The new buyers hadn't had time to find out that she had the dangerous habit of rearing over backwards. The seller didn't feel obligated to tell. Again you, your friend, or your veterinarian should be there armed with the knowledge to help you choose.

Once you've found a horse you like, what should you check before buying him? Is he the general type of horse you need for the use you have in mind? Will he be suited for your terrain? Short-coupled, small or average sized horses are usually handy in rough or mountainous country. Is the horse of the sex you prefer? Is he the general type who could do well on the amount of care you'll be able to give him? Is his size compatible and comfortable with yours? Size is mainly a matter of personal preference, but there are limits. You may feel closer to the ground in case you fall off a small horse, but a larger animal may feel more solid and secure underneath you. Remember that the actual distance from the ground is only eight inches different in a big sixteen hand high horse than a little fourteen hand high pony. A horse's height is measured in "hands", from the ground to his withers (the bulge at the base of his neck). A hand is four inches. Written, the number to the right of the decimal point expresses additional inches, not fractions. Under 12 h.h. is a small pony, 12 h.h. to 14.2 is a pony, and over 14.2 a horse, according to the American Horse Show Association rules. Many Quarter Horses, Arabians and Morgans would measure as "ponies" while nearly all Thoroughbreds, American Saddle Breds and Standardbreds would be in the taller classification.

## Shape of horses teeth at various ages



Check to see the horse's age. Although considered adult at four years, a horse is not actually mature physically or mentally until about seven years of age. Usually an "aged" horse, one over eight years old, is best for an inexperienced owner. His bones and muscles are fully developed, not as much subject to the stresses and failures of early use. And this horse has been around long enough to have received some training and to have seen lots of jack rabbits dash out of the bushes. Unless the

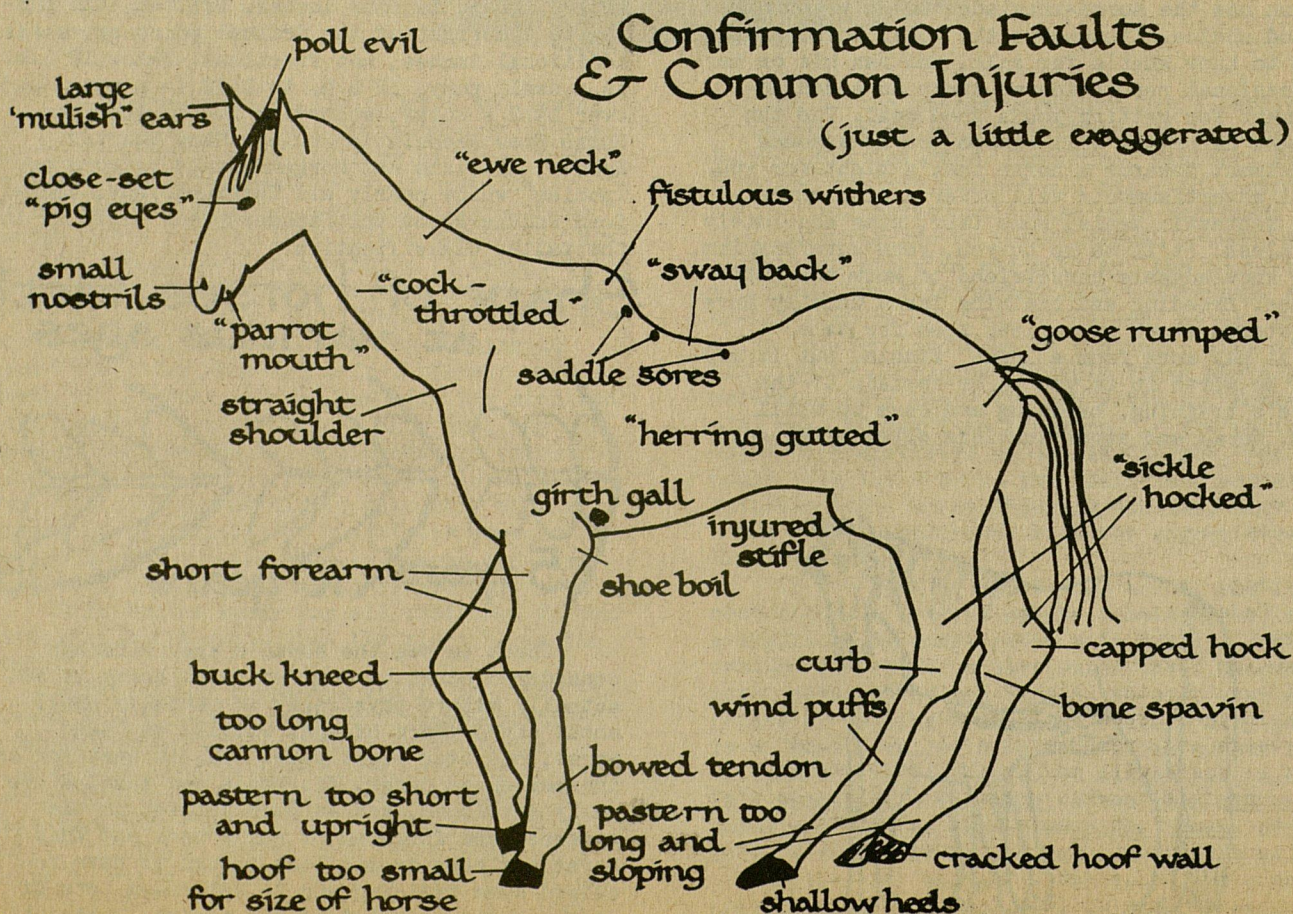


horse has registration papers to prove his age, you'll have to trust in the seller and your expertise in "mouthing" a horse. Briefly, as a horse gets older, its teeth get longer, more triangular in shape and meet at a more oblique angle. A horse's exact age from birth until eight years can be determined by an experienced horseperson by noticing the emergence and later disappearance of successive black cups in the center of the incisors. After eight years, all cups have disappeared and the age can only be determined approximately. Be sceptical of the "nine year old" horse. An experienced horseperson can approximately "age" a horse just by looking at the general appearance of its head, tail and mouth. The horse's condition can deceive, though. Recently, my well-conditioned twenty-five year old gelding was judged to be fifteen years old, while a newly acquired fourteen year old mare in very poor condition was thought to be eighteen or twenty.

One old-timey phrase sums up the importance of color. "There's never been a good horse with a bad color." If you're willing to pay more for an exotic variety, that's your business. The horse's temperament, conformation, state of health, and way of going are the prime considerations. To best judge temperament catch the horse from pasture or stall yourself. Not all gentle horses are easy to catch, but ears, tail, and hind quarters will tell you much even if he's evading you. Horses flatten their ears back against their skull when angry or ornery. They swish their tails when annoyed or ready to

kick. They kick out of fright or intent to commit mayhem. Learn to understand horsetalk. Tack the horse up (put saddle and bridle on) yourself. Notice if the horse is head-shy (afraid to have his head touched), cinch-shy (freaked out by the saddle being tightened around belly), or pulls back (tries to break loose when tied by a lead rope and halter to a strong hitching post). Pick up all four feet, both to check for conformation and injuries and to test his willingness to have his feet handled. To pick up the front foot: stand at his left shoulder facing the horse's hind quarters, run your left hand down from his shoulder to his pastern (ankle bone just above hoof). Slip your hand around from the back to inside to front of his pastern. Lift up, saying "Pick it up". Pinch the back of the fetlock (ankle joint above pastern) or tap the back of the knee if the horse needs encouragement. To pick up the hind foot: Proceed as for front foot, noting that the hock joint on the back leg flexes in the opposite direction of the corresponding knee joint on the front leg. Pull the hoof behind him and wedge your hip under his hock to help take the weight.

Conformation means the horse's build. Ideal conformation depends on and varies with different breed standards and uses to which the horse will be put. Regardless of breed, however, good conformation means: a well-proportioned head, with relatively small nuzzle, large nostrils, firm lips, wide set eyes, small, well-pricked ears and a fine, flexible throttle or throat area.

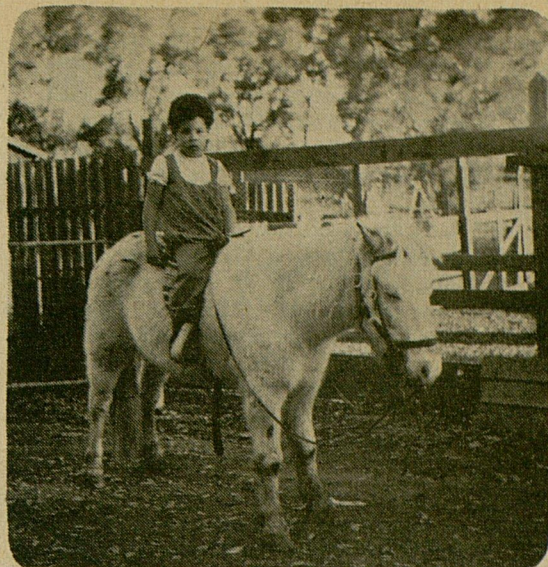




The neck should be relatively long, with a gentle arch. The withers should be pronounced enough to hold the saddle from slipping forward onto the neck, and well-muscled. The shoulders should be long and sloping. Short, straight shoulders make for a bouncy ride. The chest should be of medium width and very deep from front to back. The forelegs should be separated enough to insure no interference between them with a degree of muscling where they meet the chest. They should be straight, with large, solid knees and sizable, strong feet. The pasterns should be of medium length and slope. Look at the conformation illustration for an idea of how the pasterns should look ideally. A long, slanted pastern will be weak. A short, upright one will not be a good shock-absorber, leading to bumpy rides and leg infirmities. The back should be short coupled and straight for strength; the ribs well sprung and angled towards the rear. The hind quarters should appear muscular with a relatively long hip. The hock joint ("knee" of the hind leg) should be big in proportion to the horse's size, wide and deep with a well marked point, supported with muscle and bone above, and straight to the ground below. In all four legs, the cannon bone (between the hock and fetlock) should be relatively short and dense. The well-conformed horse moves with grace, strength and agility.

The horse's state of health is most conclusively determined by a veterinarian. Most high priced horses will have had a certified "vet. check." A sheet of paper will prove that on the (recent) date of examination, the horse checked out sound, with exceptions listed. If the horse hasn't had a vet. check recently, it may be a worthy investment for you to have a vet examine the horse before you hand over a sizable amount of money. You'll have to make a decision based on the particular circumstances. Without the help of a vet, you or a knowledgeable friend can test the horse in many ways. Begin by checking the mucous membranes around the eyes, nostrils and gums for a healthy pink color. Light pink color indicates anemia. Evaluate weight, bloom of coat, and condition around anus under the tail to judge whether the horse is heavily infested with worms (internal parasites). Check between the hairs of the coat for ticks, lice, mites or mange.

Before the horse is tacked up, have someone lead him away from you, towards you, and around you in both directions, at a walk and a trot, on level, smooth ground. Lameness often shows up better at a trot. The horse should have long, true strides, with free easy movement. He shouldn't paddle with his front feet or clip them with his hind feet (forging). He should "work his hocks," as those strong joints in the hind legs are the main propulsion. If you suspect lameness but can't determine which leg, remember that if he's lame in front, a horse will nod or duck his head when the sound foot touches ground and raise his head when the lame foot touches. If lame behind, he'll nod when the lame foot bears weight. Pick up each foot and stretch the leg frontwards and up. A sound horse won't object. Bend the front



hoof until it touches the elbow, holding it there for fifteen seconds. Release it suddenly and immediately ask the horse to trot forwards. Impending navicular disease of the hoof will make it difficult for the horse to do so. Give careful consideration to its feet. "No hoof, no horse." The heels should be wide and not contracted, the hoof wall thick and strong, not brittle nor cracked, be concaved instead of flat, and the frog (the triangular shaped "shock absorber" in the rear-center of the sole) should be large, tough and elastic. The foot size should relate to the size of the horse, not be small and dainty but big enough to offer support. Run your hands up and down the horse's legs to check for swellings and hot areas that may indicate such injuries as splints, curbs, spavins, wind galls, sidebones or bowed tendons. In the health section, I'll discuss diagnosis, prevention and care of these common injuries. Compare one leg to the adjacent one if in doubt. Your critical eye will have already noticed such wounds as saddle sores, girth galls, fistulas, or other cuts and abrasions. To test for blindness, wave your hand near each eye from behind. Remember that a horse's auditory, olfactory and tactile senses are keen, so don't be deceived.

You'll complete the health test in conjunction with riding the horse. Take the pulse, temperature and rate of respiration at a rested state before riding. Taken on a medium sized artery over a firm background, the pulse will be 28 - 40 p.p.m. Horses under three years have a higher pulse. Normal temperature, taken rectally is 99.8 to 101 degrees F. (37.5 - 38.5 degrees C.). Respiration, noted over the flanks, is normally 4 - 16 per minute; again, more in a young horse. Any marked variations from the above, points to possible areas of trouble. After a brisk ride, a cool down period, and a fifteen minute rest, the healthy well-conditioned horse's pulse, temperature and respiration should be back to normal.

Now it's time to finally go for a ride. As you ride, continue testing for soundness, way of going and manners. To test soundness in legs, trot the horse on a hard surface; any variation in cadence means trouble. Trotting up and down



steep inclines will often bring out shoulder weakness. If your riding ability is up to it, gallop for several minutes, then get off and check the flanks for wind. If they show a double heave when air is expelled, the horse is suffering from "heaves". Coughing or wheezing is also a defect.

As you've been checking for soundness and conformation, you've been noticing the horse's manners. He should not bite or kick people or other horses. He should be willing to leave the stable and other horses obediently. He should not buck, rear, balk, bolt or shy. He should stand quietly while being mounted, lead easily and be handled and groomed with no trouble. He should not crib (chew wood) or suck wind into his lungs.

If the horse's type, size, age, sex, temperament, health, conformation, and manners please you, it's time to get picky about his way of going. Here again, your own skill and preference will influence all judgments. Depending on your degree of skill at riding, you'll want a horse of more or less docile or excitable nature. The perfect horse would be both spirited and gentle. That's no contradiction in terms. If you want a horse who can "stop on a dime and give you nine cents change", you probably won't be happy with the horse who'd be perfect for your friend, the quiet back-packer who needs a stronger back. Words used to describe a horse with a good way of going are: honest, bold, has heart, a "do-er". A completely well-trained horse is known as a "made" horse, and it's just as true that a badly trained, nasty horse has been made that

way by some human, too. A horse's training is always in progress - you'll just be continuing that.

