

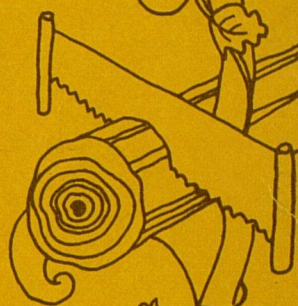
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FEMINISM AND
RELATIONSHIPS

\$1.00

COUNTRY
WOMEN

ISSUE 17



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The concept for this issue began with requests from readers that we do an issue on living with men. Then other women asked that we follow one on relating to men with an issue on lesbian separatism. After some thought we decided to cover these topics together under the nebulous title "Relationships". Our reasons were many. First we did not want to produce a magazine where the theme would be centered on a topic which some portion of our readers might find oppressive or alienating or to accentuate the "gay/straight" split. Second we feared an issue on living with men might become a series of personal solutions that did not adequately deal with the difficulty of being a feminist in a traditionally oppressive situation.

We decided to focus on feminism and how it affected our relationships--with lovers, those we live with communally, neighbors, friends, children, etc. At first this proved very abstract, as we tried to isolate the feminist aspect out of our lives and relationships. But gradually it became clear that there is no part of our relating that has not been touched and changed by feminism. Most profoundly it has affected our relationship to ourselves. Feminism has meant working to be our best and most honest self--to love ourselves as women and as whole persons. This issue reflects the daily struggles and triumphs that come from being a feminist woman in a world that isn't changing fast enough.

An Ongoing Beginning

There is no beginning to my passion. How I relate to my feelings and how I fit myself into an all too often apathetic and/or hostile environment is more than difficult, but so necessary that I hope I can reach out with success. Take the present situation: me, my energy, my not too meek approach, an intense aggressive style. Put these in a woman's body and watch me pack 'em in as fast as I back 'em off - people, that is. I feel lonely a lot, apart from all the world, a misfit.

As for who I am and how I am dealing with my life, I'm attempting to present myself vividly and hopefully, without alienation. This is such a hard task for this disease of our world affects me at almost any given moment. It causes inside me a fire which can never burn out. It hurts me to watch women cage themselves with "I can not" because society cages us. Then to lock ourselves in from the inside too. I am nearly daily confronted with this attitude, which kills before birth.

And so when one of my five male land partners needed help carrying a wood cookstove across his swinging bridge, he and three other males quickly took their spots at the corners and let me know no more help was needed. But when carrying it across the hard part and on the home stretch another male showed up, they all shuffled to make room for him to help at the bidding of the one who caught a swift hand from me against his body, in my anger and frustration. Action netting nothing but some relief. Or the day I was pitching in a softball game and the batter hit a pop up not ten feet from the mound, and as I stood there waiting to get the ball, I caught not the ball but an elbow to the side of my face from a six foot and then some male who came all the way from his first base position to catch my ball for me and give me a knot on my head and a subsequent black eye in exchange. Action nets damage and resentment.

You can't build your house yourself and be a woman around here and I imagine it's the same not just here or there. So I said, "Oh yeah? Gimme a hammer and I will do it." And little did I know where my path would lead me besides to the land of smashed thumbs. I have gone far beyond the independent, rebellious no-name feeling I've had my entire life to a place of realization, but I am still unable to feel as free as I want, even though I have come through in search of that freedom.

In the year preceding my thirtieth celebration of birth, I built the house I designed, rather an amazing feat considering drafting and carpentry were nothing but words to me before I thrust myself into their realm. No,



I didn't go running off to school somewhere for the theory but jumped into practical trial and error methods with a great deal of sweat and frustration, with mistakes a daily reality. Advice on structural soundness, etc. came when I wanted it from a friend experienced in these matters. The finished product (is it ever really finished?) turns out to be a strong, very unusual house which grew from me, all of me - mind, body and spirit - with windows looking everywhere. I could not accurately relate the feeling gained from this experience without writing endless pages. The response from those outside me was as varied as any rainbow. The one constant result though has been that I have been placed in a special category: I am no longer just Kevin. It surely makes me feel fine to hear praise from people about my house; it hurts me to watch mouths drop in disbelief that a mere woman could accomplish so much, or that look from too many men which is downright hostile, so resentful that I would dare attempt to enter

their territory.

The pain I constantly feel with little relief is women seated behind men in life endeavoring to make them happy as a life's purpose because they know no other way or won't even try, saying men are more coordinated, stronger, more capable and on and on. Always I argue, no! Can't you see the programming? Feel the self defeat? Often I get lip service and just as often I come away disappointed and longing for a sister who is strong of mind, body, and spirit, who doesn't want to close off any avenues, who wants to try everything. Sometimes I wonder where you are. I know you are there, but I can't touch you or be touched by you. So often I feel I am standing so alone. It seems as though an endless amount of energy goes into defending my position, proving my ability, recognizing and pointing out all atrocities, great and small, performed on me, all women, and all too often feeling hostile and resentful. Sometimes I think I am crazy and I doubt myself and slide downwards, numbing myself on the way, and only woman comfort and understanding can pull me back to the easy place where I am accepting of all that I am and am not so I can just lay back and let the world and all the life forces in it be.

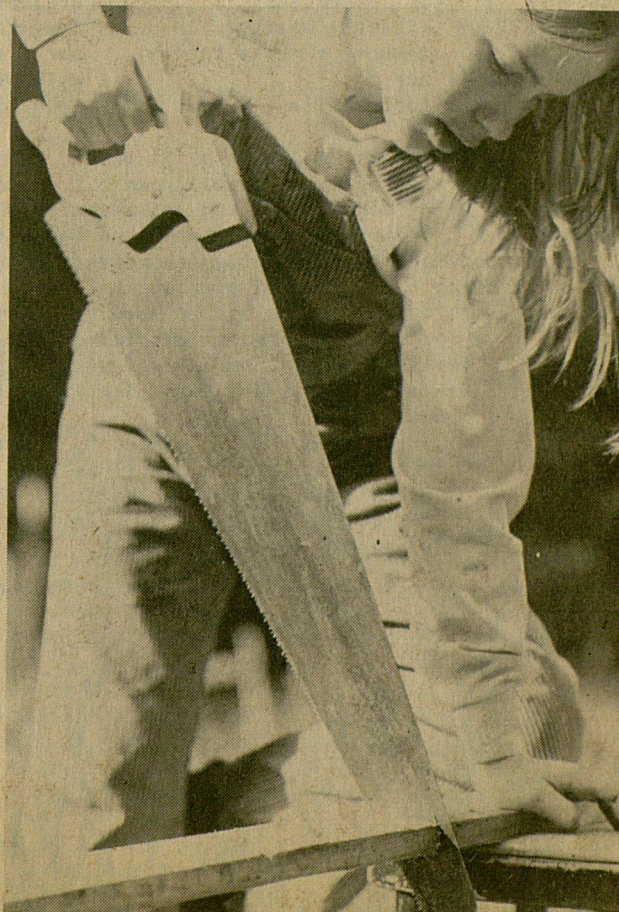
There's no answer in front of me. I'm simply trapped with nothing to do but resign myself to my incarceration and work within the confines. So angered am I by this and with no absolute recourse but to go off and be alone that frequently I am finding myself wanting to be alone, especially wanting to get away from men. There are so few women (around me) to turn to that often I find myself giving solace and comfort to myself. It's not as though I don't get love from women; I do, and I can't survive inside myself without it, but more often than not these women are living for their men first and consequently are not free to give of themselves to another woman. Not to mention the fact that my intense feelings about men and their unfair dealings certainly doesn't endear me. Also another status quo situation, that of the unit where two people join forces, form their exclusive situation and proclaim their absolute allegiance to one another offends me. My objection is that in making an alliance such as this, one narrows to one person only the absolute right to intimacy. It seems as though people can have so much more by being willing to try other paths.

And here I sit with all male land partners in an area in Oregon where the logging industry is overwhelming: men in the woods planting trees, cutting them down, clearing; men working in the mills, driving the trucks and the women are generally the wives at home taking care of the children, meals, maintaining for men. They are just not out there to take care of themselves or to worry about their freedom; unconsciously they do not even want to be free because it means a whole new style and responsibility and apparently is not worth the effort. A deep frustration engulfs

me at this writing for I want there to be a new reality where women and men can co-exist and allow each other to be free. Nothing could be simpler or more impossible all at once. What I want for my own life is not to put anyone I love above anyone, male or female. I want to be able to give of myself as much as I can and yes, I want to get love too.

As for the men around me, when I am not consciously zeroing in on every detail some are good friends to me, companions. But whenever I look I see they want me sexually and that I am dealt with in many ways as a female, that is, in the classic oppressive ways. I explode and spew a very unpleasant stream of verbal heaviness their way. I become so intense, I feel as though I am fighting for my survival, my life, and that I must come across with everything I have. I'm sure there are times when I am very clearly over-reacting too, yet is a hard thing to be in battle and I feel like almost wherever I go or whatever I am doing that the sexist consciousness is there too. I have a choice though; I can let it all slide knowing that if I focus on people just being people I can feel pretty high if I am feeling positive. I can rise above and know in my heart who I am, that I am always trying, being honest, and that I can "do anything this time around."

Now, when the kid in the grocery store
continued



wants to help me carry my load, I can be angry or accept that his offer is as innocent as the guy in the gas station who wants to open my oil can for me, or the man at the lumber company who offers to load my boards or nails or tarpaper or whatever. Innocent so long as being unconscious can be passed over. One thing is certain though, if I were to allow these men to do for me I would be furthering their opinion, conscious or not, that women must have their hand held through this life. This gives me no opportunity to take a break in the out there. Just as I feel that I cannot use a flush toilet, for the world needs its water. What I can do is so limited. It takes an incredible energy output, but it is unquestionably worth it in my own mind. To be thought of as incapable, weak, lesser than, hurts me immeasurably. The roles and the role playing are always a present reality. Then there is my constant personal reality in which I am going about the everyday business of life with my role as mother, cook, housebuilder and

maintainer, handywoman, gardener, wood chopper, chicken protectress, mechanic, laborer, photographer, sometime lover and/or friend, whatever, whoever, the everyday me who works hard many long hours at my endless list of chores, creative and otherwise, the me who gets tremendous satisfaction at working just because it feels good to accomplish my dreams not just to prove myself to a world set against me doing for myself.

I'm not here to run down my everyday life, yet I wanted to tell you how my very conscious feminist consciousness is affecting me and my life. It is hard. I have not been handed any rewards for my efforts to free myself. It's lonely out here, too often. Sometimes when I know I am a crusader and that what the essence of me wants is to be provider of freedom, I wonder why I am just a plain everyday person steeped in my own daily survival, unable to don wings. I can't stop trying, I won't stop. We all will be free. Yes...

♀

COUNTRY WOMEN'S POETRY

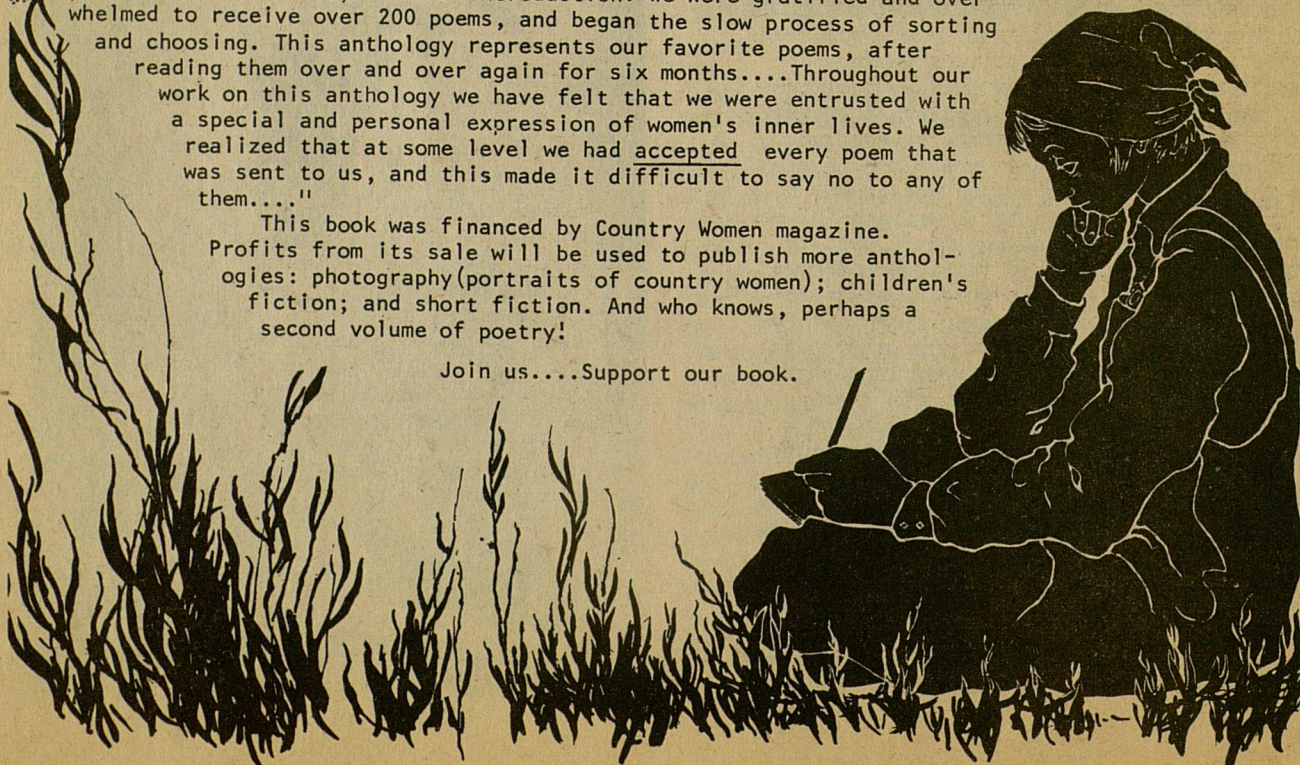
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The first Country Women anthology is now available. Edited by Christina, Marnie, and Jennifer from Harris, it marks a breakthrough in many ways: our first book, our first close working relationship with women from outside our community. We came to know each other through the process of creating this book.

With poems and graphics by 71 women, this book takes us more deeply into our shared lives as country feminists. It has grown out of our collective culture, through a collective process. As Marnie says in the Introduction: "We were gratified and overwhelmed to receive over 200 poems, and began the slow process of sorting and choosing. This anthology represents our favorite poems, after reading them over and over again for six months.... Throughout our work on this anthology we have felt that we were entrusted with a special and personal expression of women's inner lives. We realized that at some level we had accepted every poem that was sent to us, and this made it difficult to say no to any of them...."

This book was financed by Country Women magazine. Profits from its sale will be used to publish more anthologies: photography (portraits of country women); children's fiction; and short fiction. And who knows, perhaps a second volume of poetry!

Join us....Support our book.



MOVING



ON

Feminism! Is that the name of the drive that has ruthlessly swept me along and dumped me into this ocean called Freedom! Ah, my dear, you followed your star and Feminism said "right on, sister". And certainly I didn't join the flow casually. I saw the danger up ahead. No wonder I went so slowly, fearfully, agonizingly.

I could have continued like the other suburban mothers whose husbands stoically, though with repressed resentment, commuted four hours a day to jobs they hated, but were resigned to do forever. Who brought home the money and uncomplainingly shared it with the family, all the time flashing on their unfulfilled boyish dreams of sports cars, travel, etc., impossible now because of dependents.

And I would have continued spending my doles knowing full well that I was fully earning it for the services I was performing, but always feeling a certain amount of guilt in reaction to the attitude with which it was given.

And I could have continued providing a stable home for my kids out of which they would have stomped their way to independence, using me, as always, as their ladder. And I would be trying to hold together a group of individuals with different lifestyles into some semblance of a family (based on the traditional definition of that) and thereby sacrificing the one easiest to sacrifice, namely me and my right to my lifestyle. I did that for 18 years and I could have continued.

But my own guiding light drove me, and Feminism gave me the credo, the encouragement and many reminders to develop myself as an individual apart from the role of wife and mother. That sounded good to me and I went on the trip. I convinced my husband to quit his job and we brought our family of six to San Francisco and moved into a warehouse community. My far reaching goal was to break up

the nuclear family, with its destructive interdependencies and increase the freedom of us all.

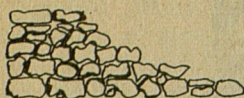
It worked, the children had many adults to relate to and I was freed from home maintenance and the role of sole provider of love, comfort, attention and food. Seeing myself not needed, I pushed on in the direction that was compelling me and moved to the country with two of my boys.

There I rediscovered my "thing" - Indian Dance. My art form to encourage, develop, provide for, nurture, sacrifice for. Up until then I was the only non-artist in the family. I began to sacrifice their needs for my needs. The scanty family income was going for my tuition. I moved back to the city to study dance full time. The feminists said "Do it, Diane." The children, some in the country with a friend, some in the city with their father, learned to shop and cook and do their own laundry. I became less and less needed.

My God! What have I done! Feminism - please support me now when I need to believe you were really right. Could I have done more for my family? Should I have done more? Did I have any more to give?

My feminist consciousness brought about the dissolution of my family. By removing myself from oppressed roles, I found my entire role was obsolete. I had nothing to give them and they had nothing to give me. So I moved to a small commune in Berkeley where I can be the way I want to be, with people who share my lifestyle. I have become young again - almost like picking up where I left off 22 years ago. I'm responsible for myself. Can I handle it?

I'm developing myself as an individual now, devoting my whole time to my dancing and music. Doing my trip. Riding my bicycle around Berkeley, free as I can be. I love it. . . I think I do . . . ♀



BUILDING NEW FOUNDATIONS

We are seven women involved in a women's collective in the hills of West Virginia. Right now our physical existence is in question. But the changes, the caring, the involvement will not stop even if we separate. The collective is unfinished, like the log cabin we began - perhaps both will be continued when some of us come back from making money elsewhere, perhaps not. We had hoped to establish a women's collective that would be "permanent" - not forever, but for years - a place where women could come and gather strength together, learn and grow and do. If it dissolves we will be sad. But it has been that gathering and strengthening place for the seven of us, this past year, and for that we are grateful and glad.

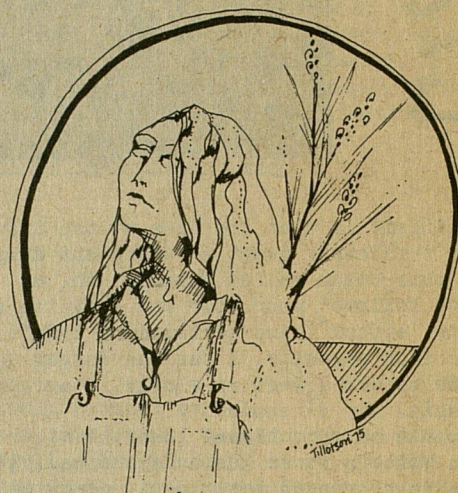
watching the sun rise
out of the female earth
and sink again
into the mountain woman

we the women
breathing the world
into day and night

The collective was born so unexpectedly! Four of us - Sally, Melanie, Janet, Anita - picked apples together as a women's crew in Vermont during Fall, 1972. All of us were uncertain about what we would do afterwards. Near the end of picking, Nita and Janet were talking to a friend about the peacemaker land trust in West Virginia. He mentioned that there were no people living on the second section of the trust, 30 acres with fields and woods but no house. Janet turned to Nita and said, "What about a women's collective on the peacemaker land trust?" FAR OUT!! And we drove home and said it to Sal and Mel, hugging and shouting and jumping up and down! But still it was fantasy, talking about perfection and what it would be like, not expecting it to really exist. Sally said, "Are you serious? because I am if you are." And it started getting more and more real.

We began to talk about what we would have to give up, as well as how beautiful it would be. Mel (with the most definite plans among us) would give up her winter living alone, playing music, reading, painting, and pruning apple trees. She had been looking forward to that space, after years of living in groups where artistic creativity got lost among physical and emotional community needs. Sally would give up her plans to go West, toward the Colorado mountains - but she'd gain a certain place to be, a place that promised to be good. Anita would leave Maine, where she had wanted

to stay and farm forever. Janet would also leave Maine and the man she'd lived with for two years - but she'd gain the space apart from him and space with women that she'd been coming to need.



We talked while we rocked by the wood stove in the evenings in our attic, or while we picked black walnuts and watercress (for us) or apples (for the grower). We talked about each of us building her own private space - a tree-house for Nita, a yurt for Mel - in addition to building the common house. We looked forward to the long growing season, which turned out to be so wet and changeable in the spring that planting times were close to New England's.

We decided we needed a special meeting to talk out plans, fears, fantasies and expectations. So one incredible indian summer day Sally and Mel brought the meeting to order by rolling down the hill together, and we gathered in a green field under blue sky and yellow sun. Carving spoons and knitting and weaving sunshine through our fingers, we lay in the grass and demanded, "Tell us the story about the collective!" So Nita told the story: "Chapter one, Sally and Nita and Janet and Mel go to West Virginia and start a women's collective! Chapter two, Mel and Sally and Janet work in the women's jail. Chapter three, Nita and Mel plant a garden. Chapter four, Sally and Mel build a house. Chapter five, Janet and Sally go to jail. Chapter six, Mel and Nita free their sisters! Chapter seven, Nita and Sally and Mel and Janet harvest the garden and build the common house!"

That was the fantasy: that we would be both personal and political, involved in the

earth and involved in changing this jailhouse political system, that the sun would always shine on green fields where we dreamed and created together, and that we would live happily ever after.

We knew it wouldn't really be entirely that way. We talked of our fears and fantasies of West Virginia - snakes and hostile Appalachian neighbors and isolation from our friends and roots up north.

Some of our fears came true, some didn't. Instead we faced troubles we had never expected. Our neighbors turned out to be absolutely fantastic. They brought us jam and pickles - both to make us feel at home and to give them a chance to ask questions and check us out. We were a bit nervous as we offered them our apple-boxes for chairs, but we were glad too that they checked us out so openly, and we were overwhelmed at their warmth and acceptance. They offered us dead wood to cut off their property, when we moved in in the middle of winter with a woodstove and no wood. One man showed us the spring on the land trust, that his brother had used when he owned the land years ago. Our landpeople, an older West Virginia couple who rented us a house two miles from the land trust, traded us an old pick-up truck for an electric sewing machine.

That gave us a vehicle to haul manure and wood and to travel the long rural distances. Although none of us were fundamental Baptist-Methodists (we all have Quaker backgrounds), we went to the church, largely because that was the only frequent community function, the only gathering where we could meet people on their terms, share in their ways, not just expect them to accept ours.

We never saw a poisonous snake, though we carried two snake bite kits with us and had two handbooks on reptiles and amphibians. We did see a beneficent blacksnake (they keep away copperheads, people say) sunning on a log when we took down an old log cabin in the woods. (A neighbor gave us the cabin free and helped us haul the logs out on his lumber truck too!)

We never visited the women's federal or state jails, about 25 miles from us, even once. We never worked with organizing mining families or forming a food co-op or answering any of the directly political needs so present in the area. The physical details of establishing the place and surviving with little money overwhelmed us: preparing the land; planting the garden; taking down the old cabin and beginning to rebuild it on our land; repairing and caring for the vehicles.

Each of us was lonely at times. Each of us had needs that the others didn't recognize and respond to, and after our honeymoon at apple-picking that was particularly painful. We had difficulty in confronting anger and conflict among us. We didn't share as a group so fully and easily as we had at apple-picking, in spite of repeated efforts at group meetings, work, shared free space.

There was Sally's feeling that though she

was learning to do functional things that have been men's territory, she was regressing in emotional sharing and communication, due to the group's lack of sharing. There was Anita's feeling that we didn't finish so many things we started, and Janet's feeling that we set ourselves such lists and expectations that we lost joy in being and in doing what we did.

The feelings of loneliness and the difficulty we had in dealing with whatever tensions arose among us were certainly intensified by our isolation - isolation from friends and groups up north, and the even greater isolation of not knowing anyone who was like us, with whom we felt we shared feelings, political views and life-style. Our neighbors were friendly, and we found that we shared far more in ideas and life-style than we might have expected -- but it wasn't enough. There were a number of "back-to-the-land" couples and communities in the area, but neither the men nor the women shared our feelings about women and about breaking down sex roles - they accepted cooking and babies as "women's work," chopping wood and mechanics as "men's work" - so we found distance where

continued



we had hoped for sharing and support. Eventually as we met a few people who began to become close friends, the sense of isolation lessened, but it is still a large impetus toward the collective dissolving.

Three new women, Diane, Gigi, and Shā (Mel's sister) came separately to the collective in the summer. The larger number relieved some of the emotional weight; there was more variety among us, more different kinds of sharing and different people to answer different needs.

We planted and harvested a beautiful garden. We took down the old log barn and built foundations and flooring and prepared the logs to go up again - but we haven't raised the new log house. We learned mountain music, played dulcimer and fiddle and auto-harp and guitar together. We ate wild foods and learned new ones from our neighbors who ate them too - "creasy greens" is one of the favorites. Two of us fell in love with each other, and it is a brightness touching all of us. We swam in the river in the summer, sometimes with a pick-up load of neighbor children. We had surprise parties for our landpeople's birthdays, complete with home-made ice cream; and they had surprise parties - complete with vegetarian dinner! - for ours.

We wrestled each other and hauled wood and manure and cabin logs and ground flour in a hand-mill and felt our muscles grow stronger. We fixed our old Studebaker pick-up "box-car berth" and our red VW bug "red emma" and later our rattly station wagon, "purple louise." Sally built a beautiful work-table and hung our tools above it, and we grew in skill and confidence with tools and woodwork and carpentry and mechanics. Sometimes we were lonely or angry and estranged from each other, and sometimes we loved each other and watched the sun set into the mountain woman and the dark come while we sat by the grape vines.

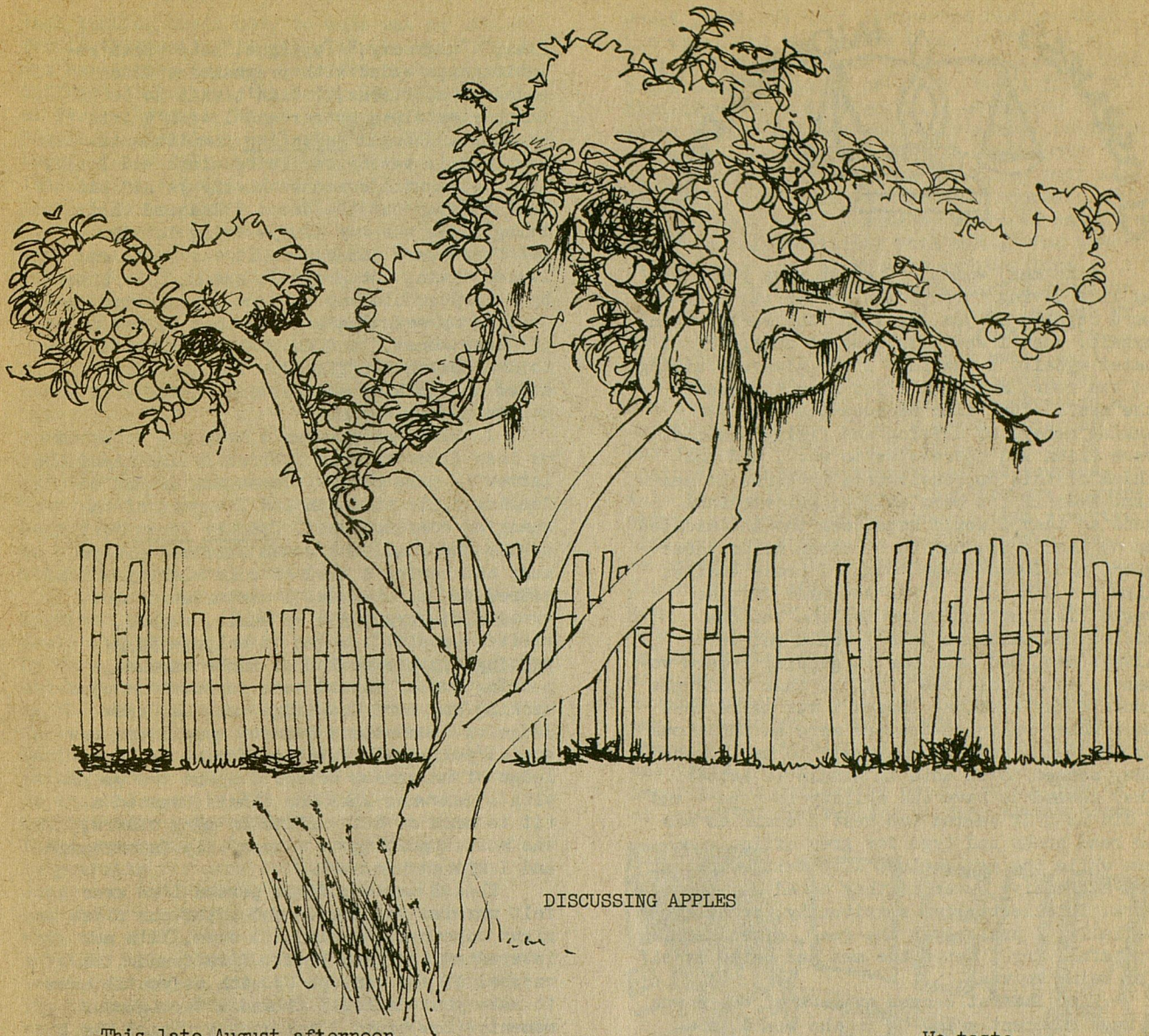
West Virginia is so poor that we have all gone broke and into debt trying to survive there financially. We are all leaving at least for the winter to make money other places. Some of us are picking oranges together in Florida; others are pruning apple trees in New England. Two of us are living with the men we lived with before. Maybe some of us will come

back in the spring to camp on the land and finish the cabin to live in. Maybe the isolation and lack of any way to make money will mean that none of us come back. Maybe we will gather again, or some of us, in another place, maybe in the north where so many of our ties are. Maybe other women will come to grow their own collective on the land here.

It has been a good place. We have grown stronger in so many ways. Perhaps we could also have grown gentler than we did; perhaps we could have better overcome the tyranny of daily details and physical work. But we have shared and overcome fears, given each other space to be and grow without the judgment and criticism and inner and outer bindings of mixed society. The collective has freed so much in us. We hope it will continue as a physical space for us and for other women, but if not it will still continue as a free space that has grown within and among us - a space that we share with other women in collectives, alone, in marriages, wherever women are struggling and growing to be free.

♀





DISCUSSING APPLES

This late August afternoon
 We sit on the terrace at Druid Heights
 Silent or quietly talking
 Savoring apples the
 Laden tree drops to our hands.

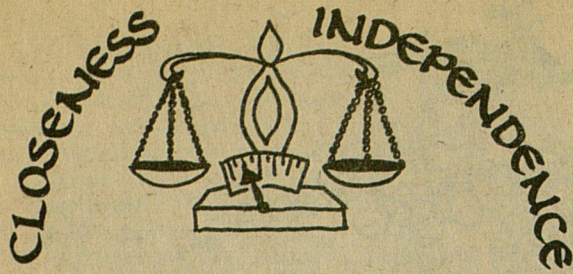
"Take and eat" -- we think we hear it --
 "Eat of the Tree
 "Whose roots are in your heart,
 "In the earth we share, in
 "The living Void."

We hold the fruit: satin skin
 Cool to touch, breathe the scent
 Of the twentieth summer
 Since the planting
 Reluctant to mar
 Globed perfection with our teeth.

"Take and eat--" the flushed beauty urges,
 "Ripeness is all. Taste harvest
 "Of your years
 "That the seed fall."

We taste
 Harvest: this instant
 At the edge of green, on
 The threshold of mellow --
 Apple's perfection:
 Taste frost, rain, sun,
 White blaze of blossom,
 And celebration of the bees.
 Taste labor of lady beetles
 Keeping the tree clean.

And taste from this tree
 Whose sapling frailty our hands,
 Hoping, placed and nurtured,
 The Knowledge beyond knowledge
 Of our inseparable being --
 That you have eaten of me. tree,
 As I eat of you
 And we are fed by all that is.



Like many women, I spent many years of my life living through men, believing them more capable of dealing with "the world" than myself. When I was conscious of doing this I hated myself. I saw that I was always trailing in the rear, and that I put many burdens on the men I lived with because the world of making money, of driving and fixing vehicles, were alien and oppressive to me. I did not think of this oppressiveness in terms of sexism. Even if I'd been able to get the same jobs as they I would have been too intimidated to do them - you had to be tough to do those jobs, and I was never tough, I broke easily, like a china doll. I was not made for the world. That my employers for the tedious office and waitress jobs I could get were always men, and that men in general regard women in such positions as dirt, this I did not consciously examine. Though I was aware that most money-making endeavors were as obnoxious to the men I knew as they were to me, somehow they seemed to be able to handle it better. They seemed to have the ability to cope - and I did not. It seemed the best I could do was to read books and type for grey office managers while the men I lived with felt competent and aggressive, even if they hated having to work. Intellectually, spiritually, sexually, socially, I trailed in the rear, often feeling spiteful, for I hated the men and hated myself for being so weak.

When I first became aware that there was a huge movement going on in the world, a woman's movement, I was almost 29, had been living in the woods for five years, hiding out, vomiting my soul onto paper, flipping out, and finally getting paid for being myself - totally, irrevocably "disabled" for paid employment in the existing culture. It was the first time in my life that I had enough money to survive without dependence on a housemate or parents. (Being dependent on the state seemed less ugly since the state had robbed me and others for so long in taxes, in land, in public schooling which makes people into machine slaves. I was determined to overcome all guilt feelings for taking that money and to take it as long as I needed until I could find work meaningful to me for which I could be paid. But I was still emotionally and sexually dependent on men. The last two relationships I had which lasted a year or so each had been extreme acting-out of my self-destructive patterns. I hated myself for being jealous and possessive, for being "demanding," for wanting committed relationships. I hated myself for being "un-

free," "ungroovy," "uptight," etc. Both relationships ended with pregnancies which ended in abortions. I didn't want to be another mateless mother and I wasn't into communes. I began demanding commitments. I saw that it was better to be alone and lonely than to be with someone who always had his foot halfway out the door. I learned that being alone was not always being lonely. But there were times when it was awful and I lapsed again, got pregnant again, this time by a 21 year old who told me one morning, rejecting my sexual advances, that he was tired of "easy women," and who balked at taking me to the doctor's office for the abortion. I ended up hitching and getting a ride with an understanding woman.

I think feminism as a movement affected me less directly than indirectly and maybe the latter is more potent. Women all around me feeling their strength and I a part of the changing consciousness. Country Women just across the road, the women involved always busy and having a kind of cold clarity which scared and excited me. I masturbated alot, wrote alot, practiced my music, walked, visited people. I began to believe in my writing, in the wealth of inner knowledge pouring out of me and onto paper. I stopped smoking and more knowledge emerged, knowledge of connections between myself and the social/political structure around me, knowledge of universal being. I spent two weeks with a man who, like the others, wanted a tit to suck on but, unlike so many others, was not supporting me financially in exchange and I kicked him out.

Then I met the first person I've ever felt married to. I proposed after our first night together. "Listen," I said, "I'm not interested in 'free love'. I've found it unfree. If you want to be with me you'll have to make your choice." It was a vertiginous moment. (How could I ask such a thing? Was I truly worth it? Was it a fair choice for anyone to make?) He said yes. Of course we talked about it again and again. He had had similar experiences. He too had been hurt by women who wanted only a piece of him. We agreed that if either of us met someone someday whom we wanted very much that we would tell each other about it and see how it related to what had been happening between us; see how we both felt about it then. In the course of a year and several months together we have found ourselves much less prone to sexual "rushes" with people, and have seen those rushes at times as old ego-conquest patterns. We can appreciate and truly love someone and see in her/him a beautiful sexual/life energy we can touch and share but it doesn't seem to take a genital direction. There is a completeness between us on all levels which I have never known with anyone and sex with others seems extraneous. At the same time communication with others seems clearer, more honest, deeper. Our sexuality has become less orgasm-oriented. We noticed after a long time

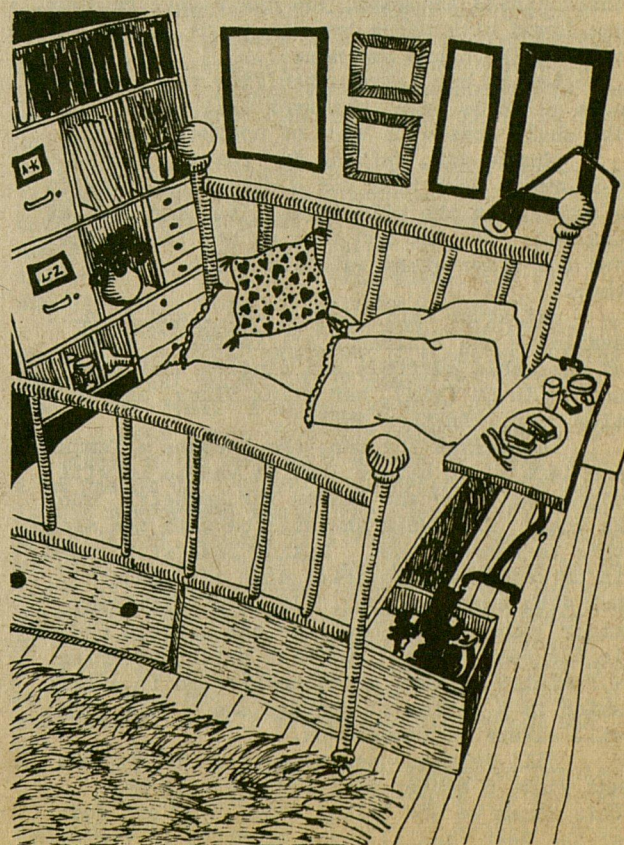
that pushing one's body to come was no better for it than eating to get pleasure when bored. Sex has gotten deeper, less frequent and more diffused throughout the body. Sex is occasional fare; the daily bread: massage, kissing, hugging, caressing, nurturing and being nurtured. I had felt starved in previous relationships for this "non-sexual" contact. Instead I had gotten unsatisfying sex. Psychologists I read said the things I craved were oral gratification (wanting to kiss more than fuck), "mothering" (wanting to be held and stroked and petted), etc. For the first long months of our relationships I marvelled continually at the mutuality of our desire to do these things, and at the pleasure of lying naked together whenever we wanted. This I had been denied previously by men who could only fuck, but could not do that too well as it is really impossible to separate sex and love (affection) if either are to be deep. I found that security and depth went together. And was happy that our "contract" made it easy for us to embrace others physically and psychically with little or no jealousy.