If the horse is fine in every other way, a little time and patience should overcome any minor mental quirks such as a hesitance to cross water. Throwing his head out of fear of the bit, constantly jogging because he has never been comfortable and easy with a rider on his back, or a mouth and neck like iron from previous heavy-handed riders all constitute more difficult way-of-going problems.

Now is the time to honestly evaluate the horse in terms of all you have learned about him. Let the seller know of faults you've discovered. Come back to ride at other times in the next days or weeks. Remember that the cost of feeding, sheltering, and doctoring your horse over the years will far outweigh your initial investment, so, within your price range, don't buy your second choice horse just because he's cheaper. An expensive horse bought from a dealer or stables will often be sold on a fifteen or thirty day trial, with money back less fees, if not satisfied. Inquire if such an agreement exists in this case. Usually it's a matter of paying your money and taking your chances. If the horse is unsound, he's no bargain at any price unless you're sure you have the knowledge and facilities to cure him. If he has dangerous behavior vices, he's "spoiled" and is no horse for a first time owner. But if most things feel good between you . . . you've bought yourself a horse.

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First of a four part series

## We used to be Strangers . . .

The musical score is written on five staves in 3/4 time. The melody is simple and uses a mix of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics are written below the notes, with some words underlined. The song ends with a double bar line and a small '♀' symbol.

We used to be strangers and then we were friends And then we were lo-  
vers with our arms a-round each other un-der the co- vers, The  
best part of lo-ving with you is be-ing strangers ever new  
But now we are stran-gers a- gain and I'd ra-ther be friends  
where the cir-cle be-gins and ends I'd ra-ther be friends. ♀



# EROSION

When I first started visiting the piece of land I am buying, I hardly noticed the gapping ugly gully, an eroded canyon beneath a culvert pipe, sticking out of our man-made pond. Only a few months passed before I was taking the gully very seriously, both as a potential source of flood water and as an aesthetic eye-sore. Although there are natural gullies just as steep as this one nearby, nothing grows on the side that gets no sun, and therefore, the soil is washing away.

Erosion has no real fancy definition; it is simply soil being carried off because whatever held it has been removed, or because unnatural conditions exist, such as an overabundance of dropping water. When we had a road carved into the property, another erosion process began and I felt the same grave responsibility and sorrow as with the gully. Thirty years ago they didn't realize the consequences of cattle-ponds and covered the hills with them, creating gullies where the overflow produced waterfalls... and made gullies.

Roads have an easier cure than pond gullies. You must first make sure that whoever cuts the road does a good job, i.e., slopes it correctly so the water runs off as much as possible. Roads need good drainage, need to follow the curvature of the hill as much as possible and slope into natural draw that already exist. A drain pipe is needed when a road crosses a natural draw. The pipe needs to be wider than the road, or the flowing water will eat part of the road. Don't cheat hungry water.

BERMS: Berms can save an ungraveled or grav-eled road from totally washing out. If a road, or for that matter land itself, is sloping steeply down with nothing holding the soil in, watch the ruts begin! The speed of the water plays an important role in how much can wash out, as does the severity of your winter weather. But generally, you want to divert the water off the slope at angles. A berm is a small ditch with the excess dirt on the downhill side diverting the water about every fifty feet. If you do it in the rain, you can watch where the water goes and dig them with the help of the water. Ditches paralleling the road can help too, but be careful to not let them get too deep. Berms should always be at an angle.

SEEDING: Roads cut into hillsides create banks that will erode, but can be caught early if you "seed" them. The Highway Division (primo road cutters) or local farmers know what is a natural grass in the area, which is what you need to plant. Also, seed with something that sends down deep roots. We planted vetch and brom, a lacy vine with pretty blue spring flowers. (The cows on the other side of the fence drooled). Seeding a ground cover is a remedy also used for overgrazed hillsides that begin to erode.

PLANTING: This winter I spent several weekends planting trees purchased cheaply from the Forest Division. They sell them 100 for \$32.00 but you have to buy one hundred of one kind. We have a division nearby that I would recommend for helpfulness, and quality of trees. You can write for order blanks to: California Forest Division, 5950 Chiles Rd., Davis, Ca. 95616. I planted pine and a native Toyon around the edge of the gully, hoping they will send down roots that hold the soil back. The eroding banks certainly need mother nature's fingers. In the bottom, I planted bamboo, which loves a water environment and will spread.

The ancient idea of using car bodies and junk to slow down water or to fill-in gullies should be buried itself. Not only does the rust pollute the water, but it looks ghastly. We have such a junk-filled gully nearby; it's a good hide-out for squirrels, but it's not helping the erosion problem at all. Tires can hold the silt in, but they must be weighted down or will float away downstream. Staking or tying them works. Although it is back-busting work, you can do what I did also; haul rocks over and dump them in. The rocks look good, and help disperse the water as it splashes.

Ideas and plans keep evolving as people visit; what I've shared here has been learned through experience that has not ended. But I have noticed that men feel far more confident to deal with engineering-type problems on land, a trend that needs to change as they are too often the tractor drivers who create the problems a little mother-nurture intuition could have prevented. Don't depend on experts, just look at the land and see what it wants.



# INS AND OUTS

There are lots of ways to build a door - from the simplicity of a batten door (battens are the horizontal boards that hold the door together) to the complexity of a traditional panelled door. To some extent, the design you come up with will depend on the purpose of the door. Otherwise, doors offer more potential for liberating your creative imagination than any other part of house building.

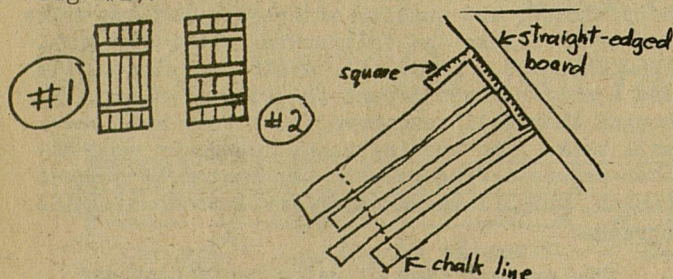
If you're planning a door to fit an already existing frame, set its dimensions just a little ( $1/8$ " less in width,  $1/2$ " or so in length) smaller than the opening. But don't make it too small. You can always plane down a door that's too large, but you can't add to one that's too small.

Here are two simple door designs I've used often which come from 18th century rural America:

## Two- and three- batten door (see fig. #1)

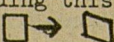
This door is fine for animal shelters, gates, shitters and other outbuildings; it's o.k. for anywhere if insulation isn't important.

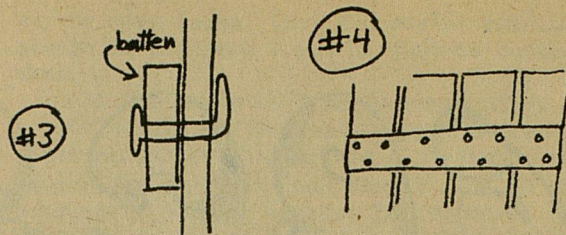
First, choose boards which, lined up side by side with  $1/8$ " or so between them, measure out to the proper door width. Square the boards at one end, and snap a chalk line across them at the desired door length. Cut the boards (see fig. #2).





If the battens are going to be on the inside of a structure, look at the framing to see if the door will close at the points where there will be battens. If not, you can either remove the door stop material and set it further in, or make your battens shorter than the width of the door.

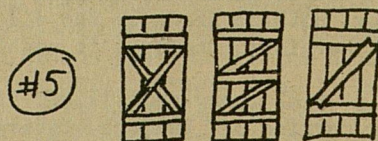
Cut battens and locate them on the boards so they will line up with hinge positions. Hinges are usually 7" from the top and 11" from the bottom. (Strap hinges work well and look good on doors with battens on the outside.)

How you apply the battens is the most crucial part of building this door. You don't want the door to wrack  and the boards shouldn't be able to pull away from the battens. The best way (cheap and strong) to apply battens is by clinch-nailing (see fig. #3). But if you don't like the look of bent-over nails, you can use special nails with threaded shanks. (These



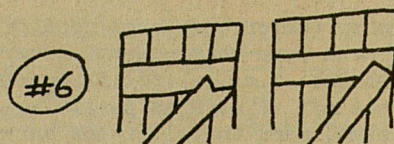
have two or three times the holding power of smooth nails.) Measure the thickness of your door where the battens are and buy nails that length or slightly shorter. Remember that driving nails in at angles to each other increases holding power too. Of course, if you like hardware and can spare the expense, lag and wood screws or carriage bolts are fine.

To prevent wracking, use plenty of fasteners on the battens, place them two or three to a board (see fig. #4). Or take advantage of the amazing triangle principle: any rectangle , but a triangle  is completely stable. By bracing your door diagonally between battens, you form invincible triangles (see fig. #5).



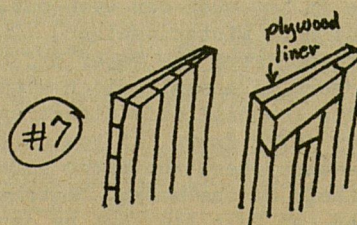
The strongest way to apply a diagonal brace is by fitting it into the battens somehow (see fig. #6) so that they lock together.

To make this door sturdier and more weather proof, use tongue and groove material for the vertical boards; you can remove the "extra" tongue with a saw or a plane.



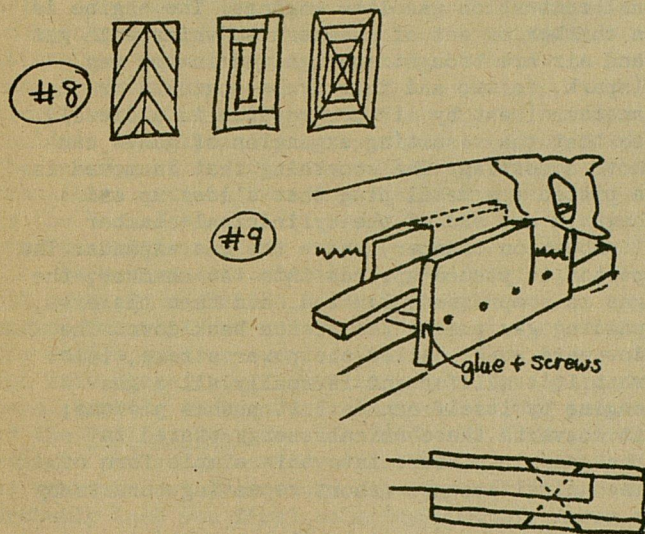
## Continuous batten or lined door (see fig. #7)

This is a stronger, heavier, more weather proof door than the one above - a good exterior door design. Traditionally one side of the door is continuous horizontal battens. But a good 20th century version of this design uses plywood as the "liner" instead of battens. To add extra insulation, sandwich some tar paper between the liner and the boards.





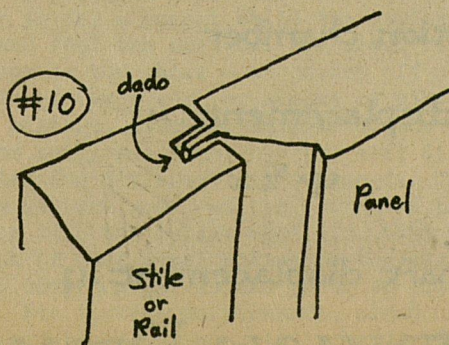
The plywood liner offers lots of design possibilities and provides a stable rectangular base for your door so that it can't wrack. You can fasten your boards horizontally, vertically or diagonally - or in combinations like a puzzle (see fig. #8). It's worth it to make or buy a mitre box (see fig. #9) so that your angle cuts will be precise.



Use the same considerations in fastening boards to battens or plywood as for the two- or three-batten door. (With plywood you'll need much less fastening than with battens.)

The most elaborate door I've built was a panelled redwood dutch door. The experience gave me a very healthy respect for classical door construction. Though you probably could build such a door with hand tools, I would not want to do without a table saw and a jointer. Since it would take another article to explain exactly how this door was built, I'll just cover some of the construction details and you can apply them to your design if you feel you have the tools and knowledge.

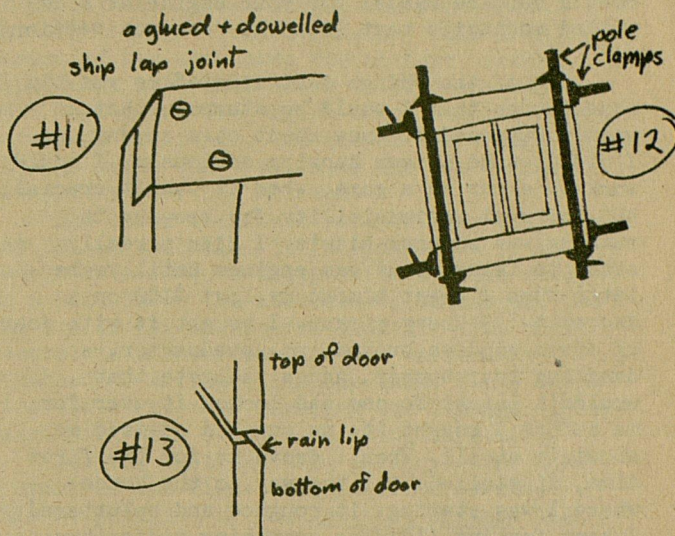
The panels have to "float" to allow for swelling. This means that the stiles (vertical framing of the door) and rails (horizontal framing) are grooved so that the panels fit in with 1/8" or so of space all around (see fig. #10). If the panels fit exactly or were glued or nailed, they would bulge and crack in damp weather.



The corners were ship-lapped - a very strong joint - and held with glue. After the glue dried thoroughly, we inserted pegs with wedges driven in. The effect was a look of wooden nails (see figs. #11 and #12).

The top rail of the bottom section should have a rain-lip (see fig. #13) as should the bottoms of any glazed areas to encourage water to stay outside.