At first we read much feminist literature together in bed: Millett's Sexual Politics, Gould's First Sex, etc. and he found a book by Marc Feigen-Fasteau called The Male Machine which I recommend to everyone. My mate told me that he couldn't kiss his father past a certain young age, that most men feel inaccessible to him emotionally; that he used to think vaginas ugly and would never lick them. He started a men's C-R group which was good but had only a few members and fell apart. There are quite a few good men who are quietly yearning for more intimate contact with other men (emotional, psychic, physical), men who are not homosexual but are unhappy with the usual back-slapping variety of straight male communication. And if men do not touch each other, if all emotion and sensuality is seen as "feminine" and therefore weak, then men will never learn to lose the hard and woman-exploiting image they have learned to survive (see The Male Machine) and women will suffer from this along with men (to say nothing of children). The woman's movement changes men through the women they meet, and especially through the women they live with. The men changed by women can reach out and change other men (and women, too). For a time I complained to my mate that I had little support from him when men were being obnoxious around me. But, in learning to respect women in their struggle and seeing the struggle as his own, he has learned to speak out and now often says something to men when they express sexist ideas and attitudes. He feels crippled by his conditioning to be unfeeling, externalized and invulnerable. He is learning to cry, and also to mother me sometimes as he likes to be mothered.

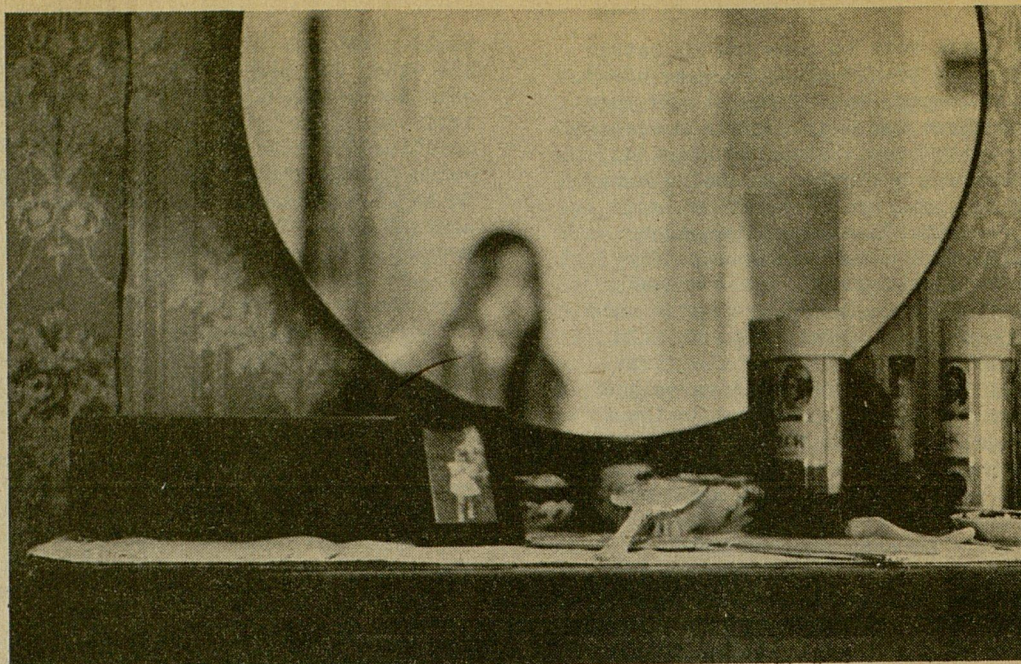
Sometimes too, he reflects the sexism of the culture and usually admits it. For a long time he made transparent excuses about not attending to all but token housework. But he

would point out that I expected him to check the water and oil on the truck and to do all auto mechanics. I know couples who accept this traditional division of labor, but I find it limiting for with it go whole attitudes towards myself and men and whole energy patterns. So he is learning to deal with his blocks against housework and I am grappling with auto mechanics and other "mechanical" chores.

We hope to live someday where we can have separate self-contained work and living space on the same land so that we can be close enough to be together when we want and yet be able to retreat at any time for as long as we like, and be out of visual and auditory range (important to us as writers and musicians). I think that self-defined, self-controlled spaces are essential to self-discovery and a sense of autonomy. This is not a matter of having enough hours to be alone - which is what many otherwise traditionalist couples tell me is all they need - but to have a space which is mine and mine alone so that creative impulses, or simply the need to center, can be attended to in solitude at any time. This, I have found, after years of questioning how much I need for myself, is the only reasonable solution to the problem of delicately balancing the desirable closeness and oneness of a union of life with another and the equally essential need for apartness, autonomy, independence. We also hope for a home where there are already flourishing women's and men's movements. At this stage in our separate and collective evolution(s) this is as important for feeling at home as are trees. ♀



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behold her at 21 the aspiring actress shot down in her career by the ineffectualness of the heterosexualmess jelly behold her large belly, downing the aisle to her roommate's clanky rendition of the wedding march, all 22 years of her, growing up, accepting responsibilities bitter tea with stars in her eyes.

she got her man the friend who became a husband because the belly got big and the child kicked and said, you can't give me away. she lived with these two for years now she can't talk to him any more...

behold her leave after five years of madness to be free, whatever that means the child goes with her, of course.

thumbs out, waiting for romance and adventure to take them for a ride, they come to a commune in the wilderness. see her look at the men. see the men look at her in welcome. see the other women watching. she ignores them.

man after man, looking for...and then... available and desirable all in one. tired of desirable marrieds and singles that were not quite it (him), her fling flung, she settles down. Another child.

she leaves the man, she becomes a feminist. she left a man before, but it was to be with other men. now she leaves for herself. who is that? She knows she will be with men again, this is unquestioned. Making love with women in threesies and foursies does not connect her with homosexuality. It is a relatively minor curiosity. She sees her sisters caught in the same traps. But this point, becoming a feminist, a very great conversion in a life which is a series of conversions - this point will always be remembered.

jill johnston sez a feminist is a woman who wants a better deal from her old man this woman we are talkin about, she got some of the best (deals). she excelled in feminism.

all her men said so. they gave her a lotta strokes for it. she exhibited much control in her simultaneous (heterosexual) relationship scene. she asked them to go to bed with her.

she was first and foremost among the women in claiming the sacred right to fuck any man she pleased. She had a lotta other gripes too, being a mother and communal housewife. she got together with the other women. and slowly, ponderously timidly, and then angrily, and pushily and hesitantly timidly and then more sure of themselves quietly and strongly and then timidly and then strongly and then angrily and then...etc...they began to air these grievances and lo and behold things began to change.

it was a feminist revolution on a very small scale, an isolated wilderness commune that didn't do anything else except be itself; and to be concrete, yes men take care of children, yes women run the farm (sometimes), yes, and use chainsaws and welding equipment and big trucks, and they can fix them too, and the men cook and all people sleep in their own private beds most of the time except when guests and if that's your definition of what a couple isn't then none are.

Especially she wasn't, there were many lovers. at one point there did not even seem to be a mr. number one. it was a very nice headspace that lasted a little while. they were just all friends.

the one thing that seemed to be out of balance was that all her lovers were men but one. and that sister/feminist/best friend/lover was not the one that got the most energy.

so, after dreaming of it a while, she followed the women. now she does not live with men any more.

consciousness rising, what's your sign? well, i'll tell you. these words i called myself (and more i won't mention) before i be-

came a femmin-ist: daughter, mother, wife... an intellectual, head, hippy, on the PATH. Now witch, dyke, amazon, socialist, lesbian, femmin-ist, more. Still i am mother daughter. Still i sing, i am a dancer. Now i play instruments also, outside my body, my first and best instrument.

but i am no longer wife. she is now a lover of women.

we has gone through a lotta changes, we femmin-ists. Smushed monogames. Multi-pile reel-ationships. Transmissions. Wheelbarrows. Workgloves. Pipe wrenches. Coming out.

oh, yes...coming out, in the country. within a hetero commune. a bunch of us, but not such a big bunch and not so bunchy, actually, though some were loud, pushy and uppity gay revolution, namely myself.

and then there is/was relating to bodies in different ways. herbs, fasting, yoga, this and that diet, bowel tonics, mucus. pain in the muscles, in the lower back, tensions held in, anger, hurt.

starting with living on the land, changes never stopped. starting with feminism, they kept on. starting with coming out, they reached new levels of intensity. starting with living-with-women, there is more happening than every before.

living-with-women is part of the mistress plan. for two years she sez. That's a fulfilled enough length of time to know if i don't wanna come back. After coming out, is there coming back? Sometimes you can't go home again.

how is it living with just women?

one nice thing is that my friends don't go home with men at night, and i don't either. another is that we do body work and releasing emotions and tensions and hurts together at least once a week and sometimes more. one hard thing is that i don't know if these women will love me forever because i've only been here 4 months (Do i know that anyone will love me forever?)

i'm a big bad dyke separatist now and i'm still the same old one i always was. just me. she. one of us. a woman. i change, everyone around me changes. women i don't know are changing too. there is movement going on. feminism has made a woman out of me.

as i said, i am following us. i have followed and walked with men a long time. i am trying to balance how straight i was with this new let's be heard. While i am as separate from men as i have ever been, i am quite more together with women than i have ever been. Why else do you think i would do this? There are no door knobs. Women who live without men can get it together and be very competent; I have a lotta friends who are competent, but it is not one of the things i am famous for. And i am living with a lot of women who share this propensity, on rented land now, not with the very competent and wonderful women that i shared so much with on that commune/family/home i knew for five years, yes five. This is not a choice, but a consequence of how much painful it was for me to see my friends and myself go home with men

at night. I also choose not to live with brothers because i do not know if (there is any such thing or if) i could tell a true brother if i saw one. My heterosexual bias did not make me very objective when it came to judging who is and who is not my brother. I think i can do better now.

But about the door knobs. There are none. Sometimes when you live with men there are some. But if you live with women, there may be a period when there are no doorknobs and the toilet gets plugged for days and no one fixes the transmission clink either. It may even be a very long period. But what i want to say about doorknobs is that i don't think there is much danger that we will never have them again, if we need them. I think us women will supply our needs; we will learn. And we will examine what our needs are, and change them, if need be. Different groups of women certainly would have different needs.

Homosexuals are not homogeneous. Some might want to always have doorknobs and some of them might want to have feelings meetings and some of them might want to have land and some of them might want the whole kit and kaboodle, and say, why don't i fix the door knob? Maybe she'll do it...who? To tell you the truth, i don't want to fix the door knob i just want to have a door knob.

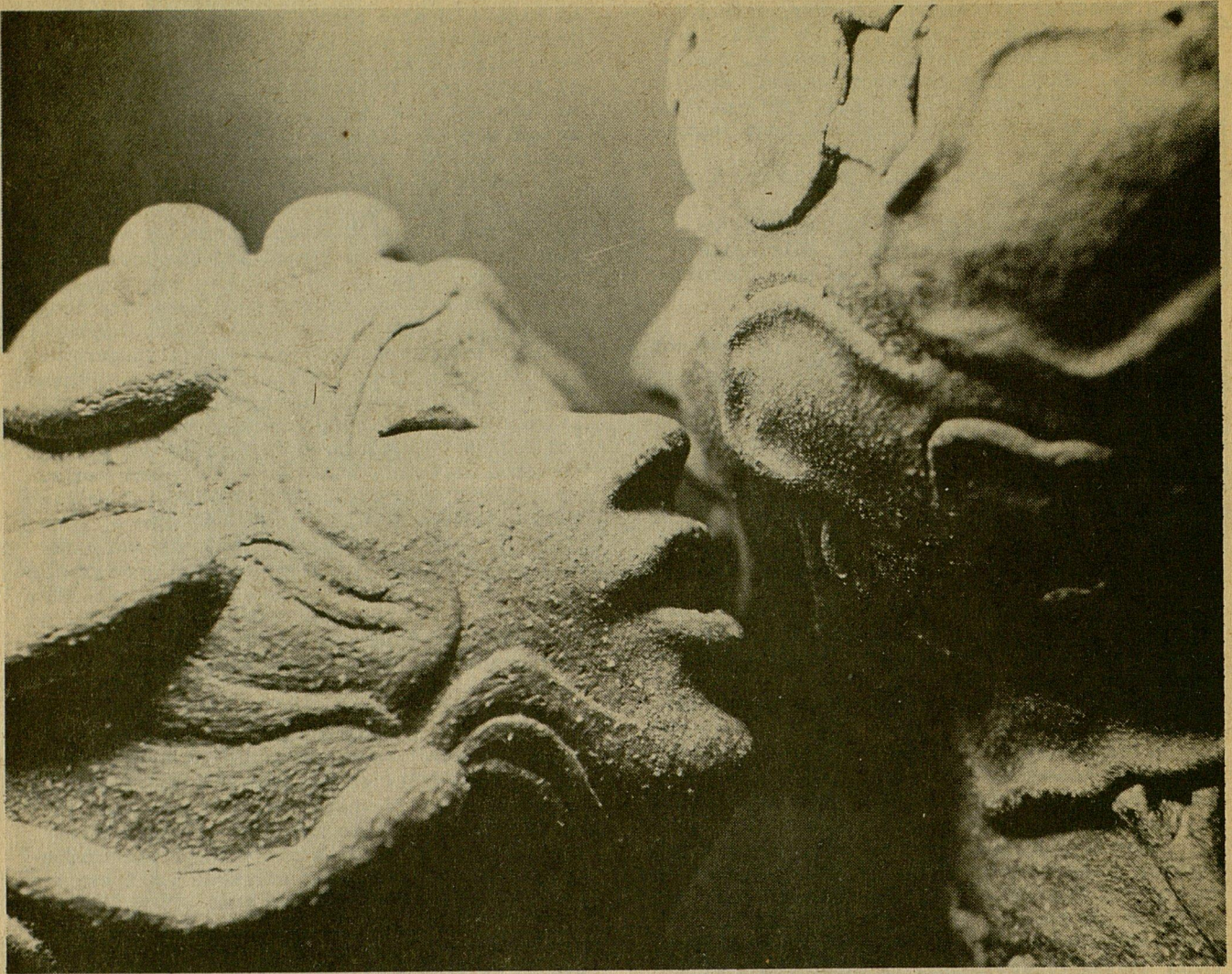
Did you get the point about door knobs? Us womens livin separatits, us roly polytickles dykes, we have every chance in the world of becoming incredibly strong powerful world changing amazons. That is what i think, cause that is what it looks like to me. And i wonder about the sisters living with men and all the temptations and i admire their strength but i can't help but worry perhaps have they bitten off more than can be chewed? Live with that contradiction every day and not go crazy wondering if they are doing it right? And him right there to fix the door knob.

but then, i worry too much about everything, including revolution, and whether you or me are doing everything right to make it happen, the new society. And since every time i go out into the world, it is still being there, the old society, this does not help my worrying.

but then again, i have been a heterosexual woman all my life, the first fifteen sixteenth (that is what 30 out of 32 years is). i know how it is. was. i struggled with men. i won some, i lost some. i do not want any woman to be afraid of me because i am one of those, now. i am one of us. it still surprises me to look in the mirror and see a dyke there. no motorcycle jacket, though if i ever get a motorcycle of course i will have to get a motorcycle jacket. i got all kinds of duds, my butch duds, and my spiritual duds and my work duds (they became my butch duds in the city and in town because i am not working and i still wear them) and then my city duds and my blue lacey nightie that i'm embarrassed no self respecting dyke would and all that but i do.

i want to demystify that change to lesbian, don't exactly know how to introduce her and tell you who she really is. i used to identify with

continued



men and be one of the boys. then i got into playing vamp/mistress/professional sex object with a heavy new style sexual political overlay. at 30, i was a strong feminist, due to the fact that i had children and did not want to be, was not interested in being, a mother. those self-sacrificing lines of worry and crowsfeet around the eyes that my mother had, no thank you, not for me, washed out and used up working eight hours a day, then home to attend to dinner and the ironing while he watched tv. when i was a housewife, home all day while my hippy husband brought in the vegies, all the dope and beads and copies of the upanishads didn't make me stop crying for hours in depression and despair.

i noticed myself yelling at my daughter, my partner in prison, the same way my mother used to at me on saturdays when she rose at six to do the laundry, clean the house, do all the shopping, stop at the bank. i hit my own child, screamed at her, hassled her constantly. she bore up well under the fire.

communal childcare changed my relationships to my children considerably. my youngest daughter has only heard that voice come through me once or twice in four years. our love for each

other is one of the most beautiful things in my life.

now, i bring my children to new women, tell them, i don't want to be mommy any more than you, i just have them, but if you want to live with me, you'll be living with them too. they seem to be hearing, although many are not mothers. i choose not to live with my brothers, or any men now. i do not choose that path for my children. i cannot. it is their choice, at the ages of four and ten, who they want to be with. the separation from my sisters at the commune i left that i did not choose is very painful to me. i see them when i can. it was as hard to leave the land which had been my home so long.

but i am learning to love again. to go beyond the confines of that group marriage. (we never called it that; it was, though, for me.) i am joining so many - the women on this commune trying to work out womenloving and women living with women - women in the community, the local feminist community, that is - gay women from the city who come to visit us, who i see when i go there. it is a small isolated separate world that is so promising and open that i can hardly encompass the changes.

perhaps it is premature, at this point,

having been a separatist but three months, to say this will "work". but every day some little something happens to make me think so. whatever the dykes in the incendiary literature said about loving women, is true. and more. not so easy, not idyllic, not just the goodies. running away, and pain, and everything else. i have just started to learn to love women. friendships have been endangered by sexual tensions. i have been rejected many times, something i did not feel so much with men. my longest relationship can best be described as an airplane flying dizzily at an altitude of twenty five feet, bumping and crashing into everything but somehow going up again so persevering. we still love each other, we will always. but it ain't been easy.

the frustrations did not stop all together in a manless environment, just some did. i fell in and out of love in two months, and that was very painful to us both, and difficult to maintain our friendship behind. as i again want to be open to sexual loving. i want to be with more than one person, and there is no indication that it is going to be easy to do that, either.

i learn. confronted by equals, i see that i am macho too. that hurt makes defense makes more hurt. that we all want to be loved. that there is a lot to this mother daughter sister business and primal attachments. men could never teach me that, or the inside of my witch's soul, which is woman and female and moony and loony and powerful in that new way i have not quite caught onto all the time, because the old ways of powering and disempowering are so heavy in my mind, in all our minds.

is she brave? to have left a somewhat satisfactory life with men for this untried road? a voice inside me sez you could never be happy with just women, you need a man to fulfill you, you will be lonely and sad. whose voice is that?

who stands to lose if these women can make it on their own?

i don't think i am even as brave as women who raise children alone or learn to fix trucks or throw bombs. many of us will write poetry for the first time, make love with a woman for the first time, cut fire wood, build our own houses this winter. we are all brave.

i just want to demystify some things about those labels and the activity that makes you take them on. to love another female body. such magic. to truly accept your own body, more than a man ever could do. to be able to love another woman, to make love, be active, do wonderful things for. make her feel good. so wonderful, how could be frightening?

and living with women, so ordinary. spectacular and life-changing and don't forget we want to change the world so everyone can make free choices, and it's so ordinary. i get up and do what i do, i just do it with women. all the time.

there are three fronts of feminism, and i have so much exploration left in each. the man in my head, the man in my bed, The Man. not having to deal with one of them, that makes more energy for the two left. together we are trying to really change the programs, really think differently really love ourselves. and out of that love, who knows what changes will come.

i have not even started to look at the big one, The Man. there's a real fight coming there. we all know him, he is the one in the world ripping and tearing and destroying and his ego is so fat any of ours is a skinny next to. he is the one who has to be stopped.

her, she is the one who is rising to take her rightful place again. our place, she is us, we are she, i am her, i am we.

look in the mirror. what do you see? ♀

CHILD IN THE MIRROR CHILD IN THE MIRROR

I have a mother. I have a father. But I don't have a mother and a father. If I do something good for my father, it's usually bad for my mother. I can't make both my mother and my father happy very easily, since my mother is a lesbian and my father is a bus boy.

Usually I'm not with my mother or my father. I'm usually with my friends.

My relationship with my mother is sometimes dim and sometimes bright. My relationship with my father is usually bright.

I've lived in the country almost all my life. I've had more fun in the country than in the city. When I'm in the country, I'm a little ways away from my mother and far away from my father. That's because the school bus doesn't come to where my mother lives. My mother used to live in a commune full of people. I lived where there's the school, either four miles walking or 20 miles driving away from my mother. She comes to where the kids are sometimes.

I lived there on a commune of kids. Different big people come down every month to take care

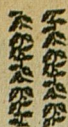
or us.

Now I'll tell you about where I live now. Now I live on a lesbian commune with three kids, one my age, and he's a boy. How I like it is the same, but it's new so it's a little funner.

Both my mother and my father are nice, but my father gets me more things. But that's not all that counts. Now my mother has more money than she used to, so she can support me and my little sister better.

My sister reminds me a lot of myself if I were little. She's real "if I don't get my way - I'm going to cry and be a snot." My sister really likes me, and I really like her, sometimes. But you know how sisters are.

I hope I have told you enough about my relationships. I think if my mother were not a feminist I would have a whole different relationship with my mother, my father, my sister, and all my friends. I would not rather just have a mother and a father. I couldn't stand them fighting. ♀



A New Family Portrait



I hang up the phone and stand, outwardly quiet, while voices are bouncing around inside my head - "Your mother's dying." - No she isn't, only if she wants to. - "But remember, Arlene, she's been getting ready to die for the past five years." She sounds so scared. I don't really know how serious this is. All I know is that she has cancer. What does all this mean? I think I'm supposed to be very upset, but I'm not. Can I admit that? My mother may be dying and I can feel so detached?

And so started a major change in my relationship to my parents. I was going home to be with - who actually? My father said he wanted me there to help my mother and my mother, not too surprisingly given the great sacrificer she is, wanted me there to be with my father. It was clear to me that they both needed me. Now wait a minute - there's something unique about this situation. My parents need ME to help THEM - and they're admitting it. I don't think I've ever experienced that before. Ah ha! Could this mean they no longer see me as dependent?

Well, I'll go, and hopefully (actually I'm sure) I can give them positive energy, even though they'd never use those words to describe what they need.

This all seemed fairly simple. After the initial confusion of "What kind of person am I to not be totally upset?" became a little clearer, I realized that my mother doesn't really affect my life anymore. That is to say that who she is today doesn't really affect me. It's how she WAS with and to me when I was a young child that affects me. Right now, I can think of her dying (if that's what is about to happen) and feel sad for her - because she's so afraid. I sense that to a large degree she thinks her life is over because she's given up believing that there's anything she can do with it.

About five weeks after the original phone call, I left. The doctor had decided to do radiation treatments before the operation. This meant that every time I called to see when I should come, I was told that they didn't know yet, but I should be "ready to leave any day". Finally I said that I needed at least one week's notice since I had to make arrangements in my life. Yes, I actually said that; cold as it seemed, I knew it was real. And I had begun to feel that they had little consciousness that I had a life and commitments.

Now let me take a look at where I was when I was about to leave. I was feeling GOOD. I had gotten an incredible amount of support from friends. There's something that happens between friends when one says "I'm going to New York to see my parents." There's that instant recognition of what one will probably experience - things like alienation (from them and from yourself). Add to that, "because my mother is sick" and you may get an idea of the support I got. It was wonderful. I actually left almost looking forward to the trip. I realized I was happy to feel that I COULD help my parents. I remember friends

laughing (but understanding) when I worried that my father would expect me to cook and "take care" of the house. Now, I must admit it wasn't JUST the political reality of such an expectation that concerned me. The fact is, I mainly don't cook and I was not going to replace my mother.

I left knowing I was going to make a real effort to be clear, to give my parents positive, supportive energy, and to see friends while I was there. I knew the latter would help my sanity and make the first two goals more possible.

I arrived in New York and stayed at a friend's house as I had arranged and had previously told my parents. My mother's response had been "how are you going to get to Wendy's apartment from the airport?" So began the familiar "don't worry" syndrome. This time she seemed to give up a little faster and recognize the absurdity of her concern.

The day after arriving, I took the train up to my parents' home. My father picked me up at the station - he looked tired but the same. Over the past two and a half years since I had seen them, my mother had often mentioned how old my father was getting - so to see him not much changed was a relief. He responded to me with as much feeling as he allows himself to express. He told me my mother was feeling better. She had completely isolated herself and wouldn't see any of her friends for the past four weeks since she "got the news". And then I saw my mother, at least I think I saw my mother. You see my image of my mother as long as I can remember was that she was FAT, and here was this very thin woman who I knew was also my mother. "Oh yes, I've lost a lot of weight over the past few years." "But you never told me," was my response. I think I somehow felt cheated that she had not shared what seemed to me a major change.

I spent that day BEING with my mother. I spent hours talking to her openly and honestly about how I see myself. Why I feel good about who I am and in essence, gave her an opportunity to appreciate me and not feel she had "failed" as a mother. We talked about why she felt she had failed. I had not become what she thought I was supposed to be - a wife with a successful husband (it was okay if I had a career too). In talking, I asked her some very direct questions about why she had those expectations. She actually came to realize that she hadn't REALLY wanted that for me (or for herself?) but somehow had felt that she was supposed to want that for me. When she would be with her friends and most of them would talk glowingly of their children's successes, she never felt she could participate. What I was doing with my life didn't fit into what they all valued, and my mother, buying the trip, felt that she must have failed. I know that my being there as I am now - strong, positive, self-aware - made it impossible for her to continue deluding herself.

Looking back, I see that my relationship with my parents has generally been maintained by

seeing the past and not the present. That's why when I used to go home to visit I never liked myself very much - in their presence it was difficult not to regress into the way I used to be with them.

My mother went to the hospital the day after our talk. And so there we were - me and my father. "Well," I said at the appropriate time, "what should WE make for dinner?" I acted on the assumption that we were going to share in dealing with basic needs - like food - and it worked. He accepted it. Although I think of myself as being close to my father, it wasn't until this visit that we really spent a large amount of time alone with each other. During this visit we were able to interact with each other as friends. He seemed to sense my strength and allowed himself to depend on me in a healthy way - not to "take care" of him but to make my support available to him.

I was in New York for three and a half weeks. I did all three things I set out to do, including spending time with friends. When I planned to stay at a friend's I was clear about it. And, again, I acted on the assumption that they would recognize that I needed to have some of my needs met in order to be there for them. And again it worked.

On looking back at the totality of this three and a half week interlude in my life, I find much growth and learning. I've come to recognize that the cultural image of a woman very closely corresponds to that of a child. So many of the characteristics we attribute to children are also attributed to women, like dependency, the need for protection, sacrificing for, doing for. When seen in this perspective, it's a little more understandable why my parents had so much trouble seeing me as an individual as opposed to their daughter (little girl). It was

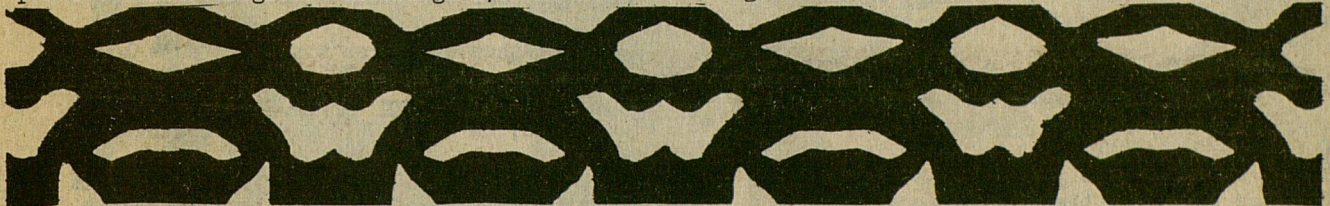
my change into a feminist consciousness and the actualization of that into my life which enabled me to break through that image they had of me. Previously, all three of us shared the same false image to some degree.

This realization (child-woman shared stereotypes) which seems so simple has given me much insight into the family dynamics. The outrageous element is that we, as women, are not expected to outgrow these child characteristics. In fact, we are encouraged to keep them.

What yardsticks do our parents use to determine when we "become women"? Marriage has been one, even though all it really represented was a transfer of dependencies. Now the husband can do all the things the parents were supposed to do. After marriage, parents can (and usually do) carry the same unconscious images of us, but their rational mind says, "Now, she's an adult." They feel they have recognized the growth, but the interactions tend to be based on the images that go along with "a wife", the very same traits that are present in the child image.

Becoming a mother doesn't necessarily change this pattern of perceived dependency. Our parents can relate to our children as grandchildren and still relate to us as their children since society's definition of woman perpetuates this. We, as feminists, are changing society's definition of woman. It is with great joy that I realize that the actualization of feminism in my life and my being has been the major factor in seeing myself as I am, strong and positive, and in having others see me in the same way. It is through this new relationship with myself that I changed and am changing my relationship with my parents.

In the traditional sense, being a "good daughter" is no more real to a feminist than being a "good wife". ♀



Silences

what if someone knew, KNEW
that we were
 but you can't mean
 you are willing to--
yes, I do mean
 speak out admit
that we were
 how can we ever
lovers
 be whole persons if
it is silence which denies
 love which heals
love:
 must be
burnt letters
imaginary telephone conversations
unwritten poems.

Epilogue to a Continuing Saga

"But why does love end in hate?" I keep wanting to ask, as if surprised, feeling it, the rage where love used to be. I look at them, Kathryn and Jonas. Perhaps it is not hate at all, but an absence of love, I think, bewildered by my own meandering mind, as anger turns to grief turns to wounded pride.

"Can you see what is happening here?" Kathryn says excitedly to me, wanting to know if I had learned my lesson: Be Here Now.

I stand beside her scrubbing carrots, making a salad, trying to leave after completing each task. I keep forgetting what comes after carrots, and erratically ask, "anything else?" as I waver toward the door, as if I have been called here to make a salad, rather than join them for dinner.

Can I see what is happening here? Oh yes. Jonas and Kathryn, Kathryn and Jonas. My old lovers now lovers; only, I could share Jonas with a hundred thousand others, so slight was our love; but Kathryn was a continual fresh wound. She was my forever love.

I am caught in the house, my eyes roaming the floors, the walls, the ceilings, anything but the two I came (for what perverse reason?) to join for dinner. Jonas' virgo nature has given a pristineness to Kathryn's libra-ness. And she has returned a laugh in Jonas' voice. They love each other, I suppose. Setting down the carrots, I finally answer, "Why? What do you mean?" to Kathryn's long ago question.

Kathryn is off guard. Abashed, she says, "Oh, nothing . . . it's just that I've realized some things lately. That loving someone is not being afraid to share your life. Saying what's on your mind as if to yourself. He is the first one since you that has brought joyousness back into my life . . ." She is shy, sharing this secret of the heart like a young girl again. "Of course, Jonas isn't the only reason . . ." and she drifts off, sighing, rolling artichoke stalks in milk, then flour and dipping them into batter and finally into the skillet bubbling with oil. I can hear and smell it cooking, but do not watch it, centering instead on my hands.

"Yes?" I say. "I can see that. I'm not sure what you want me to say."

"I just want to get it on with you," she says urgently, and leans toward me. "Come on out of there! Are you a turtle hiding in a shell?" She laughs nervously.

Not a turtle. Just not there. Or maybe only there, alone and resentful of this merger, this marriage I am forced to give witness to. It is my blessing being asked for, the laying down of ill feeling, the forgiveness of this gross transgression upon my ego. WHAT?? MY LOVERS PREFERRING EACH OTHER TO ME?? And how they robbed me; both.

"I'm here, aren't I?" I finally answer. I know I am a traitor to my self, having asked them both, please, not together--don't ask me to see you together. Yet here I am. Wavering, my body drawing back.

"Let me in," Kathryn begs. "Please don't be so far."

She has come at me direct, and I can no longer evade her. "Look, it's hard for me. Do you want me to talk about how hard it is? Everytime I do you come down on me," I say, "I told you maybe I shouldn't come."

"I'm not criticizing you," Kathryn answers, "I just want to feel close to you. You still mean alot to me. I love you so much . . . I think of you every day."

I can't stand to hear this. I am again betrayed. But I reply, "Yes, I think of you every day too; I dream of you, very strong dreams. But how can we be close in the way that is day to day loving when day to day no longer exists? Our love stands outside of here and now where there is no time and space; no place." I can feel my body tremble, tighten.

"O.K., I'm sorry," Kathryn says, miffed. "I just thought it was possible to re-establish that unity. But I guess the time for that has passed, so forget it." When she is hurt, she is abrupt, to cloak her pain in anger.

But I am frightened, feeling love slip away again for the thousandth time. So I try to give up my aloneness.

"Not that there isn't unity; isn't love," I say. "It's just hard."

"It doesn't have to be. What is hard about this? BE HERE NOW." She is triumphant--she has finally given me the Word.

I am caught in the absurdity of it. I am here now; here beside red wooden cupboards I painted. My Indian rug is under my feet, and the most beautiful redwood kitchen cupboard I ever saw and bought for her, my love, looks back at me. Everywhere around me is the home I made with her and left behind. It's not right, so much of myself not joined to myself. How can I be here now, standing in the midst of a past that is not the present? So I am quiet. My eyes roam the rooms of my head, opening again and again onto emptiness. I am nowhere.

Jonas comes in then, and leans around me with a joint. His arm slips around my waist and squeezes me. I hold myself in, a hand on his arm, then pat his arm and turn to reach past him and hand the joint to Kathryn. Jonas' arm gently slides away, and reclaiming the joint from Kathryn, he wanders into the bedroom.

I rinse my hands, trying to leave. "What next?" I ask, feeling vaguely pulled toward the door again, but not knowing where I wanted to go.

"Shred the carrots for the salad,"

Kathryn answers, motioning toward the now scrubbed carrots.

I pick them up and start grating. I am exhausted. Silence gives me time to form my words.

Finally the "blessing" comes, spilling from me like unmeshed puzzle pieces. "Of course I can see what is happening here and it's good for you. I'm glad you are o.k. It

means alot to me. You are telling me all about love because you are there; you are complete now. You have someone to share every-day with. Well, I don't, and a part of me resents you because you have what I don't. And of course, especially because it is you and Jonas."

"If you only knew how much I love you; we love you," she says softly.

Love, I think. But I don't feel it. I don't like being here, or enjoy being with them, or want to do what they are doing. Something violent keeps rising within me, and I wonder if an absence of love is a feeling too -- like the force within a vacuum. And again I feel myself reeling, caught in the well-worn groove of why. ♀



L SMITH

Feminism: Bringing It All Back Home

"I know you've only been here two days and I don't want to put you off, (still the desire to soften, to apologize first) but I should tell you that after you just said, 'Man, that son of a bitch..' I blanked out the rest of your story. I just don't hear well after that point because I can't relate to sexist language."

* * *

"Do you want to ride the horse?"

"Oh, yes he's beautiful."

"This horse is a female like me or you."

"Oh, can I pet him?"

* * *

"See that spider. Take him outside please."

* * *

"You built this buck house by yourself?"

"Pretty much, I got some help hauling the logs in."

"Well where did you learn all that?"

"Who do you think built the cabin that Ralph and I live in?"

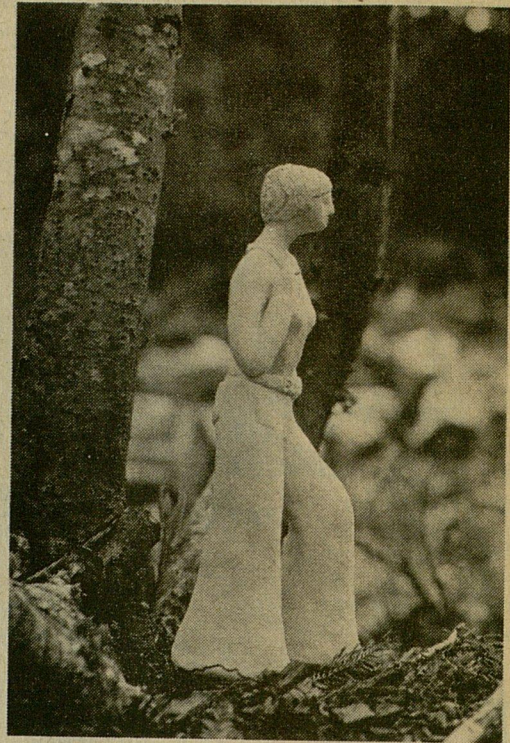
"Well I thought that Ralph ..(geep burb)"

"Oh come on Stephen."

* * *

Scenes such as these occur frequently with visitors to our land, my home, the territory I relate to as empathetic, not male dominated. As my consciousness grows, it becomes important to me not to feel oppressed in my own living space. That is why I cannot sit still long and listen to visitors use sexist language, admittedly unconsciously. Although no malice or oppression is intended, I nevertheless feel my hairs bristle, I tense, and can't feel comfortable or honest with that person until we have straightened out the recurrent vocabulary problem. I ask myself, "Am I just being intolerant like my parents were about swearing in their household?" Language is perhaps a small battle point in the feminist struggle but I know that language is a window on our culture and that our words determine our perceptions. When I imagine a large raccoon on the back porch as female, the creature is no longer frightening but connected to me. I feel my world spinning into balance when I feel free to call birds or animals female (who don't have their young by them to prove it) or when the two year old I live with says, "Jenny, look at that vulture. What's she looking for?"