The tricky business of hanging your beautiful door I will tackle in another article. ♀





# Gasoline Engines

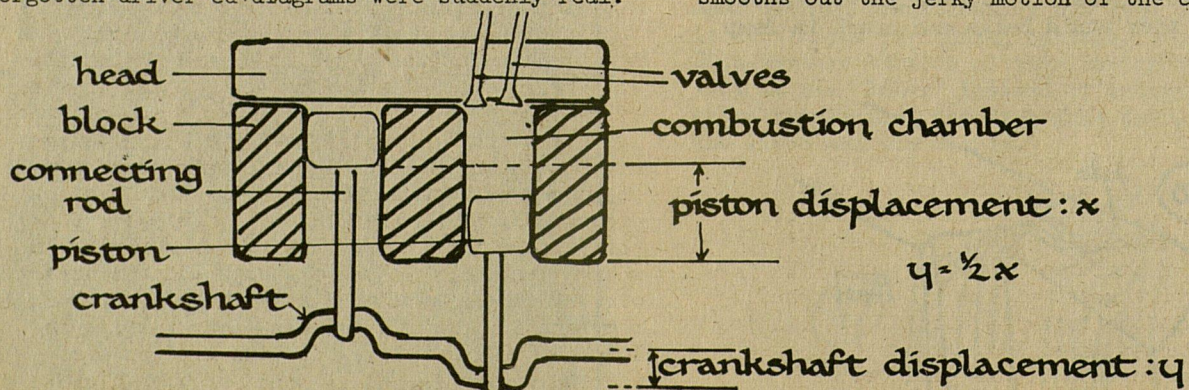
I won't pretend that in this short space I can teach you to repair a gas engine. What I want to do is to share the basics of how one works and something about learning to be comfortable with one. For actual repairs you will need a service manual for your engine or a detailed mechanics text (see the resource section).

One of the things that stumped me was the expectation that I would be stumped, that I wasn't supposed to know about cars anyway, so I didn't take my own knowing seriously. I could work on a car as a game, when it wasn't crucial, but the real responsibility for keeping it running was someone else's. I didn't really start to learn about gas engines until years later when I spent almost my last \$100 on a decrepit '49 Chevy pickup. I bought it with four of seven windows broken, no speedometer, a dangling rear bumper, and a tailgate that wouldn't latch. No one had looked it over for me before I bought it; no one had advised me about it at all. When I drove it for the first time, it stalled. All the way to the house where I was staying, it coughed and spluttered. I kept feeling I'd done something ridiculous and been horribly ripped off. But I felt excited too, because secretly I'd bought that truck as a traveling auto mechanics workshop rather than as dependable transportation and I felt committed to living with it, to somehow fixing whatever had to be fixed, or at least learning a whole lot while trying.

When I accepted the responsibility for that truck, I also changed my approach to doing repairs in a fundamental and crucial way (I wasn't aware this was happening at the time but in retrospect, it clearly was happening). All paper and ink, all comments from friends and experts, became secondary. My truck - the particular machine - became my primary source of information. I was over it, under it, in it - guessing at what was what, following wires and tubes from one end to the other and back again. Those forgotten driver-ed diagrams were suddenly real.

Starting with the picture on the jigsaw puzzle box, let's look at the basics of internal combustion gasoline engines. The engine is a chamber or set of chambers to which both gas and air are brought and ignited in one way (spark, in two and four cycle engines) or another (heat by air compression in a diesel) so that the resulting expansion of gases can move something. The something that is moved is a piston - a metal plug that slides up and down in one end of the cylindrical chamber (combustion chamber) where the gas expands. The piston is pushed upwards into the chamber, the gas is compressed, ignited, and then the expanding gas pushes the piston back down. The downward push, called the power stroke, is what it's all for and is really all a gas engine by itself can do: it pushes pistons; it converts the chemical energy stored in the gas/air mixture into this simple form of mechanical energy - short repeating thrusts by a metal plug.

All the gas engines I've known (car, truck, tractor, lawn mower, chain saw, roto-tiller) have another thing in common: they translate that intermittent piston push into a continuous rotary crankshaft push. A water wheel does the same thing. Water (piston push) hits the vanes of the wheel (crankshaft) and turns the wheel. A pendulum clock does the same thing. Each swing of the pendulum engages a new sprocket on some gear that is thus slowly turned. This translation is accomplished in a car by the crankshaft and flywheel. A crankshaft is just a long piece of metal to which a rod from each piston is attached. Each connecting rod is displaced from the center line of the crankshaft a distance equal to half the piston's downward stroke (see diagram). When the piston goes down, the crankshaft turns half a turn; when the piston goes back up, the crankshaft revolves the other half turn. The flywheel (a heavy metal disc attached to one end of the crankshaft), by its weight and momentum, smooths out the jerky motion of the crankshaft.



## Gasoline Engine: A Cutaway Drawing



Even this rudimentary picture gives you not only an idea of how the pieces fit together, it also suggests questions about the nature of the whole puzzle. For instance, if all that really has to happen in that combustion chamber is for some gas to ignite and expand, maybe there's something other than gasoline that will do it since our supply of gasoline is decreasing. During the fuel shortage last spring, a lot of industrial gas engines were converted to burn propane. Who knows what other substitutions are possible? Also, isn't a lot of energy wasted in just changing the piston direction, up to down and down to up, so often? Couldn't the expanding gases themselves act like the water, and the piston, rather than the crankshaft, rotate like the wheel? One answer is the Wankel engine (in Mazda) where the pistons do rotate.

Back to practicalities: how is this little bit of basic mechanics going to help keep an engine running? For one thing, it tells you what the engine runs on - gas, air, and spark - so you know these things have to get to the cylinders. Getting the gas and air there is the job of the Fuel System. How does it work? Read your vehicle and see. You know where the gas tank is, so start there. Follow the gas line. It will probably lead you first to a fuel pump, something smaller than a half-pint canning jar bolted to the engine block (the engine size hunk of metal into which is cut the cylindrical holes for all the compression chambers). The fuel pump is bolted to it because an arm reaches from inside the pump to inside the engine. This arm, which is rocked back and forth by a cam turned by the crankshaft, provides the energy to work the pump. Thus the engine pumps its own fuel. If you find that your engine isn't getting any gas, disconnect the gas line leading out of this pump and turn the engine over to see if it's pumping. If gas does not spurt out of the pump you've isolated the problem and you are ready for consultation with a secondary source, a book or a friend, to learn how fuel pumps work.

If you follow the gas line past the fuel pump, you may find a gas line fuel filter, a small box or lump in the fuel line. This could also be the choked off point. Next you will come to the carburetor, which usually sits more or less on top of the engine. Over it is a large round air cleaner. The carburetor is where the gas and air mix. Take the air cleaner off and you'll be looking into the air intake. Put your hand over it for a moment while the engine is running and feel the suction. The metal flap you can see is the choke - it chokes off air to make a richer (more gas per amount of air) fuel/air mixture. Assorted nozzles inside the carburetor spray gasoline into the air; different nozzles for different engine speeds. The resulting mixture goes out the bottom of the carburetor into the intake manifold, that large armed hunk of cast metal bolted to the engine block and covering the intake ports of each cylinder. For routine maintenance, clean or replace the air filter when it looks dirty, buggy and greasy, for instance. Take the fil-

ter top off and see what you can see. There may be a removable and cleanable (use gasoline) screen of some kind. There may be a paper donut you have to replace. Some air filters are filled with oil - I found that out by tipping one and spilling it all over me - so remove them gently.

Routine maintenance of the carburetor itself comes only after the engine is tuned. A screw on the carburetor, perhaps with a spring on its shank, is used to adjust the gas/air mixture at idling speed when the mixture needs to be richer than at normal running speeds. Turning the screw in (clockwise) cuts down the amount of gas and makes the mixture leaner. Experiment with this screw to find the adjustment that makes the engine sound smoothest at a variety of speeds. The slower the engine idles without dying and the leaner the gas mixture, the better your gas mileage.

One other important part of your fuel system is the throttle. It is controlled by a pedal (in a car), a trigger (on a chain saw), or a hand lever (on a tractor). Whichever, you can follow the mechanical linkage from the control to a lever outside the carburetor attached to a flap (like the choke flap) inside the carburetor. Keeping the linkage lubricated will help avoid a sticking throttle.

Besides fuel and air, each cylinder needs a spark at the right time in order to run. This is provided by the Ignition System. The easiest part to find is a spark plug, from which you can follow a heavy wire to the distributor. From the center of the distributor cap is a wire to the coil. There is another wire to the coil from the distributor body (under the cap). There is also a connection between the coil and battery/generator. You can adjust points, plugs and timing without understanding the relationship between these parts, as I did, and you may never "read" it just from your car. But understanding it in a 'what's-it-for' way is so important to me that I want to share it. About 20,000 volts is needed to cause a spark to jump the .025 to .040 inch gap of the spark plug. Since the battery/generator circuit puts out only 6 or 12 volts, some kind of amplification is necessary. Two separate circuits are used for this. The first connects battery/generator, primary coil winding, and the breaker points condenser of the distributor body. Current flows through this circuit as long as the ignition switch (key) is on and the points are closed. When the points open, which they do every time a cylinder is ready to fire, current in this circuit stops, inducing a high voltage current in the second circuit, which connects secondary coil winding (where the induction occurs), distributor rotor, and the spark plug that is ready to fire. What really surprised me when I learned this was that there is no direct electrical connection between the distributor body and the distributor cap. Body voltage is low, cap voltage high. If, like me, you are worried by the ferocious sound of that high voltage, a word of comfort: voltage is like water pressure in a hose - it can be very great, yet if you don't open the nozzle much, you



don't get much water. In a car, the nozzle is opened neither very much nor for very long. You'll certainly know if you get zapped by a coil or spark plug wire, but you won't get seriously hurt.

Regular maintenance of the ignition system includes cleaning the spark plugs and adjusting the gaps, replacing and resetting points and condensor, and adjusting timing (rotating the distributor body so that the rotor makes contact with a spark plug lead at the right time). Since these are the most routine services (understandably so, considering how often this well-timed operation has to happen, in just an hour of driving - 720,000 times for a 2,000 rpm 6 cylinder engine), every repair manual I've seen describing the necessary procedures with step by step exactness and what's even better, you can surely find someone to show you how the first time.

The ignition system is only one part of the whole Electrical System of a vehicle - the only one actually necessary to run the engine - but the other parts of the electrical system are the source of many problems. Vehicles that are sane and sensible in every other respect develop electrical ticks. I had a sixty-some-odd Chevy II wagon once. The whole electrical system worked fine, except once in a while, for no apparent reason, the windshield wipers would rise, make one slow swipe across the windshield, and retire as if nothing had happened. A friend of mine had a VW bus which, as soon as its high-beams and signal lights were connected, developed a clicking noise whenever the ignition was on. The rate of click seemed to vary with the weather, with the level of oil in the bus, with the mood of the passengers - it was a bus with a heartbeat. One cause of such electrical oddities may be the great difficulty of following an actual electrical wire in an automobile. Try it - you won't get far before your wire disappears into a bundle of wires. If you're lucky it will be the same color going in one end as it is coming out the other, but don't count on it. If you have some source of electricity (like a battery charger) you can follow a wire by applying current to one end, then touching wires at the other end to ground until one of them sparks. If you do this, be sure to disconnect the battery first so you don't pick up battery current. Even with a source of electricity and a wiring diagram, electrical work can be a big frustration. I spent nearly a year playing around with a signal light system that I had installed and had diagrams for before I finally found the last problem: a poor wire-to-light-socket connection and a fuse that kept blowing because it was too small.

A short piece of insulated wire with both ends exposed, is an essential tool for electrical trouble shooting. If, for instance, you turn on the ignition and the starter doesn't turn the engine over, there's a good chance you've got a poor connection in the battery-starter motor circuit somewhere. Touch your wire to one battery post and scratch the other end of it across the other post. No spark means a dead battery - jump the car and recharge or re-

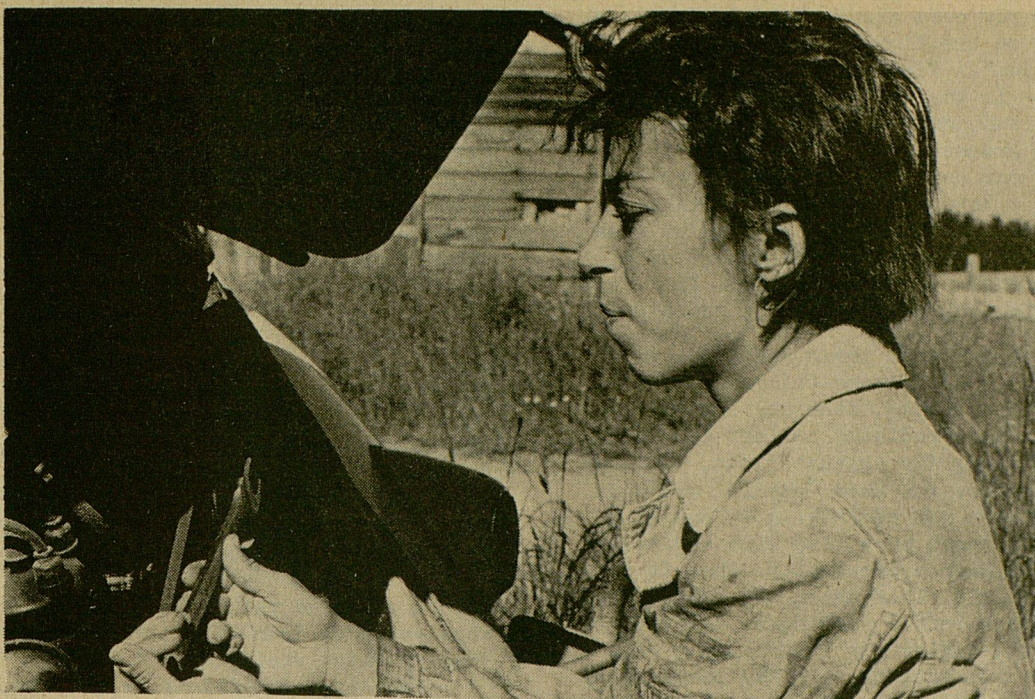
place the battery (a battery dealer or service station can tell which you need to do). If there is spark, move one more step in the circuit: touch the end of your test wire to the lead part of one battery cable and scratch the other end across the opposite battery post. If there's no spark, the cable you're touching is making a poor connection with the post it's on. Disconnect and clean it with baking soda. Use the same procedure for any other circuit that seems dead to find out where it's gone dead.

Routine maintenance of the battery involves checking the water level and keeping the contacts clean. It is useful to know which pole is positive so check battery posts for "+" and "-" markings and follow the cables: negative usually goes to ground, the body of the car, and positive goes into the engine, usually to the starter. However, your car can be positive ground, that is, your ground wire is to the positive post and hot wire to the negative post so be sure to check the post markings.

Each cell of a standard size auto battery, the caps you open to put in water, produces about 2 volts. So if you don't know what voltage a vehicle works on, count the water caps: 3 caps = 6 volts; 6 caps = 12. If you need to "jump" your car, be sure to "jump" it from a battery of the same or higher voltage as your own. Since "jump" means replacing your own battery in the circuit with another battery, you must connect positive pole to positive pole and negative to negative. What you're really doing is connecting the lead from the other battery to your own lead, making your lead longer, and the pole of your battery is a convenient place to make the connection.

Any engine that has a battery will also have a generator or alternator (to produce the electricity the battery stores) and a regulator (to regulate the amount of electricity sent to the battery so it neither over nor under charges). Many small gas engines have none of these parts; electricity for firing is produced, I think, by a magneto system. At any rate, a battery-generator system is only necessary for (1) an electrically driven starting system, and (2) uninterrupted operation of auxiliaries like lights, wipers, radios, etc. Without a battery these would work like wheel-generator powered bike lights - they'd dim as the car slowed and go out when the engine stopped. An engine that does have a battery/generator system is able to "pick itself up by its own boot straps," start itself. The front end of the crankshaft is attached to a pulley which is connected by a fan belt to the generator, where the mechanical energy of the engine is transformed into electrical energy. Electrical energy is much easier to store, so it is stored in the battery. When you turn on your starter switch, you take out of the battery "bank" some of the energy your car made the last time it ran and put it into the starter motor, where it is converted back into mechanical energy. Electricity in the starter turns a system of gears that engage the toothed edge of the flywheel, thus providing that first upward compression stroke necessary for the engine to start making its





own energy again. This first compression stroke (in practice it usually takes more than one, though) is what you need to start your engine. Remembering this can be helpful if it won't start. For instance, one way to turn the engine over is to use your car backwards: instead of using the engine to turn the wheels, use the wheels to turn the engine - push the car (in second gear).

There is little maintenance to be done for the starter and generator. Check lubrication points, the small cups or openings at each end where the shaft inside turns against the housing. These places can be over-lubricated, too much oil will short out something inside; but some oil is necessary. I discovered this when my generator froze because an uncoiled bearing burnt up. The other thing to check in these two motors is brushes. These are either two or three pieces of lead that make contact with that revolving part of the shaft (the commutator) you can see by looking in the observation ports. These brushes should be long enough so that the spring clamp that holds them is pushing them solidly against the commutator. The ends that make contact should also be smooth. If you have other generator problems (if your ammeter reads discharge or if the generator light comes on while the engine's running at normal speed and if your fan belt is neither broken nor slipping), then look at a manual for your engine. It's a good idea when checking the generator to look at the regulator too, since it's improper function could be a cause of what went wrong with the generator.

I have so far neglected an important part of the operation of 4 cycle engines: the valves. If you've been wondering how fuel can get into and out of the combustion chamber while the chamber is still tight enough to compress gas, the answer is valves. Intake valves open to allow gas/air to enter the chamber as the piston goes down (intake); both valves close and

the gas is compressed by the rising piston (compression); the spark plug sparks and the expanding gases push the piston down (power); exhaust valve opens and the rising piston pushes the used gases out (exhaust). Take the valve cover off your engine and watch it run. You can see the rocker arms (one for each valve pushes down to open that valve) doing a quick and elaborately patterned one step. Each arm knows when to take its step because there is a rod extending down the valve "memory," the camshaft, that is geared in a particular relationship to the crankshaft. When it's time for a valve to open, a lobe (cam) on the camshaft pushes the rod up against one end of the rocker arm and the other end pushes down to open the valve.

The four essential links in this chain - cam, rod, rocker arm, valve stem - are not connected to each other. Since metal expands and contracts when it heats and cools it is important to insure that the valves close completely. They are held closed by strong springs and clearance is allowed between rocker arm and valve stem. Adjusting this clearance is an important maintenance operation. Almost any repair manual will tell you how to adjust the valves and what the clearance should be. The only tools you'll need are a wrench, screwdriver, and feeler gauge.

Another general servicing necessary is lubrication. Most of it is simple - maybe so simple it's easily forgotten or postponed. Don't forget to check and change the oil; check transmission

oil or fluid level and brake fluid level. If you don't know where the brake master cylinder is, follow a brake line back to it from a wheel. The brake line is usually a flexible hose that comes from the top center of the plate behind the wheel. Use an oil can on all the metal joints you can find - in the throttle linkage, emergency brake linkage, hood hinges, brake peddle and gear shift linkages. It's hard to



hurt anything you care about. Use a grease gun under the car on the tiny nipple shapes that it snaps on to. You'll find them also at metal on metal joints - in the springs, steering linkage, and the universal joint (between the rear wheels). Pump grease into each nipple until you see it coming out near the fitting. If you manage to grease a car without banged knuckles, dirt in your eye, and a lot of cussing at some engineer's incredibly awkward placement of at least one fitting, I'll be impressed. It's basically a simple job, but one of the grungiest I know.

If you regularly do these maintenance operations - as well as some things I haven't discussed, such as brake, steering and wheel adjustments, checking radiator coolant and water level and listening for exhaust leaks, your gas engines should run. But that "should" won't do you much good when you're looking at one that doesn't. If you spend much time with engines, that's bound to happen eventually. When it does, "read" your vehicle. Then check the things that are easy to check before jumping to drastic conclusions. If the engine won't turn over, look at the battery connections. Are the connections good? Are the posts clean? If the engine will turn over but won't fire, you may be out of gas or you may not have turned the key on. I sat in a town dump in an old pickup once in a near panic holding up big dump trucks because I couldn't get started. Then I turned the key the other way. If you've got gas and the key is on, either gas/air or spark-at-the-right-time isn't reaching the cylinders. Check the carburetor for the smell and wetness of gas. Check the spark plugs for spark by pulling a plug and holding it near ground (the engine block) while you turn the engine over. If there's no spark, trace back to where there is. If there is spark, check the timing. If it still won't start, go for a walk, drink a beer, do whatever you do when you're frustrated, and then come back and try again.

Perhaps your engine runs but not well; it's uneven, or hot, or has no power. It may be suffering from old age and need some heavy attention. One of the first things to do, because it's easy, is a compression test. Disconnect the wire to the ignition from the distributor cap, then using a compression gauge, check each cylinder by removing its plug and inserting the gauge. Turn the engine over four times and read the gauge. Be sure that the gauge is firmly in each plug hole or you won't get an accurate reading. Don't start the engine while checking the compression. If you do, the compression stroke will happen too quickly for the gauge to respond accurately. Right after I rebuilt my truck, I had a power problem. When I checked the compression with the engine running, I had only half the compression I should. I was about to tear the engine apart again when someone rechecked it with the engine off. My compression doubled. Manufacturer's specifications (available in repair manuals) will tell you what your compression should be, but don't worry if it's a little low, as long as it's low by about the same amount on each cylinder.

The three most frequent causes of poor com-

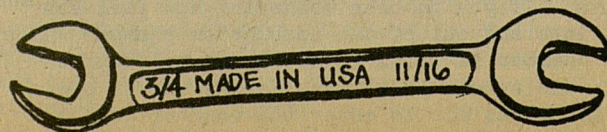
pression are blown gaskets, burnt valves, and leaking rings. Ring or valve problems are often accompanied by burning oil, so your exhaust includes dense smoke. Any time you're worried about a leak (exhaust, oil, water) checking gaskets is a good place to start. A gasket is just a piece of something softer than metal (paper, cork, rubber) that fits between joined metal faces to make a better seal. In the case of poor compression, the head gasket (between head and block) may need replacement.

If you are burning oil, it means the oil is getting past rings or valves which act as oil seals for the compression chamber. Burnt valves don't seat properly against the engine head so when they are closed they aren't air tight. An exaggerated example is the way a jack-o-lantern top doesn't seat properly on the jack-o-lantern after the first candle or so. The cure for burnt valves is having both valves and seats reground at your local automotive machine shop. You'll save a lot of money by bringing them just the valves and head rather than the whole vehicle. This way cuts down their labor and convinces them you know what you're doing.

The rings fit into ring grooves, 3 around the body of each piston. All that sliding against the cylinder wall wears them down and eventually they need to be replaced. A decent auto repair manual will tell you how to test ring size. It's important to do this rather than just buy a set of rings because they come standard and oversize. The size you need depends on how worn your pistons and cylinders are.

Still, in spite of everything you do, there may come the day when there is a clunk and a grind and the engine stops. My pickup did that one day. Hoping it wasn't serious, I did a lot of asking and testing of easy things and then took off the head and found one piston in marble size pieces and a hole in the cylinder wall. Just taking off the head was already more than I had ever imagined I could do. I got books and advice and help and tools and more advice and more help. It was greasy frustrating work and required a lot of waiting before the truck ran again. I even had one engine head rebuilt, lost it off a trailer, and had to get another from the junk yard and have it rebuilt too. But the truck ran again.

Then, moving from Kansas to Boston, in Harlan, Kentucky, the transmission went. Second gear went winding up one mountain; first gear went on the next. Transmissions for so old a truck are hard to come by and not being in a situation where I could wait around, I sold the truck. It was a sad day. But I sold it in the same way that I bought it - taking full responsibility. The attitudes of responsibility and pragmatism that make up my mechanics still work for other trucks. One engine stops; another keeps going, and I continue to learn to fit the pieces of the puzzle together. ♀





Kitchen table reminiscences  
ten times told tales  
new with each telling, another surface  
rounded out-  
nervousness on the front line  
or the ingenious escape.  
We laugh at our primitive weapons  
and defy their sophisticated steel.  
A ragged history  
like the spoken histories of hill and cave tribes.  
We measure the distance travelled  
living out the years ahead  
to breathe them into new shoots.



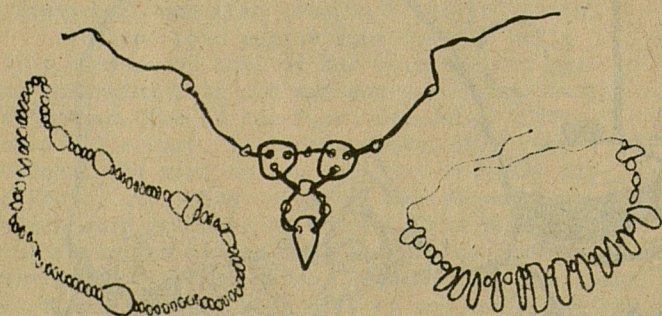


# Making Beads in your Woodstove

Several years ago a friend and I began making primitive pottery, pottery made from clay we dug ourselves and fired in a simple outdoor pit. It felt good to me - making objects from the earth, a simple process resulting in beautiful pots of red, brown, gray and black. This winter we decided to try using our wood stove as a kiln to fire the beads we wanted to make. It worked fine - too easy to believe!



The Clay Our land is basically clay soil - oozing sticky masses of the stuff in winter and cement in summer. You should be able to find suitable clay in most parts of the country. In the summer look for it near riverbanks or caked and cracking in low spots in fields or by roadsides. When it is wet, clay will be sticky, will hold a shape without cracking, and will be elastic. If the clay that you find is fairly smooth it can be used just as it is. If it is full of small stones it should be cleaned. Do this by wetting the clay until it's creamy mud. Then pour it through a piece of window screen into a container where it can dry until it is usable.

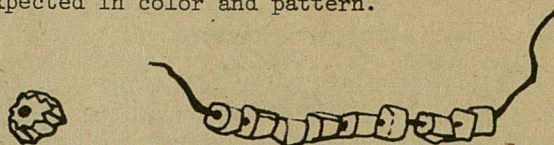


Making Beads The fun part: You can make beads of many shapes and sizes, textured or smooth, dully or glossy. For beads that will be shiny when fired, form the beads, wait until they are almost dry (leatherhard) and rub them with the back of a spoon or a polished stone until they are shiny. String the beads on a piece of coat hanger or a used guitar string or put them in a tin can (which is harder to get out of the fire) and let them dry completely. Larger beads may crack as they dry, so you may have to cover them loosely with plastic and let them dry slowly.

Firing the Beads The fire in your wood stove should be very hot. Put the wire with the beads on it into the fire. Experiment with where you place them - in the coals, buried in the hot ashes, on top of the wood - you will find that you get different colors depending on where the beads are placed - something to do with the amount of oxygen which reaches the firing clay.

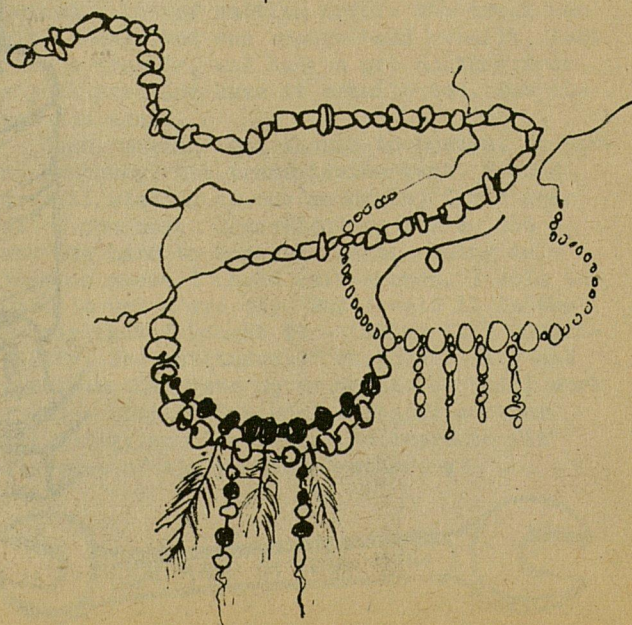
If you would like to do the firing outdoors, make a small, very hot fire and let it burn until there are lots of hot coals. Place the beads in the fire (surround them with burning wood) so that the temperature remains even on all surfaces of the beads.