The people I live with are trying to break down sexism: a continuing struggle to help one another find new ways of expression. There is uneven development - each of us in different places at different times, each lagging behind or forging ahead at certain



periods, but the definite movement is forward. The value of consciousness-raising is something understood, assumed between us, if not always foremost in mind or action. We do have a problem of integrating our actions with our knowledge, and there are different patterns within which change occurs. Often insights are first alive in the air in our communal head, then a voice will second them by verbal expression, then a change of behavior might or might not follow. For example, we all are aware that the men are doing the major part of the mechanical work. We talk about it, the men offer to work with us any time, and the women talk about wanting to be more in touch with the cars or the refrigerator. But the next time something breaks down it is the men who fix it with tools from their personal tool boxes. What does it mean that there are community tools and then each man has his own toolbox?

The desire to change can also overwhelm one's immediate actions so as to make them fruitless. I think of a woman who lived with us briefly, whose energy against sexism was

like a river gushing over eroded ground, failing to catch hold with its environment and no longer following a natural path. She and the rest of us were unable to relate to the flood of her energy. I find the changes that stay are those that we feel good about making, not those that come from proving something to somebody or oneself or from anger or negative energy.

Living with increasing feminist awareness, when visitors come to the farm, our feminist railroad signals rise. Most visitors who aren't aware of sexism usually begin to become aware at their own pace with utmost reinforcement from us. Often just having Country Women lying about is enough. But we are so sensitive to sexism coming in from outside, that we often make a conscious effort to show or tell people we are not a sexist hippie Mother Earth commune. It is a drag to be pre-occupied with a message in the front of your head, e.g., how many times have I told visitors we have a list for house jobs like cooking, cleaning, milk products and breadbaking, and that we all build, chop wood and drive the caterpillar? I also know that we are still sexually divided in certain areas like mechanics, chain-sawing or gardening, so I don't feel clear about telling people how non-sexist we are.

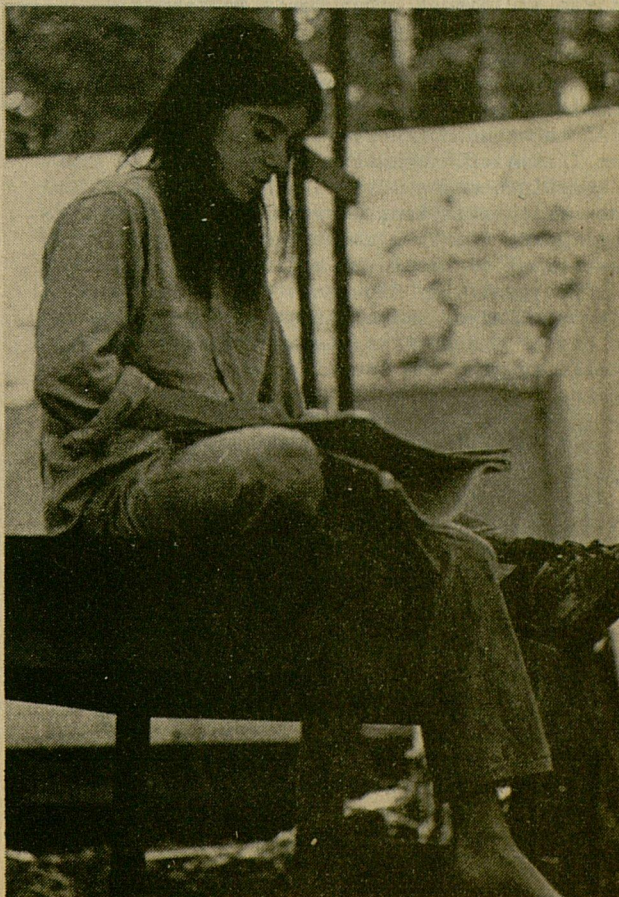
Feminism has drastically changed how I relate to meeting new women. Before feminism, I usually picked up on the women first in any situation, but most often furtively, thinking of a woman not just as she appeared to me but of how she might appear to my man as a possible sexual partner. In other words, there would be an element of threat, of rivalry and that would inhibit me. I would move cautiously and find fault easily. That is changing, although I still find myself more open and free with gay or bisexual women. In our women's group at home we were trying to figure out why that was. Do I still feel threatened by attractive heterosexual women? Am I jealous because they will look at Ralph differently than me just because he is a man? Maybe it is harder to connect because there is not that whole area we know we already share, a basic understanding that flashes when I meet feminists. Maybe it is the boldness, the openness that has become so bright in feminists' gazes. I wonder if the split I sense in women is based on sexual identity (bisexual/gay/straight) or on head spaces (feminist-straight)? I think the latter because feminists are open to women loving women even if not actively involved in sexual relationships with women and they do recognize the unlimited potential of woman/woman relationships.

With a growing feminist awareness has come a mode of self-confidence and self-sufficiency that I extend to other women and that I can rely on in them. There is no more wishing, in a group of women, that some men were around to give us a needed male point of view or okay. I find myself wanting to draw women out, looking for those secrets that are alive and shy inside each of us. I listen better to what

women are really saying and I listen to women's silences too and the sounds of those silences breaking which helps me to understand what I could not hear before feminism. I have learned how to give critical support to women and see how I can influence the flow of conversation or a work project in a mixed group by tuning into the women, reinforcing and encouraging their thoughts and perceptions.

However, this issue of support gets a bit tricky when I apply it to the two women that I live with. Ideally I would like to be able to see us push each other as well as support each other, in other words to trust each other enough to be able to question in a spirit of growth rather than of put-down. I often need a push but it is usually a man who it comes from or perhaps I feel the push more strongly from men, hard to say. We women are so wanting to be supportive of each other that we tend to hold back our criticisms. I take for granted my sisters' abilities to do formerly male tasks with high quality competence and therefore am occasionally guilty of overlooking their achievements. Often support is needed and resentment follows if it isn't given. Women's meetings help to get a lot of such stuff cleared up but it takes us all a long time to forgive and forget.

continued



Sometimes while sharing intimate thoughts and feelings in our women's group I inhibit a free flow in myself. I project my own conscience onto their faces and have a hard time hanging loose for fear I may not be on guard politically. I believe and feel any role or image is oppressive if it has strict expectations even if it is one you generally relate to. I am committed to feminist beliefs and it is a responsibility I put on myself to try to eradicate sexism whenever possible, but because sexism erodes nearly all aspects of life and relationships it means one is constantly on duty and that is hard!

Feminism has also opened me to the female half of the world sexually. I feel for the feminist movement to be truly successful, we must be able to be independent of men if so desired, and that means being open to women loving women so that we are not solely dependent on men for our sexual desires and needs. If we are bound to men by sex, then we are powerless in a vital human area. When I realized I wouldn't necessarily have to find another man if I ever stopped living with Ralph, and that there was a whole world of possible female mates too, my psychic freedom grew.

Feminism has only slowly helped me deal with jealousy. I am aware of the human potential we have to destroy and devour one another by our possessive tendencies, but I still find it hard to share lovers. Actually feminism could be a great force in easing jealousy because as sisterhood instead of rivalry becomes the normal way women relate to each other, then increased caring and communication between women would result and sexual tensions could be worked out. With one woman I live with sexual tensions (because she sometimes makes love with Ralph) fuel other tense situations between us, but increased communication about the sources of those sexual tensions are beginning to make our lives generally flow smoother. I feel a different kind of sexual tension with my lesbian sister and that is that I feel uncomfortable hugging and touching men in her presence because carried to an extreme I feel like she feels I am a traitor somehow to her, but that could be a bad case of projection on my part.

When I've been on the mountain a long time and then drive down to the city, I often feel like I'm entering enemy territory. I imagine how relaxed I would feel if all the road crews flagging and directing me were women, if the highway patrols were women, if the gas station attendants were mostly women, or if the truck drivers in those big machines were women. Generally, I am wary of men, the friendly smiles as well as the leering grins. Two factors operating: first, fear of being open to men because I do not want them to have any more power over me (I do not want to be vulnerable because I feel so few can be trusted to care); and secondly, since the women's movement has opened my eyes, I don't find myself liking many men. I do have half

a dozen male friends that are vital to my life and this number seems to satisfy my desires to be with men. There is always room in my life for more friendships but it seems to take so much longer to sift through the men to find good friends than among women.

Still there are scenes in which I do get off on being with men; one party comes to mind where I saw a group of women and was drawn to that space; warm smiles but the conversation centered around children and cooking and men. My mind couldn't get involved so I drifted over to two men and the talk was of splitting shakes, building foundations. I guiltily enjoyed the conversation, learned a bit from it and flashed to the part of a career woman in a man's world and why she's there. Of course as more women branch out from traditional women areas, we can share more between us. Right now I still use men a lot for information. It also feels good to be with men and not in their power. If I am in a group of men and feel alienated, I know now it is because of typical sexist problems and don't get messed up behind it psychologically. Often I find myself empathizing with men, when situations arise that point out the difficulty they are having in consciousness raising. Peter says to me, "Is there any way I can love and touch you without you feeling sexual pressure?" Surely there must be a way but I have no answer. And sometimes when we women are passive and the men go out to do something, get into trouble, and admit it, we women rub it in. When men stop playing the tough macho role and become vulnerable, what do we do? Do we give them freedom? Sometimes in a work situation a man will be bending over backwards so far not to be macho, that he is practically kowtowing and watching himself so carefully that he is greatly inhibited. I sympathize with the confusion a man must feel when he realizes that to act normally is acting oppressively and is unsure of how to proceed. That is the time I feel women must be careful not to put men down because the temptation is great.

Thus far other feminists have not been hostile to me because I live with men. All the questions come from myself. Can women be loyal to each other as long as they sleep with men? Can one primarily work and live with women without being consumed by a woman's world, since there is just one planet for us all? I feel we are in unexplored space, no longer identifying with men, we have few models, but as long as we struggle for honesty and caring in all our relationships we will have each other to look to.

There is an alternative to the one male dominated world. Now, women have created a liberated female culture, small as it is, which gives us the power to continue the longer struggle of making a new society and continuing with men. Small personal triumphs are great, (e.g., getting equal pay at your office) but not enough for me. I want to help to change the present sexist conditions under which all women, children and men live, ♀

TOGETHER WE ARE STRONG

I'm fifteen and I'm a feminist, lesbian, separatist. Which sounds like a lot of titles but all it means is that 1: I'm a feminist. I believe that women are equal to men in all things (except maybe brute strength). 2: I'm a lesbian. I love women in all ways, (two of which are sexually and sensually) though I am far from indiscriminate in who I love, and who I love sexually. and 3: I'm a separatist; I live with women only and I love it. That doesn't mean that I'll always live without men or that I don't have some very close men friends (I do), but right now this is where I am, and this is where I want to be.

This is a very clear statement, which a little over a year ago I would have had no concept of writing. At that time, I had no concept of it, period.

I've been living away from my mother for two and a half years, since I was thirteen, going to school and boarding with various families. She takes care of my financial needs, and I take care of getting my emotional and mental needs met, with alot of help from her and my friends. I always come to live with her in the summer and last summer she lived here at a women's farm on the coast. She had been living here for six months. Moving here opened up whole new areas, made me see things I'd never seen before. Oppression but also strength: women's oppression and women's strength. All these new ideas milled about me and I chose with care the ones that seemed right and felt good.

As I have said so strongly, I'm into women. Going back to school at the end of the summer before last was a hard, tearful parting from a very close family. I wanted to stay badly, but I didn't want to stay badly enough to go to public school, and to give up what I was receiving from the school I was attending.

It was a hard year. But hard times often make you stronger. So far in this article I've been getting to how my feminism affects my relationships. There's no way it couldn't affect my relationships, because, basically, it's made me stronger and more sure of myself, less afraid to stand up and say what I think and what I want. That's always a hard one for me, to say "I want.. I want." I can (and did sometimes, though not as much as I wanted to) stand up to macho boys, and be an equal with people I admire, and work for change, because I'm centered. That's what feminism does for me. Oh sure, I still get depressed as hell, and my life falls apart occasionally. I still go through crises, and I have my personal problems and frustrations, but I know I have myself, and then my community-family to fall back on.

At school, people sometimes told me I came on "too strong." Or, for example, if someone was talking to me and called me "man" during the conversation, and I said, "I am a

woman," they might tell me I was uptight, or "it's just a word." Or the difference between calling myself and the young women around me "women," and their calling themselves and me "girls." That one struck home to me the different ways we see ourselves and act.

There were strong women around, and sensitive men, but not the kind of support I feel here. The deep support to work on myself (though I got some of that at my other home too), the support to do "unfeminine" things like be on an all women moving crew, the support to take self-defense so I can smash any man who tries to hurt or rape me, and so I can hold my head high when I walk down the street. The support to wear unrestricting clothes so I can dance, haul wood, do things without worrying about my clothes, run when I need to. The support to shake loose my oppressions, and to get angry at the male institutions and the specific males who oppress me. This is the support that I missed, plus all the loving and healing we give each other. It is hard to hold convictions that others around you don't.

I never quite reconciled my two needs, one for women's support, and the other for learning the things I would learn and get into at that school. I still haven't reconciled it completely - I have fantasies of that school, or a good feminist school (is there such a thing?), or any good alternative school, but there are none here.

Living here is so high, though I'm often frantically busy. We are all helping each other to laugh and to cry, to get rid of old and new resentments, and most importantly to reach out for help when we need it. I feel a sense of unity. I've just come back from a women's festival where 200 women became a family in five days. I feel a sense of unity with the women I live with, with those beautiful women at the festival, with women everywhere. I relate to the world and to everyone I know with the knowledge of that unity. Together we are stronger than we are alone. Together we are strong. ♀



Why It's Working

Feminism and relationships .. hm..

It feels odd to write this, but feminism has most deeply affected my relationship with a man. I had, since ten years old, been closest to women. Then, at 26, both feminism and Allan came into my life. I am loving and living with him, and have been for over three years. I am still surprised at this even, not because it "happened to me" -- it didn't -- I have been awake and conscious all along, but because loving Allan and leading a feminist life I feel whole and good. I am a very committed part of a monogamous couple and I have never felt as free to explore my own creativity. My commitment to my own growth has, if anything, increased. There is an overall dynamic, an interplay among my career, loving Allan, and loving other friends that is working. There are several clear reasons why that I would like to share.

The most important factor is that our relationship began at the same time I began consciousness-raising with women. Consciousness raising changed my whole life focus, and it was and is as important as Allan in terms of who I am and what I do with my life. I was in no way dependent upon him for support -- not financially, not emotionally, not physically. And I knew it. I had lived on my own for over seven years, and two of those years were in the country. I had never been really coupled, much less monogamous, and I was not waiting for "the real thing" to come along.

One of the most crucial things we have going for us is that at heart our relationship was and is a friendship, not a romance. By the time we started seeing each other (slowly and regularly), I had more than adequately experienced romance. I felt then, and still do, that romanticism is a commitment to unreality, to the antithesis of friendship, much less equal relationships. It is significant that we both saw and knew this right then as it was happening. We had both been in therapy and had excellent feelings about the process of working things out through confrontation. Being in a CR group was, in itself, a confrontation that I could NOT ignore. It always came home with me. Allan felt that learning to be up front with his feelings had literally saved his life. What it's come down to is that we can't not confront each other about what really matters to each of us.

Part of this confrontation process that began during our first weeks of living together is fighting in public. By public I mean close friends. It is such an incredible relief to have loving mediators who both of us can hear when we cannot hear each other. That mutual deafness of a couple seems among the deadliest of traps. Our friends have

helped us so much to see each other for who we are rather than the paranoid mythic beings that fighting conjures up.

Our friends have helped in other ways too. Most of the people either of us are close to are single. This has raised and kept high our consciousness of coupleism. Also, all the other people we have lived with have been single, and we have always put energy into having separate relationships with them, as well as joint relationships. Our only friends who are "coupled" are non-monogamous, and we usually spend time with them in their other relationships too. And not accidentally, most of our friends are women, feminist women.

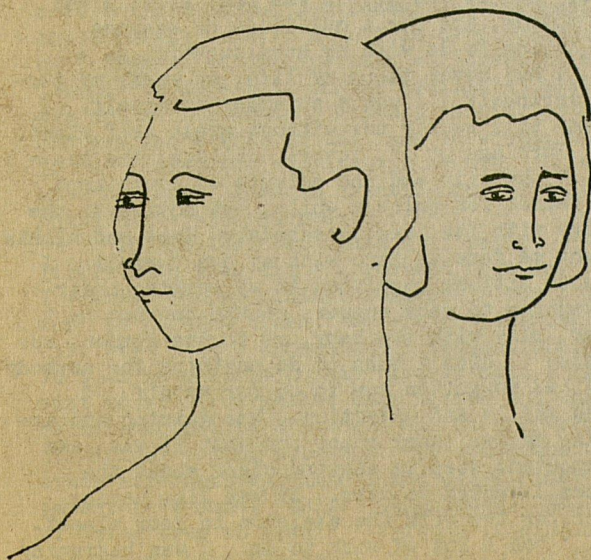
Sex was no big thing. Neither Allan nor I was particularly attracted to each other physically, on the usual fantasy level. There were no trembling knees or humid glances, no nights of prolonged ecstasy. We needed partners in tenderness and release, and on a regular basis. One of my conscious goals was to integrate the friendly and the erotic (also spelled romantic). In my life the friendly had lasted and been supportive, and the erotic was soon over, usually disastrously. I was also clear that I didn't expect to integrate these two parts of myself quickly. I knew that they had been so deeply separate that it would take a lot of self-work and a long time. And I was beginning to trust slow, steady changes much more than overnight transformations. Again, they last. So sex was just nice for a long time. Very gradually, it transforms itself, responding to our feelings about each other, our trust, our commitment, our reality. And the process of integrating the friendly and the erotic continues, if bumpily. We have also been very clear about having sexual relationships with ourselves. I am still struggling with really making love with myself, not just quickie tension release manipulations.

Recently, because of conflicting schedules and exhaustion, (I worked nights, he days) I began feeling we didn't make love enough. A rather tense subject for discussion at first, partly because of a couple dynamic that runs as follows: If one person is a little more X than the other, you begin to see each other as the extremes on the continuum. You put each other in opposing boxes. I am this and you are that (and shall be evermore). It's a dynamic that's full of mythic bullshit. Just plain unreal -- in fact, hiding the reality so it doesn't have to be dealt with, so we don't have to see ourselves. Our sexual myth was that I was always ready and generally more into sexuality than Allan. We believed this. After a day's interaction in which I felt I was

sexually rejected about five times, I blew up. Allan suggested making a contract about our sexuality. Our lives were such that the first time we would have free together was three days later. So we made a date to make the contract, an evening home alone together. I awoke (alone) that morning in a total rage. He's not into sex, he's not into meeting my needs, what do I need this for, etc. Gnawing at the edges was -- he doesn't like my fat body -- I'm not beautiful enough. Gradually, over the day, I knew I would be clear and say where I was at and what I wanted, and that I would not settle for less. Calm and clear, I sat down, ready for any level of confrontation necessary. Lo and behold it was easy! Half an hour later we had our contract -- to make love at least once every three days with a massage a week. And the shared feeling, after shared tears, was that what was most needed was to raise our sexual consciousness -- to pay attention.