After a short time (20 minutes for tiny beads, up to 45 minutes for large ones) you can use a stick to hook the wire of beads and take them out of the stove. After the beads have cooled wash them to remove the ashes. Now look at the beautiful colors - red, black, shades of red and brown or black and gray, each bead unexpected in color and pattern.



String your beads on leather strips, yarn, nylon fishing line, or cord in ways that please you.

You can also experiment with other objects and pots, candle-holders, pipes, sculptures and on and on . . . ♀





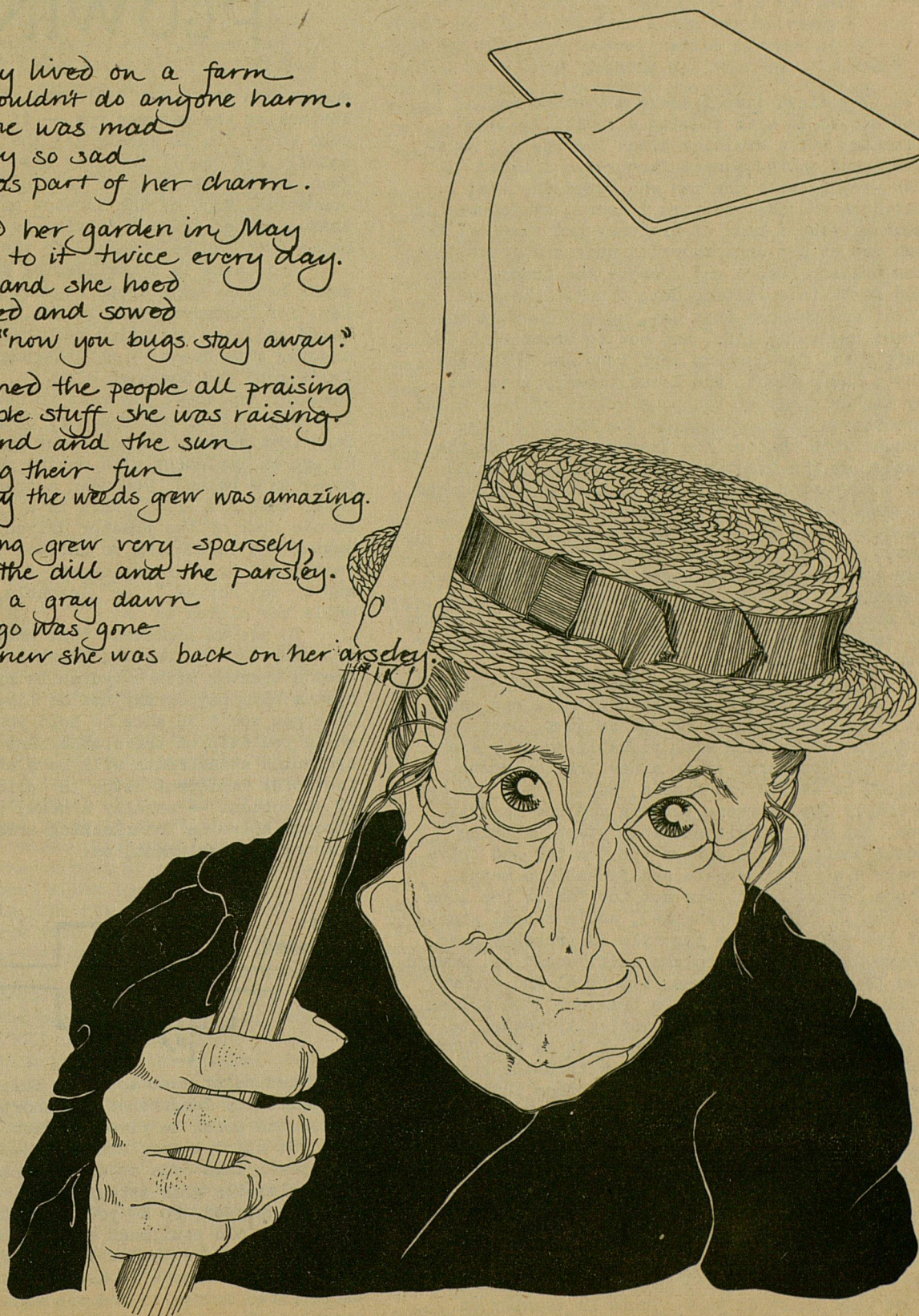
# Glimmer-ick

An old lady lived on a farm  
where she couldn't do anyone harm.  
The fact she was mad  
wasn't really so sad  
for that was part of her charm.

She planted her garden in May  
and spoke to it twice every day.  
She raked and she hoed  
and watered and sowed  
and said "now you bugs stay away."

She imagined the people all praising  
the delectable stuff she was raising.  
But the wind and the sun  
were having their fun  
and the way the weeds grew was amazing.

So everything grew very sparsely,  
except for the dill and the parsley.  
There came a gray dawn  
when her ego was gone  
and she knew she was back on her arseley.





# TRACTORS:

# KEEP ON PLOWING

The first time I drove a tractor had nothing to do with plowing a field. We were cleaning out a drainage ditch for the old swimming pond on the Kansas farm where I lived. I was working with the man who owned the land I lived on and the tractors I drove, my teacher in much of what I know of tractors and farming. He and one of his sons shoveled muck and gravel into the tractor loader and I drove the tractor back and forth to a waiting dump truck. I learned first and reverse that day, up and down on the front hydraulic lift, and how to brake with the left wheel for a sharp left turn and the right for a sharp right. And I was totally absorbed by the driving: by the possibility of rhythm and smoothness in coordinating the motion of the loader with that of the tractor -- to lift the loader as the tractor moved forward, lower it as the tractor moved back; so neither motion had to wait on the other but both were completed at once, together, on time. We got two truck loads of muck and gravel out of the ditch that day and sometimes I managed with smoothness but sometimes I didn't. But I am still fascinated by the possibility of feeling the machine working in easy harmony with me as operator and with the job that's being done.

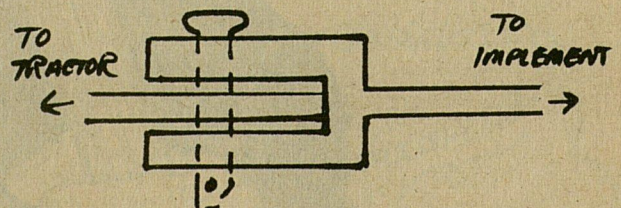
The actual driving -- shifting and steering -- is little different than driving a car and an older car at that. If you're just starting out your experience will probably be like mine: with old tractors, since a new tractor costs \$3,500 to \$4,000 (in Kansas, May, 1974). You can probably find someone to show you how to drive one, but with or without that start, nothing beats doing it. So get on the tractor and drive. There's a key somewhere and probably a manual choke (to pull out, but not too far or too long or you'll flood the engine), and a manual starter (to push in). The throttle is probably near where an automobile column shift would be. Toward you is probably more gas, but trial and error will tell you for sure. On tractors I've driven, the throttle does not automatically return to idling speed when you let go of it as the foot feed on a car does. The tractor throttle stays where you put it (so you can do other things with your hands) which means that when you put the clutch in and stop, the engine will race dangerously until you put back the throttle. The clutch is somewhere near your left foot and the brakes -- one each for the wheel it is nearest -- are near your right. The shift stick is probably somewhere between your legs. It may be two sticks or one with a high and low position or who knows. Fool with it a while and you'll find what gears do what. There is usually an

engine rpm dial that indicates either the optimum or the maximum rpm -- if it doesn't, use your ears. You'll surely get the hang of driving quickly and you'll probably also notice that just driving the tractor is a pretty useless operation. Much of the knowhow and challenge and usefulness of tractor driving is in the implements that can be attached to the tractor.

And there is a bewildering number of implements because many crops require special tools. Hay, for instance, must be cut, raked, and baled and each operation requires a different tractor attachment -- an attachment that isn't good for anything else.

Whatever implement you want to use, it must be attached to your one tractor. There are some important general things about attachments. To use an implement with moving parts (e.g. a mower or a baler), you need a tractor with a power take off (PTO). This is a fluted shaft at the rear of the tractor driven by the tractor engine and connecting to another shaft (the jackshaft) on your implement. A power take off may or may not be "live" (capable of turning while the clutch is in).

To use an implement that must be raised or lowered (e.g. loader, plow, auger, disc) you need a tractor with a hydraulic system. This system also may or may not be live. If it isn't live you won't be able to hold your tool up while you step on the clutch. Any tractor with hydraulic attachments will have at least a two point implement hitch (a "point" is a point of attachment -- usually a heavy pin that goes through holes in interlocking arms, one each from tractor and implement, as:



One fixed point must act as a fulcrum for the hydraulically lengthened and shortened arm of the second point to pivot against.

Not all tractors are necessarily equipped with power take offs or with hydraulics and not all implements will attach to all tractors that are so equipped, so if you're buying equipment -- especially old equipment -- do a lot of planning and asking before you do any spending. Probably the best arrangement is a three point hitch -- usually two hydraulic and one fixed point. Most recent equipment is made to fit and Ford even



claims that they have used the same three point hitch on all their tractors and implements since 1935. One dealer I talked to told me I could probably get a serviceable tractor with live PTO and hydraulics and a basic set of implements (plow, disc, harrow, and planter), used, for around \$2,000. Another dealer offered a tractor with plow, cultivator, mower and planter for \$895.00 but it had a two point hitch and it was pretty old so other implements to fit it might be hard to find.

What I know about implements -- a rather haphazard conglomeration of actual experience, bits of information from people who've farmed a lot, and answers to direct questions asked of farmers and dealers -- is summarized below:

plow: counterpart to the spade; about \$600.00 (new); used for initial breaking of the ground in spring and fall. It turns the earth over in one direction and in long row-length pieces (a mold board plow does. Chisel plows cut into the earth without really turning all of it. They are supposed to be good for faster land preparation and better soil moisture retention. I've never seen one used). Plowing I've done has been in clockwise circles outward from the center of the field. One rear wheel usually runs in the edge of the last furrow. It is good to vary from season to season where you begin and end this plowing since, especially in the fall, this plowing will influence where the water sits all winter long.

disc: counterpart to the hoe; about \$700.00 new; used for working the ground to ready it for planting. It is made of two or more rows of circular discs cutting more shallowly than the plow and turning the earth first one way, then the other, to break large pieces, mix, aerate, cultivate.

field cultivator or harrow: (but I have also heard the word "harrow" used to describe what I have just called a disc -- harrow seems a pretty flexible word) counterpart of the rake; for finishing the ground prior to planting. There are also row cultivators which cultivate only between rows and can be used on row crops (e.g. corn, beans, potatoes) after the plants have come up. Be sure to plan row spacings so you don't run over a row with the tractor wheels.

planter: counterpart of bending over and putting the seeds in the ground one by one; about \$700.00 for a two row or \$1200.00 for a four row model new. Can be used for corn, beans, peanuts, etc.

hay baler: \$500-\$1000 used. Some balers make square bales, packing the hay like stacked newspapers; some make cylindrical bales, rolling the hay around itself. People I've talked to seem to have a strong preference for one or the other. The cylindrical bales are probably harder to handle -- they can't be stacked as high -- but they are also more resistant to water while still in the field. Probably, you like the kind you've got.

loader: unlike the other implements I've mentioned, this attaches to the front of the tractor. There are many designs, but it's basically a big scoop for lifting and moving things: earth, man-

ure, a friend trying to reach ripe pears, a bumper of a truck with a flat tire. The uses are probably endless, once you're tuned in to thinking about the loader like you probably do think about a pocket knife or a hammer. Once last winter we had a snowfall that left a 2'-3' deep drift for 30 or 40 feet along our driveway. Leaning on a snow shovel handle to rest my aching back after digging all that out, I looked up at a grinning neighbor who said, "Driveway looks great, but why didn't you use the tractor?" It was sitting in a nearby barn, the loader already attached.

An even more persistent problem than hooking up the right implement in the right way is keeping the tractor in running condition. Most of my experience has been with an old pick-up instead of an old tractor, but the approach is the same in either case. Unless your tractor is a diesel, many of the problems are the same too. I've talked of them already in the preceding article on gas engines. Again, the most important aspect of getting the job done is not know-how so much as attitude. If you are responsible for your tractor -- if you know you have to fix it -- you probably will, though not always on the first try, or quickly.

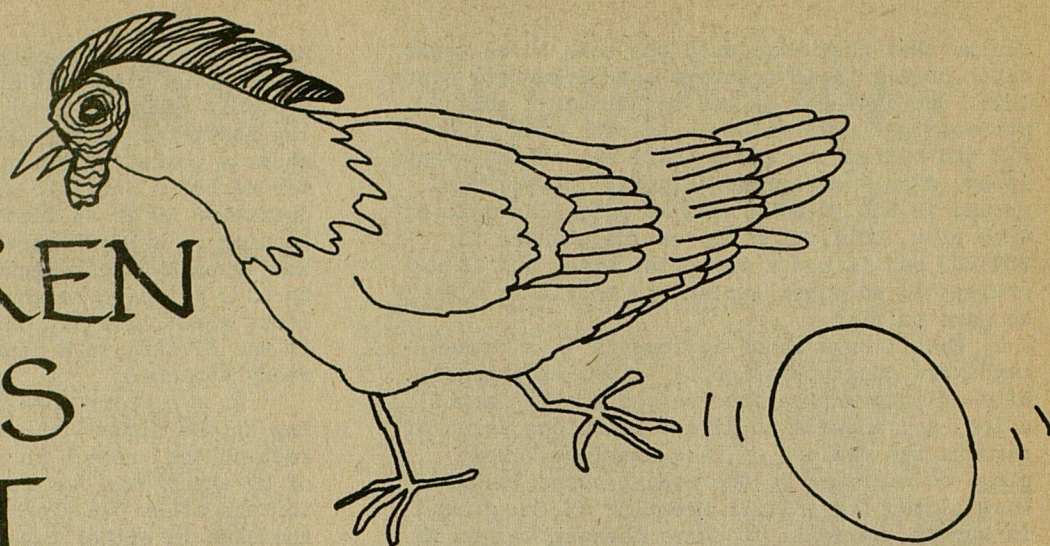
Last year my landlord had hay cut and ready to bale in the fields for a week. Every night he came home from work and worked on his baler. Some nights he'd get one or two bales before it broke, but it always broke. That season he finally hired someone to bale the hay for him. This spring he hired someone again. But the baler is back in his shop. He's working on it again.

The attitude that tools are fixed because they have to be fixed is the most important thing I've learned about tractor or truck or any kind of maintenance. If you use old equipment it's an economic necessity. But it's not only that. Part of the satisfaction of using the tool comes from the better knowing of it that working on, as well as with it, gives.

When the garden was plowed under last fall, I rode on the tractor while its owner cut the first few rows of furrows, showing me how. There is a ditch along one edge of the garden field and each time we approached it he drove the front tractor wheels clear out into it, reaching for the garden edges with his plow, knowing its weight would give him traction to get back out of the ditch. All his actions were fast and smooth and the plow turned out the black and shining earth in straight sharp rows and there was no wasted time or action and neither was there haste. I finished that job next morning alone, neither as fast nor as smooth as he, but getting better all the time; and the earth turned out black the same, and the sun and wind and feel of fall were there, and the sense of ending one season and beginning another all in the same act. The longer I plowed the more a feeling of harmony with the machine joined into the feeling of harmony with season. Earth, sky, machine and me -- it pulls my own roots down into the ground and I am nourished. ♀



# THE CHICKEN COMES FIRST



"If it's fryers, roasters, capons, or eggs you want - get this greatly improved White Rock."

"White Leghorns! 'The Modern Egg Machine'!"

"Lakenvelders have been described as the most beautiful breed in America. ."

Hatcheries must have a difficult time coming up with enough superlatives to describe all of the breeds they offer in their catalogs! Whether you're starting out your first chick flock or looking to embellish your established flock with some "rarest of rare" exotics, you'll probably enjoy looking through the hatchery catalogs. Other sources of chicks and grown birds may be local farms, feed stores, auctions, or Sears and Roebuck. Whatever your source, your choice of breeds should include some consideration of the egg and/or meat production, and temperament of the birds in question. Aesthetics and immediate availability will no doubt sway you too.

Chickens are grouped or classed in a few basic ways. Practically, they may be grouped as "heavy", "light", or "fancy" breeds. Or they may be listed as egg-producers, meat-producers, general-purpose or miscellaneous breeds. The more professional classification places a bird first in a class, then in a breed within that class, then within a variety of that breed. There is a book called the "Standards of Perfection" published by the American Poultry Association which illustrates and describes all varieties of chickens as to their perfect type. You will probably want to consider the different breeds very pragmatically at first (at least until some "fancy" types catch your eye). The most useful groupings would be egg-producers, meat-producers, general purpose and miscellany.

Egg-producers are generally medium to small size birds such as Leghorns, Campines and Araucanas. Mature hens weigh about four pounds and cockerels (or roosters) weigh about six. Despite their small size, hens of this type lay

large eggs, usually chalk-white in color. They tend to mature early and begin laying at five or six months of age. They lay exceptionally well, rarely go broody, and are very efficient feed-to-egg converters. They are considered to be "active", almost nervous birds and, because of their light size and ability to fly, might have to be kept in covered pens if you want to confine them. White Leghorns seem to be the most popular and readily available of this type of chicken.

With roosters commonly reaching a weight of ten to twelve pounds, the meat producing breeds have been especially bred for the table! This type of chicken includes the Orpingtons, Brahmas and Black or White Jersey Giants. The hens are correspondingly large and heavy. They mature late (often not laying until they are eight or nine months old), lay large brown eggs and are considered poor layers. Our Cochin and Brahma hens do, indeed, lay erratically. But both of these breeds are so beautiful - stately, almost, with extravagantly feathered legs and toes - that the sheer pleasure of looking at them seems worth the feed for a few pair. Their chicks (they will hatch a brood but are clumsy mothers so you will probably take the chicks away or import a Bantam to hatch and mother) bring a good price if you want to sell them. Cochins are now fairly rare and listed in many hatchery catalogs as an "unusual" breed. These breeds are also among the gentlest and tamest. They are mild and easy to confine and make nice pets if you don't eat meat.

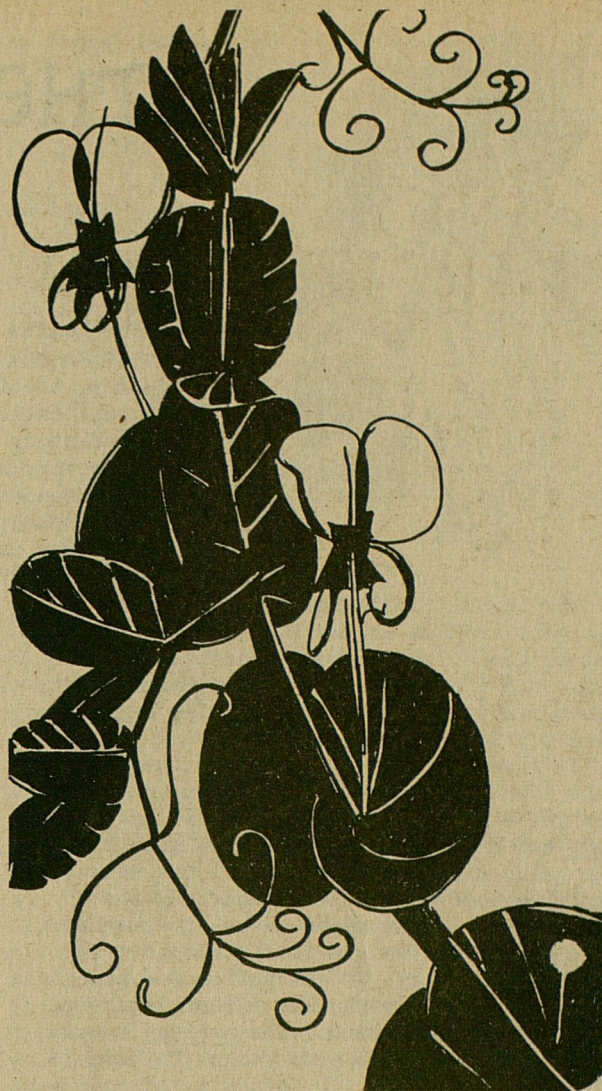
Most farm, homestead or backyard flocks are best made up of general purpose breeds. These general purpose birds have been long bred for a good body size (hens average six or seven pounds; roosters eight or nine pounds) and good quality meat. They have also been bred for good laying ability and early maturity. Most lay large brown eggs. These breeds will occasionally go broody and set and raise chicks. We've raised and kept White Plymouth Rocks, Barred Plymouth Rocks, Rhode Island Reds, and a few Silver Laced Wyandottes. All of these birds have been



extremely hardy, very fine layers as well as fairly quiet, and tame. The Barred Rocks and Wyandottes are the most interesting to look at but our favorites have always been the Rhode Island Reds. These hens will lay right through the coldest weather. They seem to go on laying and laying. Speaking of laying, the record old age layer for our farm is Maria, a White Plymouth Rock now in her sixth summer and still filling her favorite nest with almost duck-sized eggs!

Under miscellaneous breeds come all the fancies, the rare exotics, and the Bantams. These include the Polish black with white crests that seem to flow from their heads - or buff laced with buff crests. These lay white eggs. They are kept as ornamental or show birds. The Japanese Yokohama and Phoenix are beautifully colored descendants of the original Imperial garden fowl whose tails reached the incredible length of twenty feet. Salmon Faverolles, with muffs and feathered toes, are supposed to be good layers and exceptionally pretty. We rescued a pair of silkies (which are classed as Ornamental Bantams) from a butcher shop window and took them home. These chickens have feathers which more resemble down or fluff. They are small, hardy and bright. Ours grew very tame. After a long, long wait in which we debated the age of the hen from pullet to ancient, she began to lay. We let her keep her clutch of small white eggs which are now downy chicks a month or so old. She and the rooster are raising them together - taking turns finding food, protecting them, and keeping them warm. If you need to justify keeping such wonderful little birds perhaps you could plan to sell their babies.

Another miscellaneous breed that we accidentally began with and have kept ever since are Araucanas. A friend gave us our first five hens and a handsome rooster who hatched from a big blue egg. These six were the nucleus of what grew to a flock of twenty or thirty prolific, hardy and attractive birds. Araucanas are the "Easter egg" chickens - they lay eggs in pastel shades of green, blue, gold and pink as well as the more traditional browns. They were developed from the South American Araucanas who have rather bizarre reptilian heads and odd feathering. In this country, Araucanas have been crossbred with Bantams and other breeds until there is really no set breed type in terms of coloring, body size or type and so on. Our Araucanas were probably Bantam crossed at some point. The roosters have beautiful coloring with large iridescent tail feathers. The hens vary in color from brown with black lacings to yellow and light brown to an almost pink beige color. They are all medium sized birds. About half of our hens lay colored eggs; the others lay brown. The eggs are medium size, larger than a Bantam egg but smaller than a Plymouth Rock's. We became really fond of our Araucanas because they are so capable - in hatching and raising chicks, foraging for food, sleeping high in the trees out of the reach of predators, and so on. Most of ours have been left to live a semi-wild life - they are not locked in pens or houses -



but they stay right around the farmyard and lay most of their eggs in the barn or in the goat feeders. When we want to control the population, we can usually catch extra chicks, hens or surplus roosters and sell them. Araucanas lay fairly well, beginning as five-month old pullets and laying for as long as five or six years. They go broody often, which is their one major disadvantage. When they aren't broody they usually lay an egg a day. If you want the pleasure of stumbling upon a nest of beautiful colored eggs or would like chickens that still have an element of sturdy independence, try a few Araucanas. You might find them among your very favorites!

Whatever breed or type of chickens you begin with or find yourself being unable to resist, you will probably continue changing and adding, hatching and selling, ordering and trading all kinds. One good system we worked out was buying or hatching a new variety of chick each summer as a replacement flock for our oldest layers. The new pullets would then be clearly distinguishable from year old hens or two year olds. And we would have a chance to work our way through at least some of the sixty-seven varieties Murray McMurray offers for sale.





# THEY ARE WHAT YOU EAT

The health of every young animal, whether llama, baboon or human, begins with and largely depends on the health of its mother. During pregnancy, the infant shares the thoughts and food of its carrier. Many complications of pregnancy are due directly to a poor quality diet. One study showed that 94% of babies born from women on a good diet were very healthy babies; while 92% of those born to women on diets inadequate in even one element were defective in some way.<sup>1</sup> The main thought to keep in mind here is that when you are pregnant, you are manufacturing a baby from the raw materials you put in your own body.

The unusual food cravings a pregnant woman gets are due at least partly to real physical needs, which are not necessarily met by the item craved. A well balanced diet is what meets those needs, as I will explain in the section on protein.

In general, it is important to keep your weight down without skimping on your nutritives. It is not a matter of eating for two in amount but much more in quality. Although the fetus gains nine to ten pounds of its weight during the last four months, and half the total in the last eight weeks, the mother gains most of her weight in the second trimester of pregnancy. If you put on too much, it makes for a heavy burden, harder labor and remains as fat afterwards. The average amount (and this does cover a wide range) to gain is about twenty pounds.

## QUALITY OF FOOD:

I give credence to the connection between what we eat and drink and what we are. So try to avoid the empty, filler foods that put on lots of calories with little nutrition. Basically, the closer a food is to its natural, right-from-the-earth state, the higher is its nutritional value.

When I was pregnant, my body took me for small frequent snacks into the garden. You'll find these snacks the only comfortable way to eat after a while, as the room for digestion gets smaller and smaller from the growing uterus.

The more peaceful our diet, the more peaceful our minds. I suggest that anyone, especially if you are pregnant, give careful thought to a meatless diet. I personally believe that women have a great store of power for changing the tone of our violent society by gearing our own and our children's systems toward a peaceful and strength-producing diet; without meat and without poison. Although there may be people so in tune with, and respectful of, the animals they kill and eat that it is a meal of love, I also believe from my own experience and

from literature on past and religious societies, that very heavy meat consuming individuals and cultures tend more towards violence than vegetarians. I have been told and believe that when we eat, we absorb the suffering of the slaughtered.

Also, on the level of polluted foods, in the average U.S. diet, meat, fish, and poultry provide 36% of the chlorinated pesticides we consume. I urge you to eat no meat while pregnant, since these poisons get to the fetus. (For assessing the breakdown of the total amount of chlorinated pesticides in our food, and to further urge eating organically, see the pesticide chart from Diet for a Small Planet, by Frances Moore Lappe, Ballantine Books, New York, 1971.)

## PROTEIN RAP:

The concern most people express about not eating meat has to do with getting enough protein, the most important part of a pregnant woman's diet. Protein is necessary to the basic chemical reactions of life, to maintain the body environment, to help regulate the body's fluid balance, and to form antibodies to fight infections. Protein is the raw material for making the baby, the placenta, and a strong uterus. It keeps the blood sugar consistently high, which provides the immediate source of the body's energy. The common bummer of nausea can be greatly relieved by keeping the blood sugar level high through the proper intake of protein. Likewise, swollen ankles, face, and wrists can be relieved by avoiding salt and carbohydrates for a while and by maintaining a high protein diet. A lack of protein often manifests itself as a craving for sugar.

A non-pregnant average-sized woman needs 50 to 60 grams of protein a day; a pregnant woman needs at least 85, and actually 100 is better. There are two ratings for protein - the quantity of protein in a given food and

<sup>1</sup> Lester D. Hazell, Commonsense Childbirth, Tower Publications, New York.



the quality of the protein. It is the second of these that is the truly important one.

The quantity of the protein is the amount which is actually absorbed and used by the body. In pure protein quantity, plants rank highest. Soybean flour is over 40% protein; certain cheeses like Parmesan, are 36%; then meat, dried beans, peas, and lentils at 20% to 30%. At the bottom of the quantity scale are grains, milk and eggs.

Now on the quality scale, the net protein utilization (NPU) scale, animal protein is at the top. Eggs are the most complete protein food with a NPU rating of 94! Then milk at 82; then meat, soybeans, and whole rice at 67; then plants at 40 to 70.