Three weeks later I can write that our myths about who we are are falling apart. We are not extremes on a continuum. I am not Ms. EverReady -- I cop out too. He is not Mr. Non-Sexual -- he has, in fact, been as into it as I. What we are is less clear now, but getting clearer. I am definitely excited about the contract process -- it feels good to equally share responsibility in ways that have been clearly agreed upon.

Our relationship is working also because the process of commitment to each other has been very very slow. My trust of men was minimal. I was always ready to leave. What has changed in me is the growth of trust that whatever the problem, we will put enough good energy into resolving it. What I needed deeply in my life was/is to learn to deeply trust another person. I was so rigidly independent that opening up and sharing and loving was both the most difficult and the most important thing I could do for my own growth.



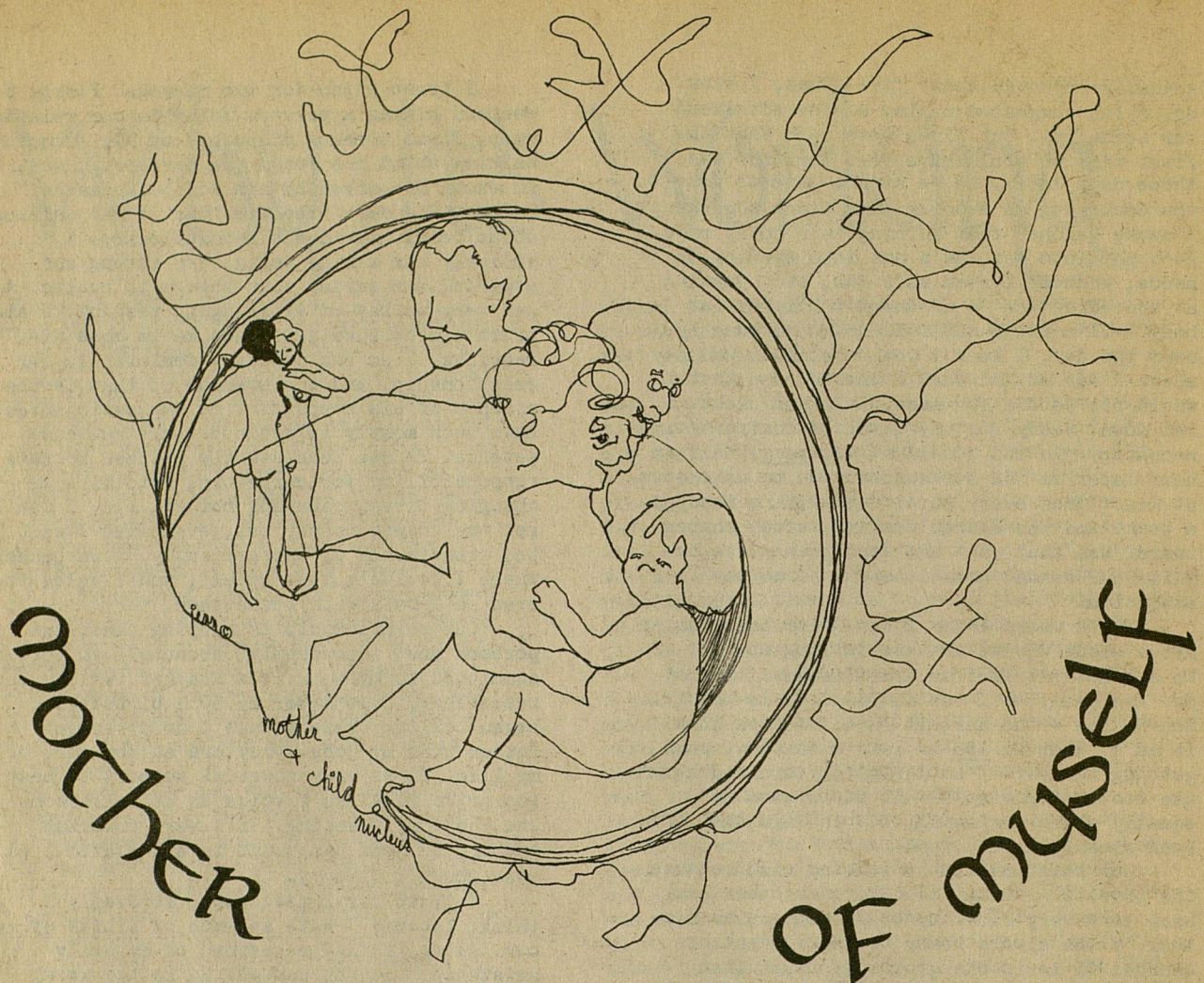
I trust Allan for two reasons. First, I respect him as a person. Early in our relationship, I was somehow disturbed by his frequent talking about his fears and terrors. I was, in fact, disturbed by his not being macho enough. One day I realized that a man talking about being afraid was revolutionary. I suddenly saw him as being very strong and powerful for saying such things in public. A man very worthy of my grudging respect. I also trust him because he pushes me in good directions. I am not the only feminist in our relationship, and the essence of that is the essence of his support of me. My resistances have been mostly in areas of physical competence. He has consistently refused to take responsibility for carpentry, rototilling, changing tires, carrying things, etc. I don't get the chance to cop out, even when I want to, consciously or unconsciously. I am pushed where I wouldn't push myself, and I value it-- even as I balk with resistance.

Our relationship is working also, and perhaps most importantly, because I am totally committed to my work as a teacher, writer and researcher. Just after my 30th birthday, I began calling these things I do my career rather than my jobs. They are at the core of my life. It is very powerful support to hear the pride in Allan's voice as he tells someone about my teaching. It's very powerful support to hand him stuff to type while I go read women's history.

I trust our relationship so deeply I think, because I have so much of a life of my own. Allan is the touchstone of my daily existence, not the center. He is the warm, sleeping smell I curl against when I get home after night class and lie there tripped out and flying behind the magic I have made in a classroom. I can share with him my excitement at developing a good statistics technique. I can share with him my writing, and know I will get excellent criticism, and deserved praise. I am loved for my visions and my insights -- a very supportive kind of love.

So, in my "personal solution," which is of course just another process, I am experiencing all these positive aspects of commitment on a daily basis. My commitment gives me freedom to focus the bulk of my energy on my own creativity. I am sharing equally in the buying of land and my own home. I am sharing equally in all the struggles, and all the burdens, and all the joys of keeping a trip together and functioning, sometimes even smoothly. We can share our home and our lives pretty openly and lovingly with others because we love and are loved. For me, commitment is energy-giving, not energy-robbing.

But most of all, we are good together and for each other because we bust our asses working out whatever needs to be worked out. And because we play together regularly. And because we want ourselves and each other to be strong and loving dynamite in whatever we do. And because we love most in each other not who we were or who we are but who we want to and will be. ♀



For a woman, choosing not to relate to her child is considered an unnatural act, a crime, a rejection of her very being, or at best a tragedy of circumstance, but still a definite failure. Psychiatrists predict she will suffer anguish and guilt, priests that she will go to hell, and the general populace mutters platitudes about the joys of motherhood. The act is radical and rarely will the quality of relating that is happening between the two human beings be looked at objectively.

Two and a half years ago my husband and I separated. My daughter from a former marriage was seven and our son, Eli, was a little older than two. He had been conceived and born in joy. We had sailed through a LaMaze birth and practically had the nurses at Ukiah General Hospital singing "You Are My Sunshine" with us on the delivery table. Later, Michael sobbed uncontrollably at my bedside for the very beauty of it all. It was one of the most intense moments of my life, and I can recall it now almost without bitterness. The bitterness came with the following years of disappointment, pain, and frustration trying to simultaneously discover what I actually wanted to do and what I was supposed to be doing as homestead wife and mother. At this point I almost want to fall for the trap: to explain how I wasn't centered enough to do both, how I wasn't strong enough, or wise enough, mea culpa mea culpa father forgive me. On the other hand, I could coolly explain it all as the incredible inability of the nuclear family to

meet the demands of its members. Or of two people, husband and wife, being strangled by the sexism of the culture and the roles they were trying to play - impossible for them. But in actuality, I think the truth lies somewhere in-between. Certainly consciousness raising gave me a framework to understand more rationally the politics of family and what was happening to me. But it was *me*. I was that wife; I was that mother, and for a multitude of reasons, many having to do with my acculturation as a girl, I had never taken my life, my work, my purpose seriously. I was a stranger to myself. I can say this gently now without great self blame.

Marriage at 17, lovers, college, the busyness of the city and the naivete of youth kept this secret for quite a while, but moving to the country with its long, unscheduled days and nights brought me face to face with my own turmoil. I remember sitting paralyzed in my rocking chair not wanting to make supper, soothe another hurt finger, play with the baby, go to the garden, see friends. I didn't want to do anything for anybody and I had forgotten how to do for myself. I lacked skills and direction. Recognizing and accepting my own inner chaos for what it was, was an important step in staying clear about the choices I wanted to make. It was like having dinner for two with the skeleton in your closet.

I had a lot of work to do. I was beginning my puberty rites about fifteen years late, and I needed time. Michael and I decided to live separ-

ately. (That sentence is a laugh. Squeezing three years of conflict, love, physical and emotional fighting into one neat phrase for simplicity's sake is a questionable trick, but that is another story.) What I am concerned with here is choosing to have Eli live with Michael and what that choice has meant to me the last two and a half years. The choice itself was clear. Imagining Michael get in the truck and drive away with my curly haired baby next to him definitely brought tears to my eyes, but the thought of Michael getting into the truck and driving away with Allison tugging at my skirt, Eli in my arms and mounds of diapers waiting to be washed seized my whole body with terror. NO, no, no, my insides screamed. Luckily, my feminist consciousness and supporting friends were able to help me rationally interpret those screams in a way that allowed me to let go of the image of being a "good mother" and thereby let go of Eli. It was scary from an identity standpoint; if I'm not a good mother what am I? Maybe a good carpenter, a good stained glass maker, a good friend, a good Harriet? Maybe nothing? It was painful in terms of the separation but not nearly as painful as I expected it to be. I knew there was no way I could fill the needs of an excitable, demanding Allison, a busy two year old, and myself. Not that I couldn't take care of them both, but that the quality of our lives would be lacking and, besides, I didn't want to. Logically there was no reason why I should; I had to be responsible for choosing my life.

Michael had been as close to Eli as I and felt positive about Eli living with him. There is nothing that intrinsically makes a mother the more suitable parent and certainly in this instance it was not the case. Nothing but 3000 years of dusty traditions, mother earth images, female fertility idols, madonna and child icons and a host of other hocus pocus that so surrounds the sanctity of motherhood as to fog that simple fact. Smashing those idols it becomes clear that relating to children is a matter of temperament and timing, not biology, and that it is not intrinsically more rewarding or fulfilling for women. In fact, in this culture men who have so much more to learn about gentleness and responsiveness could really benefit more from developing close nurturing relationships with children. I was "lucky" to have this choice available; most women are not as fortunate. Nixon's vetoing of daycare centers was a slap in the face to women, but even in our "politically conscious counter culture" we have not come close to creating positive loving child/adult alternatives.

In the last two and a half years, I've spent little time with Eli - a weekend here and there. I feared losing contact completely but I didn't want to get too close. We are not sharing responsibility; I have enough other responsibilities. It took me a while to say clearly that I did not want to be first called baby sitter and that my relationship with Eli would not be a by-product of Michael's time schedule. He could and did find other alternatives, like I and every other single parent have done. Cold? Calculated? No, a means of being true to myself. Friends in similar circumstances have chosen to co-parent but that would have been a cop-out for me. Eight months ago,

Michael and Eli moved back to L.A. I didn't want them to go so far away but I didn't expect Michael to live his life in order to keep Eli where I could see him. In a recent phone conversation Eli's first words were to tell me about his new gun. In giving up control, you do give up control.

I have not once during these years felt I made a mistake in choosing not to live with Eli. I have not felt remorse, but I have at various times felt guilt. I failed as a mother; I lack grit. Accusing fingers point from within and without. I've found that my responses get confused by the people who I am working or hanging out with. When I spend most of my time with women who don't have or desire children, who are fulfilled in their work, I feel clear and satisfied by my choice. In fact, I feel thrilled by it. Recently, however, I was spending a lot of time in a totally child-centered commune. I respect and appreciate the interaction that happens between children and bigger people there and it is helping me work out my relationship with my daughter. But, it also pushed my guilt button. I lost perspective and all of a sudden child raising became the most important and meaningful action possible. Instead of one path it became the path - a ridiculous assumption in an overpopulated world. Anyway, I felt depressed and confused. When I thought about Eli tears would come to my eyes and the tenderness between a friend and her curly blond boy child was painful. I was a failure. (F in red pencil.) When I grasped what was happening to me, how subtly I was again accepting others' needs and realities as my own, I realized fully perhaps for the first time that not only had I not "failed", but in fact I had succeeded. I as a woman had made a very difficult but important life sustaining choice.

For me personally it had been a coup d'etat in terms of my own development but its political significance can't be overlooked. I am helping create an alternative for other women outside accepted role patterns. The internalized motherhood stereotypes are really cracking. But I also find that when I feel uncentered or unhappy with myself I am more susceptible to guilt. It is an easy club to beat myself with - too easy. I think the time has come to dig a little deeper. I am bored feeling a guilt I don't believe in.

I don't deny that along with this manufactured guilt I have felt a true loss at not being able to share Eli's young life with him. That pain doesn't go away but I also know the joy which is the other side of that coin. The miracle of a quiet moment and the possibilities of what that peace might birth are never ending delights. Also, I haven't erased Eli from my life or emotions and I wonder if Allison's father hasn't divorced himself so completely from his daughter in order to not feel that pain. Total obliteration isn't real or necessary and I hope as Eli grows older to keep the lines of communication open between us.

Feminism has profoundly affected my relationships with my children, but I look forward to the day when it has so affected this society that the negative bonds that tie mother and child together in suffocating destructive patterns will be broken. ♀

I Mourn My Sister's Suffering

This morning as I leisurely enjoyed my second cup of coffee I reached for the local suburban newspaper and read with horror that a 36 year old woman had been murdered during the night. A neighbor had seen the figure of a man with a gun standing in her doorway. Even though I did not know her personally, nor her two children, nor her estranged husband (described by the press as having no regular address or place of employment), nor her co-workers where she was employed as secretary, I wept for her. She was my sister.

I was overcome with outrage at this violent act, a symbol of the final or ultimate sacrifice of personhood which men have historically demanded of us as a separate species: Woman.

The male/female relationship has probably best been characterized by the female's willingness to sacrifice any or every portion of her own individual needs, goals and basic personhood. Direct confrontation was out, so she developed covert manipulative methods. I consider it a frightening statistical fact, that married women make more suicide attempts and carry out "successful" suicides at an alarmingly higher rate than single women.

I personally find intimate relationships with men draining. I find myself in a pingpong cycle, getting the emotional support I need from women so I can be strong enough to hassle it out with men. I find myself representing every female relationship they have experienced from mother on down; taking on an interaction with them, means taking on their garbage and accumulated myths. It is tiring to discover that each friendship turns out to be a CR experience for both of us.

Some men, in their honest groping search for new roles to play, are themselves many times lost and it takes a very self-assured woman to gently guide them in the relationship. It is, however, a fine line between guiding and teaching a person to allow himself to be free with you and yet not attempting to dominate him, denying his needs, under the guise of your own liberation.

I have watched women friends try to please men who cannot be pleased, remembering as little girls that pleasing their fathers and grandfathers and uncles brought them love and acceptance. The circles enclosing their worlds grow smaller and smaller as they try harder and harder to please until they are mere things, objects. Their life energies sapped and dissipated, they either give one last sigh and surrender, or take a deep breath and come out fighting.

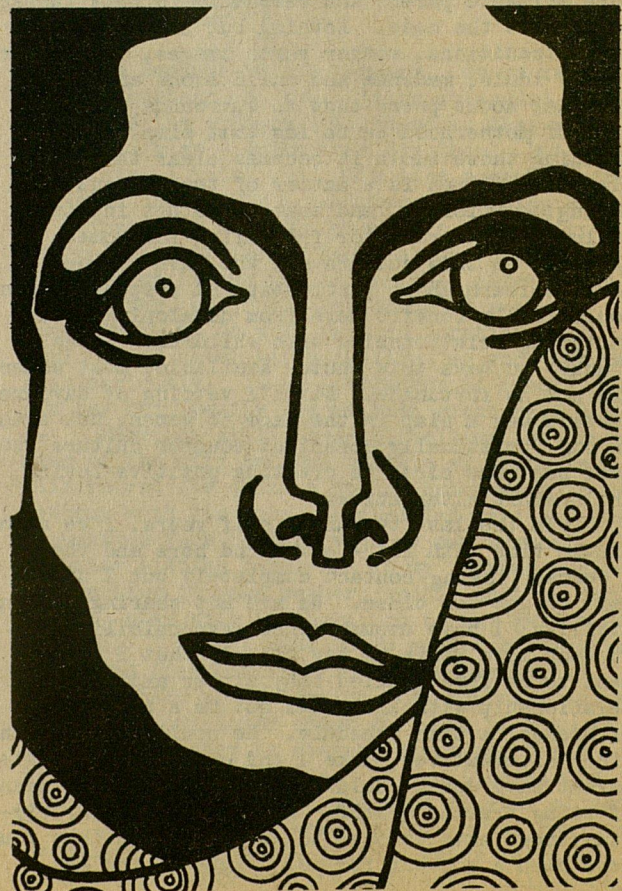
The tension of being powerless. The waiting and knowing that with each strange shadowy figure on a dimly lit street your very existence could be wiped out, or with luck you would only be raped, molested and beaten. The physical power, the physical meat-muscle

strength which is held over women from the time they are small wobbling toddlers and are threatened with "When Father Comes Home," or the gangs of boys on the way home from school - the pushing, shoving, hair pulling, rock or snowball throwing, or the adolescent male sadistically teasing with an arm twist or a locked grip on your wrist. This constant taunting of Muscle Power over our bodies as we remember the neighbor lady with the cauliflower ears from her husband's beatings. The very real vulnerability of our experiences recorded permanently in our minds and ever interfering with assertiveness in our adult day-to-day relationships with men.

How many ways do men kill women? Killing us softly, slowly, eating away at our capabilities, our self-confidence, our dignity, self respect and self esteem; eroding our hopes and dreams, the Dream Killers, the Mind Killers, the Soul Killers, and the epitome of their domination, when we act out their final demand and take our lives or have them taken from us.

So today I mourn my sister's death, shot in the head with a shotgun by her former husband, and I mourn the suffering that all of my sisters have received at the hands of the men they loved.

♀



GROWING PAINS

March 23

Coming back after three months away and it feels like a lifetime. I feel as though I hardly know Pamela; it's as though we have just met instead of as though we had just shared the last year of our lives together, intimately. She became lovers with Harriet two weeks before I came back from the trip. (Became lovers? Is that right? Made love three times with Harriet and still is? I have no objectivity and have a hard time being accurate. Are they lovers? Are we lovers? What is a lover?)