The way to get all the amino acid (full protein) requirements met without meat is to get it from other animal sources (eggs and milk products) and/or use of certain combinations of plants which together give very complete protein. Details about complementary plant proteins can be found in Diet for a Small Planet and Recipes for a Small Planet by Ellen Buchman Eward. Without knowing more about the basic categories that will pull you through, remember to combine in the same meal whole grains and legumes, whole grains and milk products, or seeds and legumes.

Brewer's yeast is a pregnant woman's best friend. One heaping tablespoon will give you ten to twenty grams of protein, as well as good iron and B vitamins. When I was pregnant, I didn't know about complementary plant proteins, and I managed to get most of mine with milk products, eggs, whole grains, soybeans, sunflower seeds, peas, beans, nuts, and lots of brewer's yeast. Corn, sprouted seeds, wheat germ, and mushrooms are also good sources.

#### MILK RAP:

And now it's time for the milk rap! Now that we're all organic vegetarians, we can start becoming Friends of Goat's Milk! Unfortunately a vast majority of us have an image of goat's milk as something unpalatable. This comes from the fact that what one buys in the store is often more than a few days old, by which time it has taken on a strong taste. When it is fresh, however, as anyone who has ever drunk it will attest, goat's milk is sweet and delicious.

The size of a goat and a human is much closer than that of a cow and a human. Because of this, the fat globules in the milk are easily digestible by humans, whereas those in cow's milk are not. Part of why people in the United States tend to be overweight is that they were raised on cow's milk, whose huge fat globules produce an irreversible tendency toward obesity in some people. The fat in goat's milk is integrated by nature into the milk and therefore needs no mechanical homogenization. The curd is small and easily assimilated into our bodies. Goat's milk is richer than cow's milk in vital mineral salts and aids in skin diseases.

An infant can drink whole, undiluted goat's milk. As well as protein, it is a source of riboflavin and thiamine. So this is a high recommendation, especially if you are pregnant. Try to find a source of fresh goat's milk.

#### LIQUIDS:

Liquids are important, largely because they help keep the elimination passages running smoothly. Drink as much liquid as you possibly can, eight to ten glasses a day of water, milk, tea, fruit juice, or even beer. Water aids digestion and absorption by dissolving food materials; it supplies fluid for blood, lymph, digestive juices and secretions; it aids in excreting waste through the skin as sweat, through kidneys as urine, and through stools. It aids in the regulation of body heat too.

#### MINERALS and OTHER CHEMICALS:

Moving further down the list of essentials for pregnancy, we come to iron. Iron is the main component of hemoglobin, which is the component of blood that carries oxygen to every body cell of both you and the unborn child. The fetus draws on your iron reserve to store enough to last it throughout the nursing period; it is you who are left without it first. A lack of iron causes anemia and weakness. This simple anemia is widespread among pregnant women.

The uterus needs a tremendous supply of oxygen during labor, and won't get it without enough hemoglobin. The baby's brain cells need oxygen and deprivation could be serious. In women generally, often what is lost in menstruation is not replaced and the result is weakness. If you are pregnant, I would recommend being tested for iron deficiency anemia.

Good sources of iron are raisins, molasses, egg yolks, dried fruit, whole grains, greens, brewer's yeast, seaweed, sprouts, beans, almonds, dried peas, and soybeans. A fine old-time source is to stick rusty nails in apples overnight and eat the fruit the next day. The nails leave iron deposits in the fruit. The B vitamins and protein are needed to properly use iron. If you just cannot seem to get your quota, and one source says, 15 to 18 milligrams a day, it is important to take supplements. Iron in the form of ferrous gluconate and ferrous fumarate are fine to take with no side effects except dark colored shit, which is harmless. Avoid at all costs iron in the form of ferrous sulfate, which leaches out other vitamins and causes stomach problems and constipation.

The other important mineral for pregnancy besides iron is calcium, needed for building bones and teeth. It is also important for blood clotting and normal action of the heart, nerves, and muscles. The baby draws calcium from your system for (co's) bones, both prenatally and while nursing, so again it's you who lose. It's probably a good idea to get your teeth checked



NO X-RAYS - early in pregnancy, and keep them brushed. One source recommends 1.5 to 2 grams of calcium a day when you are pregnant. Good calcium sources are milk and cottage cheese, soybeans, greens, grains, sprouts, citrus and dried fruits, molasses, almonds, dried beans. Again, if you can't seem to get enough, natural calcium lactate or gluconate supplements are fine to take. They should be taken on an empty stomach with vitamin C. Pills of calcium with phosphorus probably are not utilized. If you have cramps and other pains, which you undoubtedly will, extra calcium can take them away. I woke up every morning with a charlie-horse in my calf. After taking extra calcium, it stopped completely. (It's also great, incidentally, in relieving menstrual cramps.) A lack of calcium causes sleeplessness, irritability, muscle cramps, nerve pains, uterine pains.

Iodine is a must. Without it the baby can fail to develop normally, can even be an idiot (cretinism). It is needed by the thyroid glands on either side of your windpipe to secrete thyroxin, which regulates the rate food is burned in the body. Iodine is found in the sea, in salt unrefined or iodized. If you need extra, eat seaweed, garlic, eggs, spinach, oatmeal, potato skins, milk, cabbage, green leafy vegetables grown near the seashore or in iodine-rich soil.

Magnesium as well as vitamin B6 prevents pregnancy convulsions. It promotes new cells, relaxes and protects nerves, prevents and relieves constipation, and activates enzymes. Good sources are coconut, figs, barley, eggplant, whole grains, goat's milk, cocoa, nuts, soybeans, green leafy vegetables, egg yolks, grapefruit, oranges.

Manganese aids in forming hemoglobin, activates enzymes, improves memory. It is found in bananas, blueberries, bran, beans, beets, peas, egg yolks, chard, leafy greens, whole grains, wheat germ, nuts. A lack can cause retarded growth, abnormal bone structure, poor equilibrium, and poor co-ordination. In general it is known as the mineral needed to have healthy babies.

Phosphorus along with calcium comprises 95% of the minerals found in bones. In this combination it helps form and maintain bones and teeth. It is found in the nucleus of each cell, assists the cells to absorb food and get rid of wastes, is abundant in brain and nerve cells. It is found in the blood stream and muscle tissue, and is essential to a normal glandular system. Vitamin D is important in the absorption of phosphorus. One recommendation I found is 2 grams a day while pregnant. It is found in cheddar cheese and peanuts, many vegetables, soybeans, egg yolk, dried beans, almonds, dried peas, oatmeal, lentils, milk, barley, bran, whole grains. A deficiency causes perverted appetite, retarded growth, loss of weight, weakness, imperfect bone and teeth development.

Potassium is the regulator of the acid-base balance, maintains weight, and tones muscle. It is good for nerves, disposition and grace. It is found in dried fruits, nuts, molasses, potato skins, dandelion, watercress, parsley, olives, cabbage, coconut, peaches, blueberries, whole grains, beans, fresh vegetables.

Last to mention here are the trace minerals found in the soil, such as zinc and cobalt. These will be found in vegetables grown in rich humus. Indeed, the content of all vitamins and minerals in vegetables varies greatly with the quality of the soil where they're grown.

#### VITAMINS:

Vitamin C is for growth, teeth, cell activity, healing of wounds, formation of supportive tissues. Vitamin C detoxifies a number of our nonfoods, as well as the bacteria and viruses we have when sick. If you smoke cigarettes (which, please, try your hardest not to do when pregnant - there is direct poison to your child) 25 milligrams of vitamin C per cigarette will help. Vitamin C helps build a strong placenta.

Recommendation varies from 100 to 250 milligrams per day for pregnancy. It is found in citrus fruit and tomatoes, melons, berries, cabbage, seaweed, rose hips, dark green vegetables, cauliflower, bean sprouts, parsley, apples, potatoes. When we are under stress, our need for vitamin C goes up. Our bodies don't store it, but excrete the excess. A lack results in bleeding gums, bruising easily, tender joints.

Vitamin A is needed for growth and health, resistance to infection, growth and function of cells of the skin and mucous membrane, normal tooth formation and eyesight. It is vital to normal pregnancy and lactation. I find recommendations ranging from 6,000 to 25,000 units daily for pregnancy! Sources are leafy greens, orange and yellow vegetables, apricots, peaches and persimmons, egg yolks, cheese, butter, seaweed, milk, red raspberry leaves, alfalfa sprouts, avocados, green beans, peas, tomatoes. A lack causes retarded growth, respiratory infections, night blindness, dry, scaly skin.

The vitamin B complex is for growth, helping the body absorb carbohydrates, normal appetite, digestion and bowel movements, health of skin and eyes, proper function of nervous system, normal pregnancy and lactation, formation of red blood cells. The vitamin B complex consists of B1 (Thiamin), B2 (Riboflavin), Niacin, B6, B12, folic acid and probably others. Watch out for vitamin B supplements as they usually contain only a few B vitamins and not in the right proportions. Taking only a few B vitamins (or taking them in the wrong proportion) causes a deficiency in all the other B vitamins.

A lack of B vitamins causes nervousness, skin problems, lack of energy, constipation, changes in skin pigmentation. Coffee drinking can cause a B vitamin deficiency. Folic acid is particularly important to pregnant women; without it the baby can be anemic or die. A



deficiency can cause harder labor, premature labor, or miscarriage. Vitamin B6 is needed for normal brain development and to prevent anemia. Nutritional (brewer's) yeast contains all the B vitamins, especially B6. Folic acid can be gotten from greens; B12 from milk, eggs, cheese. Other sources of the complex include sprouts, whole grains, legumes, citrus fruits, bananas, apples, avocados, nuts (especially peanuts), tomatoes, seeds, whole rice, mushrooms, soybeans, goat's milk, lima beans, outer leaves of lettuce and cabbage, yogurt, molasses.

Vitamin D is for growth, building and maintaining bones and teeth, especially needed during pregnancy. It is needed to absorb calcium. Vitamin D is hard to find in food sources; it is mostly produced in the body by sunlight on the skin. A great lack causes rickets; excess is not secreted and over 300,000 units a day is toxic. It helps produce strong, straight legs, ample chest, and adequate pelvis. Recommendations vary from 800 to 2500 units daily for pregnancy. If you spend time in the sun, that's probably all you need. It is found in small amounts in eggs, raw milk, sunflower seeds, alfalfa sprouts, watercress, cream and butter, almonds, coconut. A lack can cause irritability and weakness.

Vitamin E is recommended to keep your body's healing power high and to prevent prematurity and anemia in the baby. Adelle Davis

recommends taking your iron and vitamin E separately as they tend to cancel each other out if taken together. A deficiency can cause lack of fertility so it is essential to normal reproduction. Recommendations range from 100-200 units daily while pregnant. Sources are whole grains, wheat germ, beets, celery, lettuce, oranges, cold pressed oils, nuts and seeds, corn, eggs.

Vitamin E aids suppleness of breasts and abdomen when applied externally. Rub in vegetable oils, wheat germ oil, or best of all, vitamin E oil itself. To prevent stretch marks from remaining after pregnancy, rubbing this in daily really works.

Vitamin K is necessary to the clotting mechanism, is essential for good circulation, and in preventing hemorrhaging. To this latter purpose, vitamin K is important especially near the end of pregnancy to help avoid the danger of hemorrhaging in labor. Alfalfa sprouts are full of vitamin C and K and also help build milk production. Other sources of vitamin K are oats, wheat, rye, green leafy vegetables, cauliflower.

#### HERBS AND TEAS:

A few special teas are worth knowing about. Uva Ursi is especially good for keeping the kidneys cleaned out. It was recommended to me by my midwife. So is Red Raspberry which also seems

cont.





to be the number one pregnancy tea to ready the body for labor, easing pain, promoting contractions, preventing hemorrhaging. I also used it to alleviate nausea and as a calming, soothing drink. One precaution is not to use red raspberry leaves that are not completely dry, as they let off a poison while still moist which disappears with dryness.

Other recommended teas are squaw vine for keeping up strength; wild yam for relaxing the nerves, relieving cramps, and preventing miscarriage; wild cherry as mild sedative. Some Indians used a decoction of powdered rattlesnake rattles to help painless childbirth. Slippery elm root for easy labor. You might want a supply of blue cohosh if delivery needs stimulation. Stay away from sage as it is supposed to dry up milk, and from penny royal as it is an Indian abortive. Lobelia and spikenard relax you and relieve nausea and labor pains. For a quick relief from excess water retention, take ginger and/or honey.

Primitive women often crush aromatic herbs in their hands and smell them during labor. Coriander is a favorite. In prolonged labor, cold cloths wrung in mint or sage, applied to the temples and wrists, give pain relief and soothe the nerves. True also for sips of these teas and of rosemary. For acute pain, sips of honey and poppy heads. Some pain is indeed part of the mystical experience! Drugs render both mother

and unborn child helpless and confused, at the very least. For complications, the Gypsies try a strong brew of raspberry leaves. For retained afterbirth, the same with a teaspoon of crushed ivy leaves plus honey.

#### OTHER CULTURES:

Juliette de Bairacli Levy spent much time with the Spanish Gypsies, a healthy and enlightened people, particularly in the realm of pregnancy and childbirth. She has written several books about herbal upbringing of children and animals. She recommends keeping the weight way down, keeping clean (water relieves nervous tension as well as cleansing, and clearing the pores to excrete by sweat), getting plenty of air and sunbathing. Lack of exercise, she says, a common problem particularly among U.S. pregnant women, can result in slack muscles, excess of fluid around the child, swollen limbs, and often varicose veins. She also recommends dried ginger or peppermint tea and dill seed to prevent nausea, and puree of black currants against miscarriage.

#### A FEW LAST THINGS:

In general, it is helpful to remember that when you start to eat well your body is housecleaning. There may be little annoyances - pimples, warts, sores - as you quickly get rid of poisons. They will pass when their function has been fulfilled. Yeast infections are common in the fertile environment of your vagina when the normal hormonal balance is altered. Uninfected white discharge is normal. If infected, clear it up before labor as the infection can get in the baby's eyes. Also, get checked for VD as some kinds can cause blindness in the baby. To

this end, have neosporin ready to put in the newborn's eyes to be totally sure.