I'm prey to whole ranges of emotion from despairing withdrawal to confidence. I distrust my instinctive withdrawal, my automatic insulation against vulnerability and pain. At the spring equinox celebration my third day back, Harriet came up to me while I was in the circle to say good bye. Then she walked out and Pam followed her. They were gone what seemed like a long time and though my consciousness was in the circle, it also followed them. Repressing freaking out, I closed myself down. Then they returned to the circle and sat next to each other, across from me. I wanted to leave. What scared me most was that I couldn't feel the pain. I was conscious only of wanting to give them space, to remove myself, to abdicate. The next night I sat editing Pam's article about sexuality and I thought Jesus, this is masochism to be doing this mostly to please her, partly to be doing something together, to be more real. I was hating Harriet that night, all my muscles hurting as I hear about and read about their relating or when I see Pam's car parked there on my way to work in the early morning. But last night I talked to Harriet on the phone and remembered that she is Harriet and I'm Sherry and we've known each other a long time and none of that has changed.

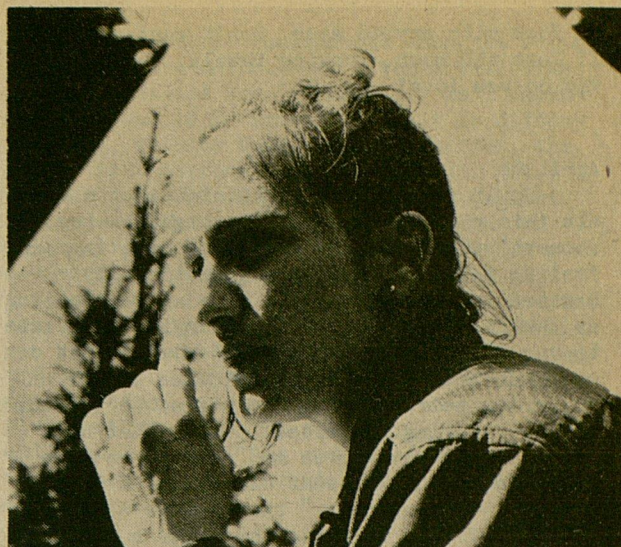
March 28

Got the weather women's book of poetry last night. One of them was like a gentle voice of hope and perspective:

In my steep and scary path
you were an unexpected
green meadow
where I rested and sunned myself
awhile;
I know I can never go back
to that place.
But next time, farther on, you may be
a dark brook flowing through
a mossy canyon
or a tree
tall and still against the sky
at the top of a hill.

April 4

Just stormed out of Pamela's house yelling "You two fucking dilettantes. You've never



worked a day in your lives. I hate you." because she had just told me that she and Harriet had arranged to spend weekends together while I was at work. Came home to find Harriet walking out of my house saying, "I just missed you." I said, "Well, that's good because I just told Pam I didn't want to see you or her ever again!" (the "ever again" I regretted immediately because it spoiled the whole effect with hyperbole, obviously I'm not going to be able to live up to that one.) But Harriet's shocked face was exactly the sort of scene I wanted. Then I debated being even more outrageous like tearing up my article for the magazine or writing lies! lies! all over it, but neither of those really help my pain and anger. There is a voice inside of me that says that Pam says she wants a relationship with me. But what do I do about the fact that we have only made love twice since I returned? Or that the best we can manage to be together is fighting or carefully comfortable? Or the fact that I want stability and security now and I do not trust her enough to be nonmonogamous? But it's also my choice not to trust her. She says she wants a relationship, but what kind? On her terms? The old seesaw. I obviously want to feel angry and mean. What I wonder is whether this relationship is self-destructive for me or whether if I stop, I'll be hurting myself more than protecting myself from hurt. Certainly if I withdraw as much as I'm wanting to, the chances are she won't come looking for me. So I have to do what I want to do. Cause here's only me, baby. That's all there is.

Ten minutes later and a little drunker I wish we lived on the same land or that I had stayed to fight it out, because at heart, oh hearts, god what do I want one for? I don't; I didn't ask for it; because at heart, she is my friend and I do love and respect her. And I don't want to be distant from her I just want to know she loves me and I want her not

continued

to fuck with anyone else. Don't want much do I? Just the moon, knowing Pamela. Who, who, who do you love?

April 26

Spent one of those hard nights with Pamela this week, up most of the night, being "honest" which means mostly communicating and feeling pain. I left feeling emotionally drained, wanting space and time alone, feeling as though it's not time to be trying to relate to her, this interaction isn't what I want or need. In spite of all the evidence of her unflinching self honesty, I mistrust her, wonder if she is lying to herself or me. What does it mean that she "loves me?" I have not the least idea. But it seems clear that I do not want this "spontaneity" that she is seeking. Oh shit. Trying to write this like a story, in the right chronological order, when I'm seething with feelings and tension. Pam's car is at Harriet's this morning. And though I'd decided to retreat, I find myself feeling mistrust and anger. She's "not into sex" right now (except with Harriet?); she wants "spontaneity" (how convenient that Harriet's house spontaneously lies at the beginning of the road). Well I guess she can spontaneously relate to someone else - but then I can only really say that through repression since I am shaking with anger and the desire to hurt both of them. Barely resisting picking up the phone and making an outrageous scene again. What does it mean this violent hostility when I have chosen not to relate because Pam doesn't know I'm choosing not to, so her choices are not in response to what I'm doing. And obviously I want her to be alone if she's not with me and I also must want to hurt her or to have power over her. And I want to not be caught in this web of wanting, I want not to be in love with her, not because I don't want to be in love, but because it is so painful and impossible with Pam. And I feel almost as cynically bitter as I did with my husband. It seems as though it is only within the context of a relationship - some sort of security and trust - that I can experience acceptance and love. Otherwise I become egocentrically blind, deaf, and crazy.

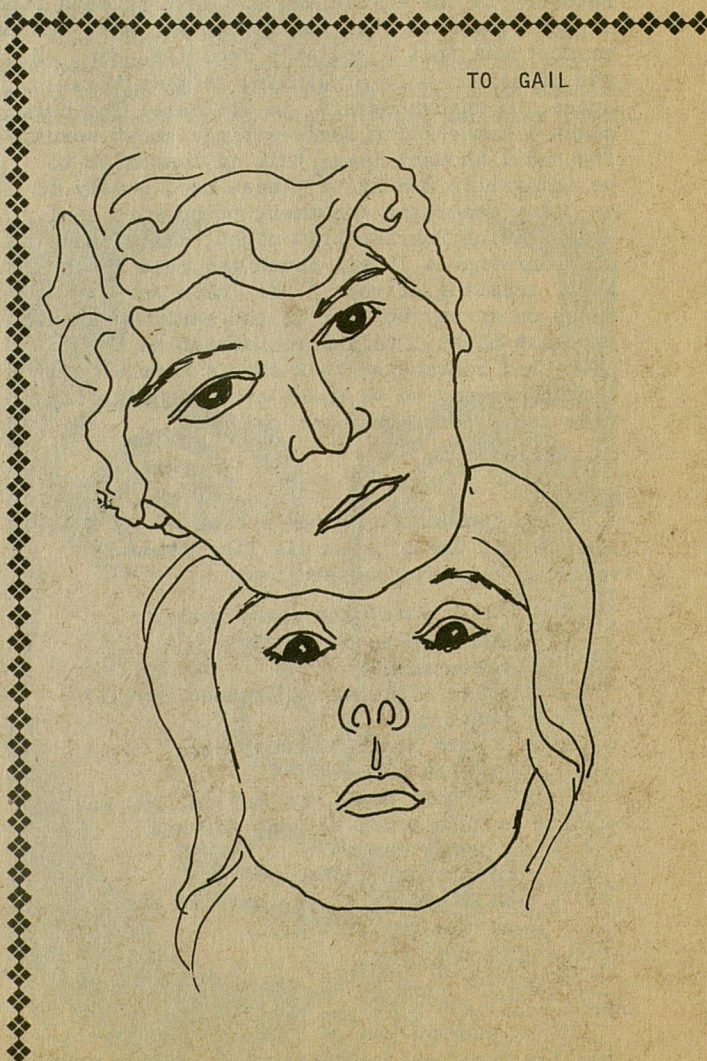
The last time I saw her, Pam said that my mistrust was indicative of my system of projections. She says she would not hurt me or be manipulative or do anything except what she has to to be honest with and to herself, to be herself. There are a million possible things she might have been doing yesterday and last night, yet I seize on one particular explanation (that she went deliberately to be and sleep with Harriet) that will cause me the most possible pain and then hate her for the pain. I use her honesty against her. She told me two weeks ago that she set out to see me, got dropped at the end of the road, stopped and stayed at Harriet's instead because Harriet's house came first. So now I wonder when I see her car, did she start to come to

me and go to Harriet's instead? I hate Harriet for living three miles closer. Yet wasn't it an outrageously hurtful thing for Pam to say in the first place (or to do, knowing I'd just left her and was wanting her to come?) That is what I don't trust I guess - that everything should be acceptable in the name of "honesty." But I don't like this storing and re-using of old pains that I do, giving them four or five times their original value and power. Feeling more at peace now, writing all this out - expressing it - has released some of the tension, opened me to seeing and understanding myself.

July 12

The day and a half after my birthday were burned up in rage, my whole self in subservience to a relationship, to the desire to be loved. Pamela did not come for my birthday or the day after. That she did try, though not hard enough, to make it, is irrelevant. The problem's not the question of her fault but of my self-abnegation, of my total vulnerability to what she does. I do not want to be

TO GAIL



that crazy, whatever I have to do. It's like killing myself, going mad (literally, for days) with pain and despair. Resenting and hating the woman who forces me to be born again, to rediscover my self. The night she did come after my birthday, we talked late, lying side by side, not touching. Ideas flowing between us as they have in the past, being able to say anything, our words precise. I do not know if it would be more honest or simply indulgent of nostalgia and old forms, to hold her as we talk, to lie curled and relaxed with her, to see if passion flows there. Somehow that hard night of constraint and restraint was a purging too. We are not lovers now and I feel better knowing that, facing its reality. Whatever we do (and we may make love) however much we love each other, our real work is not with each other right now. It might be more accurate to say that her work is not with me. I can't feel my own movements clearly right now. None of the old images have to hold. We do not have to be lovers and not lovers. We only can be who we are. That's not true. I do feel less able to be close, to share, because images inhibit my spontaneousness and because

If we had met

at another time in our lives,

we would have

roamed streets together,

stayed out late

talking

in small cafes,

criticized each other's

writing.

As it is,

we talk of our

daughters

and make a friendship

that allows for a hundred

other realities.

As it is,

we can only

smile at each other

when our conversation

has been broken into

one more time.

it is easier to be spontaneous when the motion and energy are mutual. Too often I feel like a supplicant and too infrequently do I remember that she is my friend. Yes, it is different, yes, we have both changed. And yes, the energy is transformed and diminished. But I want to find out who we are now, to explore what we can share, perhaps even to find an intimacy that I haven't known before that goes beyond the personal pain we cause each other into a deeper level of acceptance. I'm not the same person that I was a year ago and I would not trade that time of learning and searching and occasionally of wonderful fearlessness, for anything, not even a more secure and happier present. What I'm struggling to recognize and accept is that the movement of separation is as inherent and inevitable as the movement of convergence.

July 15

Spent today with Pamela. We had an appointment to meet and work on her horse pasture fence. The appointment was my idea, a way to relieve my persistent insecurity, to know we'd see each other one day each week. And to find something to do together besides worry about the past. Today did all I had hoped for and more. I wouldn't have gone without the appointment - sheep need shearing and I find myself using the "we are not lovers now" description as a reason to keep myself away. But I did have the appointment and did go and we set 24 fence posts, more than she's done in a month. And she got high and I got high and we were even able to hug and touch each other without self-consciousness or tension. And I was able to leave feeling satisfied and relaxed, instead of hurting and rejected. All in all, it is a good breakthrough. We have been talking about learning to work together for more than a year and I've been saying how physical work is at the essence of my life and that I can't share that reality with her. Seems like I am working myself back to sanity.

July 17

The day after our high day together, Pam came to the printshop down the road to print the school book. Sent the children down to visit me and said she'd try to come later. Didn't come, didn't call. Came the next day to get the truck I'd borrowed, a swift hello/goodby. No contact. One brief look. Heartsore was the word that came to me in the garden. Weary, worn down pain that is no longer pain. Just a slow dull diffused ache. Heart ache. How cliches come home. I wish I had poems in me. If this is freedom and honesty, this callousness of hers, I want no part of it. It's not my way and I see no virtue in such egotism. Harriet says she feels like she's falling in love with Pam and I think she's welcome to it. I am becoming more and more free. But not free to love her; free from loving her. Free from vulnerability to whim and caprice. I'm a little on the make these days. Pursuing Morningstar and Tommy, wanting to open up my heart. Letting fantasies run riot and enjoying

continued

the confidence and openness. Hoping fantasy and projection don't take me over completely. I'm feeling ready to experiment with relationships, feeling as though I have nothing left to lose and a lot to gain. Yet knowing there is also a hunger in me for commitment and longevity. For family or partner. Not for nothing did I learn the joy of independence with Pam and I doubt I'll trap myself in mutual propping up.

July 18

Came in from doing chores to hear the phone ringing.

"Hello?"

"Is this Sherilyn Thomas?" The voice familiar, but I'm not quite sure who.

"Yes."

"Well, this is Pamela Abell and what I have to say is go fuck yourself."

Pause. Very shocked I try to collect a response. "Well, that's about what I have to say to you."

"I know. I think that's what you feel all the time only you pretend something else or try to make something happen..."

"Things have changed because of the last time you were here and..."

"Nothing's changed. You just try to pretend that..."

I hung up the phone. It was the flash of an instant. But also a conscious choice to not be vulnerable to her hurt transformed into insults and hurtfulness. Can't call back, don't know where she was calling from.

I'm not even completely sure what caused the call. Last night I thought of sending her a note to say I was cancelling our Monday appointment, but waited to test the motives, to find the right words. I'm very conscious of the push-pull game right now, the "you don't love me if you don't pursue me" syndrome. Then I accidentally ran into her at the post office this morning, debated saying that I was cancelling Monday, decided I was too unclear and did not want a scene. So instead I moved away and did not speak to her at all. Something like what she did to me when she came to get the car. I realize now that I assumed that it didn't matter to her what I did, that nothing I could do would cause her pain.

I think this really is the end of us for a while, the long, belated, drawn out end. What do I feel? A little relief if I can really stop, move away, reconstruct a life. Not much pain yet but I've had a glass of scotch and am anesthetized. And glad that I have a murder mystery at hand, seeking to submerge my consciousness, not to explore it. I think this is an ending and I have made it. I don't think she'll seek me out of my shell and I don't think I wish she would. Not entirely true, I did hear a car on the road and think she might be coming to finish the hung-up conversation. But I have to acknowledge now that she won't and that I have made it so she won't. I've walked out and hung up too many times.

July 20

Pamela did come. Arrived in the middle of the night and woke me up to continue the fight. Accused me not only of cutting her at the Post Office but of manipulating Harriet and Slim to do so too (which I didn't). I said how she had fucked me over about picking up the car, and she said she had just picked up the car. I said she has no concern for anyone but herself. She said I was just "on a regular old lover trip." I screamed "get out of my house and leave me alone." She said, "O.K., it's your house and you can make the rules." I said, "Get out and god damn you for waking me up and causing me this much pain." I went into the kitchen and put on water for tea, conscious that if she would leave I would switch to scotch instead. She said, "I'll leave but you can't shut me out of your life you know because I won't play it that way." I said, "Yes I can. I don't want to see you, be with you, and I won't." She said, "I'm not your husband and you're not going to get rid of me like that. I'm going to work with you on the magazine and I'm going to mail magazines out of your house and you're going





with the tea and lay down and began to sob into the pillow, not wanting to feel the pain, not being able to stop it. Later she came into the bedroom and put a piece of paper on the bed beside me which I threw on the floor to have to relate to me." And I said, "Get out of my house or I'll knock your teeth down your throat" and went back into the bedroom and said "Leave me alone!" She said, "I just want you to know that I love you and you can't change that or stop it." After a while I sat up and said, "I don't lie to myself about loving you. I just don't want you in my life." And we both started to cry, and held each other and held hands. She said, "Thank you for telling me that." I said, "I feel like it's a question of my sanity and I'm pulling myself back together thread by thread." Later she said, "I feel like I've been good for so long, all that time you were sick, I just don't want to be good anymore. I feel like you haven't been a friend to me when I want to share my life with you. If we weren't talking about our relationship, you wouldn't talk with me." And so after a while she did talk to me about troubles at home and about going to visit the father of her younger child. And I offered what I could until it was nearly dawn and we both had talked past clairvoyance into silence. And we held hands until I said, "O.K., you can spend the night." She said, "It's up to you, I can go home." I said, "It's

a bit like with Arnie; I make these pronouncements like I am a lesbian" or "I don't want to see you again" and then they don't fit who I am and I have the choice of consistency or honesty. So let's go to bed." We made love like intimate strangers. Her body thin, almost fragile, a surprise; no patterns or familiar motions, staying conscious of each action, response. Yet we also moved in tune. And in the morning which came very quickly I did chores and fixed her breakfast and said, "I will help you with your fence, but I'm still wanting space and to be alone." So I have been alone and feel some measure of peace now. It's better this way than estranged in anger and not understanding. She isn't my husband and it doesn't seem to end and I suspect it would be a whole lot easier if it did.

July 26

The editorial collective meeting turned out really well. Pam and I enjoying each other and talking on three levels at once. I invited her to stay and she did. We sat talking until almost dawn, about her school, me and Slim, her and Alice; she read this journal and we talked about ourselves. It feels like the old days since that last bad fight - enjoying each other's heads, playing with words, thoughts, images. Her energy and intensity - excites and ignites me. Fragile, hollow boned, she is a light, live burning fire. I could easily fall in love with her all over again.

August 6

Went away on a trip with River for a day and a half. Nearly non-stop talking which happens every time we get together. Mostly it was a long conversation about relationships, both of us groping our way along the same path feeling fear, feeling excited. In my optimism I'm envisioning a long term relationship with Pamela - sometimes as lovers, often as friends, that can survive and weave itself around each of our other relationships, around our lives, our real selves. The true test is whether it can withstand either of us forming a relationship of equal intensity and importance. (Heaven forbid of greater intensity!) It's like being my very best and clearest self all the time, breaking through patterns that are as deeply ingrained in me as the English language, creating new images of how humans can be to change those that surround me all day every day. River spoke of how Robert is not and never will be monogamous and how she has to accept that. I was feeling the ways he and Pamela are similar: that craving of experience, that wanting to make love easily. And I said, "I have to learn to love her freedom. I don't have to be like her. But if I'm going to love her, I have to love her making love with other people."

This story has no ending, just as it had no beginning. ♀

SPEAKING OUT!

There was little doubt that I was crazy. At 27 I was unmarried. As I ran swiftly from each "marriage opportunity" I sensed from a deep unspoken place that, despite family pressure, I never wanted to settle into that cage, and I knew that was the wrong way to feel. Once I had thrown the I Ching to "Do not marry this woman." I was devastated.

I knew also a nameless anger towards men. Where was this anger from? Obviously I had only my mother to blame. The men in my life were intelligent, gentle, interesting, attractive, in short, nothing to complain about. And yet, there it was, hostility, almost scorn in believing myself more capable than they. "What you need is a good man to tame you," a psychiatrist once told me. I agreed. But I had known many good men and I was still not tamed, so clearly, I was mad.