One consideration worth mentioning is that the best foods in one thing may not be the best all around. We have all been warned about too much mucous in our diet. It is easy to eat a lot of mucous foods in the attempt to get enough protein. Near the end of my pregnancy, I was eating a great deal of cottage cheese, and my midwife connected that to the fact that the newborn had a lot of mucous in her stomach, which was very uncomfortable to her. If this does happen to your child, incidentally, give co as much tepid boiled water as co will drink to help the mucous flow out.

#### PREPARATIONS FOR BIRTH:

Be extremely attentive to preparing sterile supplies and an absolutely clean environment. To sterilize cloth goods, steam for two hours and leave in a clean place to dry; or bake for an hour in a slow oven with a pan of water, wrapped in cloth and paper. Drying in a commercial dryer is probably hot enough too, to be then stored in paper bags. To sterilize rubber goods, wash with soap and water, dry thoroughly, boil for five minutes and cool in the same water. For instruments, boil for ten minutes and remove with a sterile tool.

#### Labor Kit for Home Delivery:

Natural sponge and bowl for water for keeping mouth moist, powder for effleurage, sterile scissors for cutting cord, baby's rectal bulb syringe for removing mucous, clamps for cord, sterile 3x3 gauze, large plastic or equivalent for bed, lots of clean rags and towels - some sterile, kotex, rubbing alcohol, oil, bowl for placenta, phisoex and soap, receiving blanket, camera, pillows, scale, sterile sheets, vomit bowl, cold boiled water, warm boiled water, hot toddy ingredients, wood for stove, tape measure, tongs for handling sterile items, watch, cotton, hot water bottle, rubber sheeting, cord dressings and pins, diapers, sleepers, teas, thermometer, clean and orderly room, enema fixings, light food, washed body from belly to knees, encouraging friends.

Remember: the Greek goddess Artemis is the protector of a woman, in childbirth, and of the newborn. So, relax . . . ♀

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# Liberating Masturbation

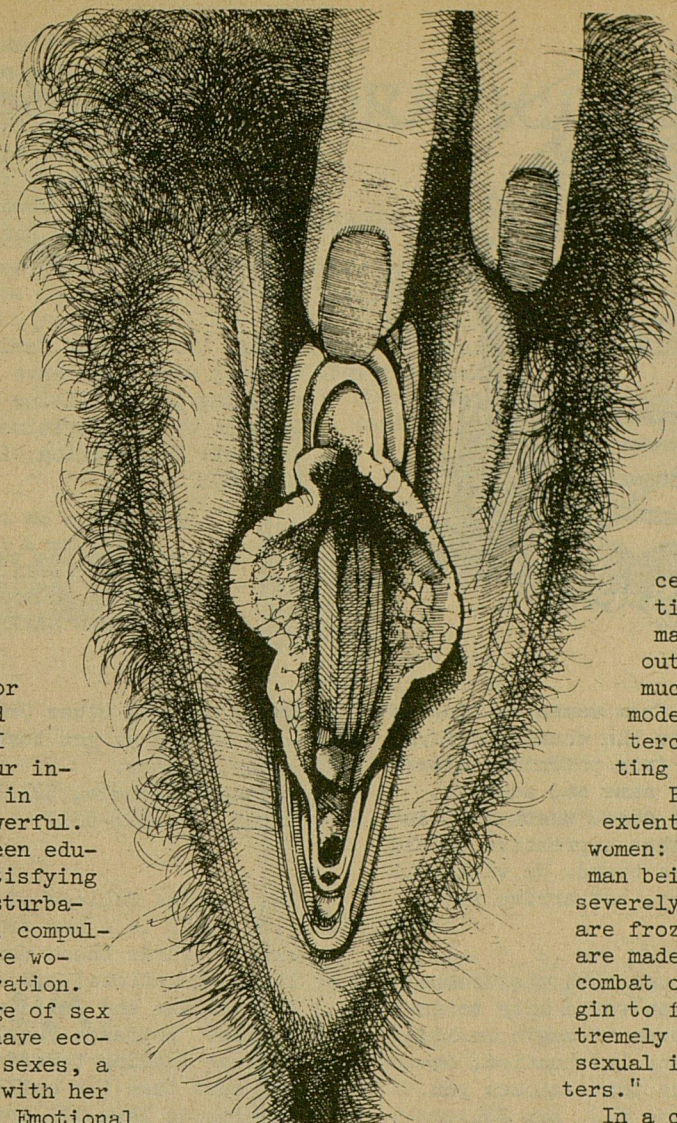
LIBERATING MASTURBATION, A  
MEDITATION ON SELF LOVE  
by Betty Dodson

I love Betty Dodson for exploring the pleasures and politics of masturbation. I love her for celebrating our intricately beautiful vulvas in drawings. Her words are powerful. She writes of "how we've been educated to feel that self-satisfying sexual pleasure through masturbation is wrong, second-rate, compulsive and infantile: a mature woman comes with penis-penetration. With that romanticized image of sex in a society that doesn't have economic equality between the sexes, a woman is forced to bargain with her cunt for economic security. Emotional security comes with romantic being "in love". "It's like mainlining emotion, shooting up feeling, and you are hooked on your beloved and in no way could you live without your 'fix'."

Viva the independence of masturbation.

"Sharing masturbation for the first time was extremely difficult. First I had to get up enough courage to watch myself in a mirror. With sharing my masturbation came an increased feeling of comfort and ease. For example, my sexual buildup to orgasm had always taken at least thirty minutes so I would often hang up worrying that his mouth or hand or penis or all three would be getting tired. Because I could now continue by myself, the pressure was off him and consequently off me." And she realized that "honest to goodness sharing is the basis of intimacy."

"The development of my erotic art relates directly to my sexual development. . . I have always struggled against society's restrictions and censorship. But the worst kind of censorship has been the kind I've been conditioned to apply to myself. Now I understand that once I am able to put it down on paper, whatever it is I fear, I've won. . . I decided to devote my second show to the



## Book Review

celebration of masturbation. Getting models to masturbate for me turned out to be very difficult, much more so than having models engage in sexual intercourse - a very illuminating comment in itself..."

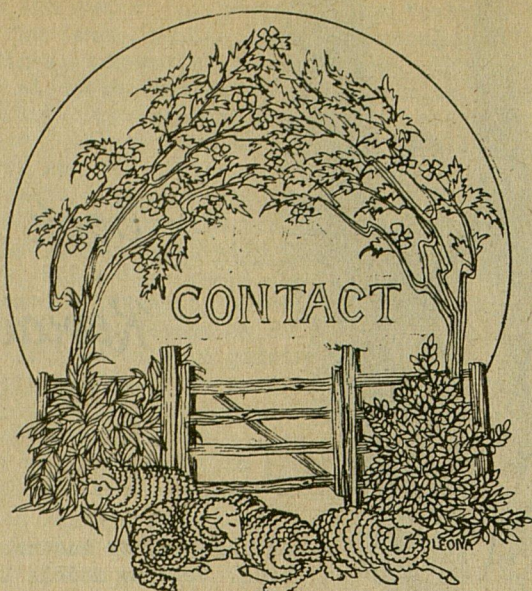
Betty Dodson discusses the extent of sexual repression of women: "We became crippled human beings. Our pelvises are severely locked. Our shoulders are frozen forward. Our genitals are made repulsive to us...To combat our repression and to begin to free ourselves it is extremely important for us to share sexual information with our sisters."

In a chapter titled "Becoming Cunt Positive" she describes a photographic adventure: "We each took turns posing...squatting...lying down naturally and exposing the clit. Then each woman was given a mirror and asked to arrange her own genitals in the way she thought was most appealing."

She eventually shared these slides with many groups of women in Bodysex Workshops. In the four sessions of this workshop women share their feelings about their bodies, examine their genitals, do breathing, posture, Yoga and other exercises. Betty shows them how to masturbate, alone and with another person, by hand and with different vibrators, and acts out different kinds of orgasms from mild to intense. After a week of masturbating at home the women share their range of pleasureable experiences. Finally they do self-massage, group massage, masturbate individually or in groups, whatever they feel comfortable doing together.

"Masturbation is a meditation on self-love. Since so many of us are afflicted with self-loathing, bad body images, shame about body functions and confusion about sex and pleasure, I recommend an intense love affair with yourself." ♀





We get many requests from women wanting to spend the summer working in the country. If you are interested in hearing from potential apprentices, please send us your name and address, what type of work you want done, whether tools or skills are needed, whether apprentice should be able to provide room and board. We will tell apprentices to write to you, not arrive for a visit.

We want to put women in touch with the common magic of our rituals. If you would like to increase the presence and power of magic in life send us your address and any information, objects, photos, descriptions that express you. Contact: Grand Valley Women, P.O. Box 2311, Grand Rapids, MI 49501

Fantasy film theatre/coffeehouse needs people and resources to make it happen. Grants Pass could use some cultural enrichment and some new films especially by and about women. Contact: Marsha Emerman, 1633 Lower Wolf Creek Road, Wolf Creek, Oregon 97497

I am living in McCarthy, a small town (pop. 14) in the Wrangell Mountains of Alaska and I want to meet other women living in the bush. If you are thinking of moving to this area- Contact: Joan Cousins, McCarthy via Chitina, Alaska 99566

We are a group of radical feminist/lesbians in the Miami area seeking to develop an effective nationwide system of communications among feminists. We propose a national community and communications network. We are looking for a place to hold it during August or September and sisters interested in organizing in their areas. Let us give power to Elizabeth Gould Davis' vision of a return of the matriarchy. Contact: J. Weinstein, 677 Indian Creek Dr., apt. 7D, Miami Beach, Florida 33141

Want to connect with another woman interested in buying land on the north California coast. I probably have the down payment so I want someone who can make the monthly payments until our finances are equalized. My dream is at least five acres, separate living structures and a shared studio (I do ceramics but any craft would do) and garden. Contact: Judith Simon, P.O. Box 462, Albion, CA 95410

We are two Lesbian feminists interested in contacting women who have any knowledge of homesteading possibilities in Canada, especially Ontario or the Maritime Provinces. Contact: Teri Nation, Lynn Beers, E. Alstead, NY 03602

New Lesbian magazine seeks Lesbian correspondence from rural Lesbian groups. For details - Contact: White Mare, Box 90, Preston Hollow, NY 12469

Where are you other Orange County feminists? I want to see us get together and help each other, sister. Contact: Michele, 521 Knepp, Fullerton, CA 92632 (714-526-5317)

The Peoples College of Law of the National Lawyers Guild is a new four-year law school oriented towards those usually excluded from the legal educational process. Gay people, especially lesbians and third world gays are definitely welcome. Entrance requirements are two years of college leading towards a Bachelor's degree, or you must take the college equivalency test. Tuition is low. All applicants should be committed to use the law as a tool for social change.

Contact Gay Caucus, c/o PLL/NLG, 2228 W. 7th St. Los Angeles, California 90057 (213-388-8171).

In recent issues CW has carried a notice for RFD as a journal for country gays. RFD is conceived and written by faggots and we owe apologies to women who expected a publication which addressed them. Our purpose in advertising in CW was to locate country faggots in touch with women. Please pardon our misinformation and of course money will be refunded to women who had expected a joint lesbian/faggot publication. Contact: RFD, P.O. Box 161, Grinnelle, Iowa 50112

The country women collective is made of women living scattered all over a twenty square mile area. We have no central commune and no place to accomodate guests. Please do not try to come visit us, it places great strain on our resources and interrupts our work. We understand the need both city and country women have for a central meeting place, but we are unable to provide it.



# FUTURE ISSUES

# GRAPHICS CREDITS

Women and Work: practical work experiences--  
positive and negative aspects of creating  
meaningful and remunerative jobs in our  
sexist society. How do/did you choose  
your alternatives?  
Deadline: May 25

The following issue will focus on our living  
situations. Who we live with; a possible  
exploration of our different lifestyles-  
living with men, separatism, living communally,  
living alone. How does our living situation  
affect who we are?

BOX 51

ALBION, CA.

## Graphics:

Bara Brown: 57  
Virginia Butler: 39  
Ruth Mountain Grove 51  
Betty Dodson: 63 Liberating Masturbation  
Victoria Hammond: 22 Bodysex Designs  
from the book Loving Women 121 Madison Ave. N.Y. N.Y.  
available through: The Nomadic Sisters  
P.O. Box 793  
Sonora, California 95370

Jennifer: 37  
Jane Kogan: 21, 24  
Laura Lengyel: 14  
Leona: 27, 53  
Louise: 31  
Meadow: 20  
Billie Miracle: 52  
Judy Oliver: 19  
Lari Shea: 40  
Slim: 7, back page  
Janet W. Stanley: 58

Song page 42 transcribed by Ellen Chanterelle

## Photographs:

Sally Bailey: 1, 3, 30, 38, 49, 61  
Carol Bloom: 14, 15, 32 top, bottom, center  
Alice Flores: 32 and 33 - center faces  
Karen Gottstein: 34  
Jill Henry: 12  
E. Hott: 29  
Bobbi Jones: 41  
Lynda Koolish: 33 top and bottom  
Jill Manton: 25  
Ruth of Mountain Grove: 8, 9  
Yvonne: 5

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## Country Women is all of us

We are still trying to increase our bookstore sales in order to pay sub-subsistence salaries to women who have been volunteering their services in putting out Country Women for the last two and half years. Readers have helped by taking copies of the magazine into local stores and asking shopkeepers to stock Country Women. We need more such help in broadening our distribution network. Also, please let us know if stores in your area usually sell out. Sometimes they do and then neglect to reorder.

We also really need people to contribute art work. Unfortunately we cannot offer any money in return for your graphics, but individuals whose work is chosen to go in each issue receive a complimentary copy of that issue. By graphics we mean pen and ink drawings, wood or linoleum block prints, etchings, engravings, sumi brush drawings, ink washes, quality black and white photographs, even fingerpaints. But clear, crisp reproduceable material is what we need. Please if you send in photographs and graphics, put your name and address on the back of each piece of material you send us.

As always, articles reflecting your personal experiences with the practical side of country living are avidly sought. Currently we are in the middle of building an office space for Country Women and things are in a bit of a shambles. If you have already sent us articles, photographs or graphics, and requested they be returned to you after publication, it may take a little while longer before they come. But come they will, eventually. Have faith... we are trying.



COUNTRY WOMEN  
BOX 51  
ALBION, CALIFORNIA 95410