I remember the moment well - the change from I to we. Reading the New York Times one Sunday afternoon, a picture of Robin Morgan sitting on a couch, a caption which changed my life; something about the "anger of women." Women are angry; it's not just me? It was my first step into women's liberation, this realization that there was, indeed, something to be angry about, that I was not just crazy.

From that moment to today has not been a simple step. It has taken me through consciousness raising, through compromised struggles with men, through learning from those struggles, through working and growing and learning with my sisters, to an ever-increasing awareness of who I am, what I want and with whom I want to share it. Sometimes it feels so exhausting that I wish I could turn time backwards and try once again to believe in the myth - prince charming, a family and security. I have a fantasy of hiding, as a mid-western housewife, from the person I have become.

But liberation was a choice which, once faced with, I had to make, as it so clarified my feelings and the direction I was going in.

Its meaning has been a day by day change from "I can't, I don't know how" to "I'll figure it out; I can do it" and a growing self-respect for who I am and what I want. I feel a powerful sense of unity with women, of sisterhood, and a strong commitment to change.

At a women's conference years ago the black women's group addressed the others on what we could do to fight racism and sexism: respond to racist and sexist remarks whenever they happen; do not let them just pass. I have taken that very seriously although I often feel isolated and frightened as I speak. A man once asked me how it feels to hear people groan as I open my mouth to say something. If

one person begins to think about her/his sexism it was worth it.

I often feel like the "resident feminist" counted on to be the one to speak out. At a free school meeting a man kept referring to children as "he" (although most of the students were girls). Unable to sit quietly any longer I pointed out that there were girls in the school as well. He turned to me angrily, "Well, I only have sons," and continued as before. No one, not even his daughter sitting opposite him, made any protest. I felt shut down, unsupported and even shocked at the hostility of a man I had supposed to be fairly conscious.

The same has happened with non-feminist women. I sat through a community center meeting listening to, "If anyone has tools he should come and help to build." At the end I pointed out the sexist quality of the meeting and explained that this was one of the reasons the feminists in the community do not put energy into the center. A woman lashed out, "Put your money where your mouth is." It was a man who came over after to agree with me but no one else had said anything when it might have made a difference.

I wonder why it must always be me? Surely other feminists are equally aware and equally offended. Is it that my tolerance is lower, or that my commitment to change in this way, my willingness to "stick my neck out," is higher?

I have found myself in this position with women as well. In a consciousness raising group, at the first meeting I attended, every woman was against me as I confronted someone about her husband who did childcare only when he felt like it. (She had been complaining about not having time to do the things she wanted for herself and did not seem to make the connection between this and her husband's leisure.) We were almost shouting at each other. A few weeks later she told me she realized I had been right but that I had really "pushed her button" and she announced to the group that she had left her daughter with her husband for the day, without asking permission, to do something for herself.

Sometimes speaking out can be immediately rewarding. A demonstration at a workshop seemed to me sexist. I sat and watched, uncomfortable with my silence until I finally said something. A wonderful, meaningful discussion followed and sexism became an important topic which the workshop then took up seriously and a number of women came to me with their support.

But creating change, speaking out, can not only be frightening, it is often tire-

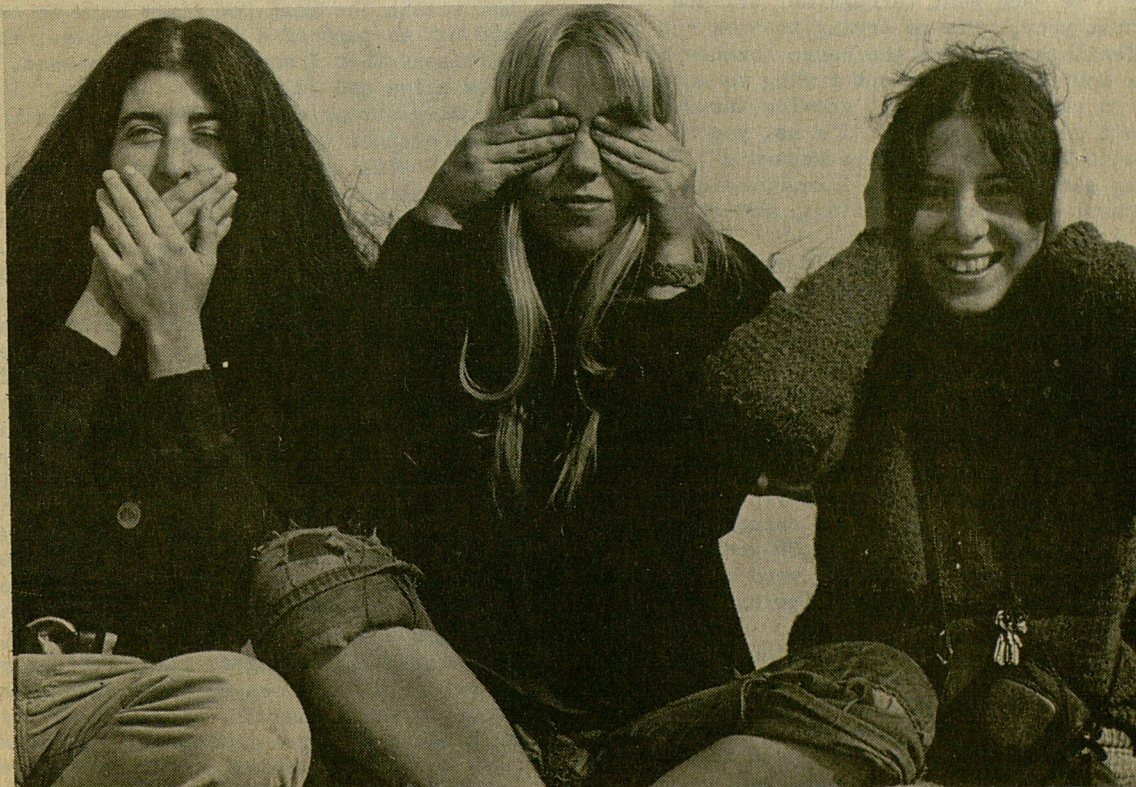
some. It feels as if I have had some conversations 100 times. How do you say to a man, "I am not a girl or a lady; I am a woman, without becoming involved in a discussion/argument that begins with "I don't mean anything bad when I say girl," or "Words don't mean much to me," or "Don't tell me what to say." I am trying to learn to deal with men without creating hostility so that what I say, perhaps even if threatening, can be heard. I have found this a particular problem lately as I am taking classes in town and have had to relate to men there.

At first, coming out of a feminist community into the community-at-large was almost disorienting, suddenly having to relate to men, especially as my teachers. There was both internal and external conflicts as I tried to resolve my hostility. By keeping in mind that men are also human, and it was important to relate to them as such and that I was there to learn and could not do so in a hostile atmosphere, I was finally able to develop good, friendly working relationships with them. What I say is listened to, respected and even assimilated. I commented recently on a welcome change of wording that one of my teachers has

made, "With your patience and help," he replied. We have had numerous discussions, our perspective is very different, but as he himself points out, he is learning from me as I from him.

Having the reputation of "feminist" can be a problem in relation to non-feminist women, as they sometimes become defensive about their relationships with men, but I also find that they are anxious to share their negative feelings towards men and readily can see these experiences within a feminist perspective. At heart every woman is a feminist. Though I am impatient and fed up about consciousness raising with men, I am willing to expend considerable energy talking with women. Women's liberation has touched everywhere and it is truly beautiful to see non-feminists' new found independence and assertiveness.

Feminism is a revolution. It has the potential to totally change the order of things, the way people relate to each other. Such change is not easy. It starts with each of us as our personal responsibility. It is lonely and frightening to speak out. It is my contribution to our revolution. ♀



THE SOUND OF PATTERNS

We met eight years ago. I was eighteen, he was 21; we both lived in a communal house and gradually, we "fell in love". A typical story perhaps. Our love grew. My friends often asked "how do you and Mark stay so high together?" We continued living together, a model couple in many ways; we fought rarely and spent most of our time with one another.

A few years passed. We decided to experiment with living non-communally, just the two of us. We spent around half a year in this way, becoming more of a Couple, more one half of each other (our names spoken together as though we were one person, not two.). Our days, our nights, we spent together; usually with other friends included but with the clear knowledge that we were special to and for each other.

We talked occasionally about non-monogamy. "What," I would ask, "if you met someone and you really liked her and you really wanted to make love with her?" (Always assuming that it would be he who would be in this position.) But these discussions were not real to me. They were a way to pass time but did not threaten me with the winds of change.

The wheel of karma turned again, and it changed. I fell in love with another friend. I didn't fall out of love with Mark, but my focus had shifted. Suddenly our discussions came down from the plane of intellect into our reality. We each went through our private hells that year, with me trying to work out my guilt feelings at being the cause somehow of all our depressions. I kept trying to explain myself as realizations kept growing inside me "We can't own each other"; "I'm me, you're you, we're one being but also separate"; "We're chaining each other down". I kept trying to be supportive of Mark's feelings, but it was, all in all, a painful time.

Which brings me to why I'm writing about non-monogamy. We worked, somehow, through that year. We decided, once again, to live communally. We kept on being a couple, kept on struggling through the changes, moved to the country. Our fantasy "ideal commune".

As we grew, and as I became involved in a consciousness raising group, I started to see the personal reality of my own changes as part of a larger political reality. I was no longer isolated in my desire to change the bonds of our coupleness. Women in my CR group, in fact, women all over the world, were also beginning to change their relationships and break out of the old patterns.

Mark and I talked about living in separate spaces. Again, we both went through pain and insecurity. Would we love each other less if we didn't share every minute of our lives? Would we still want to focus our energy on each other? Did we feel strong enough to deal with the unexpected changes?

But of course, once the seed idea had been planted, it was only a few months before we

tried it. That was a good time. I felt strong in our love and strong in our attempts at re-becoming individuals. If I was occasionally frightened by not being always with him, I carried myself through the fear by assuring myself that I was doing the right thing, or by going to him or to any of my friends, for a reassuring hug.

It's two years later now. We have each had other friends, other lovers. For the last ten months we haven't lived on the same land and the changes inside feel new and familiar at the same time. Often it's still hard for me to not see him every day. There's a certain security I feel in hearing his voice singing on the path in the woods. I get frightened by not experiencing his day by day changes; I don't want to lose the closeness I feel with him. I sometimes think he doesn't want to see me or spend time with me and I get a horrible choked up feeling as though I'm all empty inside. On my most depressed days I wish we were still married, living together and that I had never cracked open this Pandora's box of change.

Still, my overview of the situation is a good one: I feel I am more open in my other, newer relationships because I no longer put a major focus on my coupleness. I have my own life, my own growth and changes. People I've met within the last few years know me as myself and not as part of a severed couple. The emptiness that I sometimes feel passes, and I am alive and full of life and joy. I am becoming strong and independent going through these changes inside of myself.

I still get much support and love from our relationship. We are still lovers; I feel a strong commitment to our friendship, and a strong bond connecting our hearts.

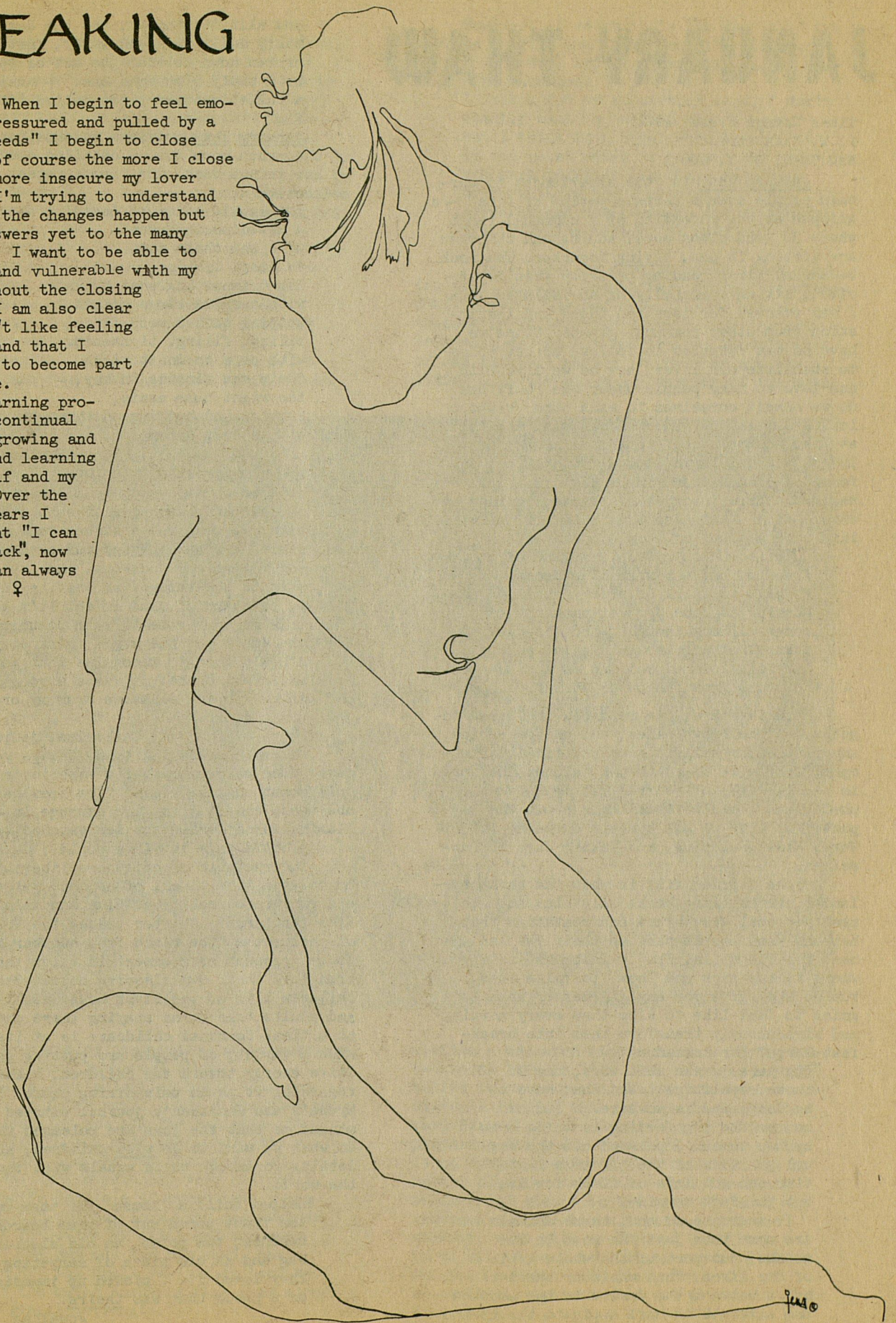
I feel as though I've learned a lot, but of course the learning process never stops. When I meet someone now and feel love for them, I do not think we will be together for ever and ever. I feel open to having close friends, open to having close lovers, but I do not wish to share every second of my life with one other person. There are so many aspects to my being, and I share different parts of myself with the many people I love.

It isn't always easy to explain my new vision of myself to a lover. So often we play out patterns that we no longer really believe in because we have not yet forged the new ones. I become close to someone, we make love, and suddenly it all changes. Expectations begin to creep in; if I see my lover once a week she feels insecure and unloved. If I see my friends that often they are glad to see me and we can just be there together. If I see my lover every other day, I begin to feel too coupled and want to withdraw. I want to be friends with my lovers without the desires and insecurities creeping in but I don't know yet if this is

BREAKING

possible. When I begin to feel emotionally pressured and pulled by a lover's "needs" I begin to close down, and of course the more I close down, the more insecure my lover becomes. I'm trying to understand what makes the changes happen but have no answers yet to the many questions. I want to be able to stay open and vulnerable with my lovers without the closing down, but I am also clear that I don't like feeling pressured and that I don't want to become part of a couple.

The learning process is a continual one, I am growing and changing and learning about myself and my friends. Over the last few years I have thought "I can never go back", now I know I can always go forward. ♀



JANUARY THAW

Times Change Press \$3.25
62 W. 14th Street
New York, N. Y. 10011

January Thaw is "the experiences of certain people over a certain period of time" - a glimpse at the unfolding of a communal ranch where 30 (and often more) adults and children are working it out, living together. The book became my first reading priority when it arrived; living communally in an isolated area I was starved for news and ideas and inspiration from other communal groups. Since we have no pat formulas to follow, no set roles to stabilize our lives, how do we live with and love so many people under one roof? How do we commit ourselves to each other without losing our independence? I was glad the folks at Blue Mountain could openly discuss their lives, without laying out a rationalized defense of communalism. The myths and tribal magic are here, stories of peyote meetings and circle sings, but also the truths of daily life with a group of people. Geba says,

"Our isolation gives us a kind of freedom, but our work is endless. We have to think of every detail. Nothing is done for us, nothing comes without thought. And the randomness of our thought is incredible. Our life is a circus. An asylum. Refugees from the outer world. . ."

Here they are, the refugees, gathered together in their own names, not united behind any particular religious or political philosophy, making it up as they go along. The book is a collection of journal entries, poems, photographs, and informal raps about the phases of life we all concern ourselves with: Work, Kids, Relating, and Taking Care of Ourselves.

These stories fill in what the backtothe-lander homesteading books only hint at: the real personal growth and confrontation that happens when people pack up their VWs and head for the hills. The "guidebooks" tell you where to buy pigs and "how" to raise them, but do they give you any glimmer of what it's going to feel like to slop them every morning and miraculously transform them into breakfast bacon? For instance:

"Pig care. . . was shit work, one of those repetitive tasks that have to be done, and is nowhere. . . And of course the pig feeding is being done by two women. I pointed out the sexual politics of the pig trip last time and got lots of flack for it, but the fact remains.

It seems to me that these animals are more than just the meat in our mouths, but part of the whole cycle of our lives. That whatever barriers exist between the desire to use muscles and strength to hurl a pig to the ground

and slit its throat, and the desire to carry daily food and water, must be broken down so that the act of death can be a truly righteous one." - Ahni, from a bulletin board piece called "Off the Pig"

January Thaw provides an emotional tour of the ranch more than a detailed description of how things work. The themes repeat in the collective story:

the exhilaration of learning a new skill:
A new consciousness
with the chain saw,
falling, limbing,
Bob-O imparting what he knows
with careful virgo spirit,
cutting butter wood flesh,
oiling, filing, tightening,
with care to do it right.
Chain saw singing in key,
the right tune again,
humming and huffing on through
to the next water bar.

Skyllark

the slow growing into love:

"It's so obvious that we all want to live in love and harmony with each other. Doing it requires a sincere effort to see each other, beyond our apparent insecurities and fuck-ups, and love anyway. This is something I am just beginning to be aware of, and I feel it's going to take me some time to warm up to people who don't act the way I think they should. It felt good to recognize that in myself and realize that it was a strong factor in my keeping distance from my brothers and sisters."

Catherine, journal entry

The rush of daring to do things we have never done before: Amber's experience as the only woman on a 100 "man" fire crew had me hot and tense cheering for her courage in the flaming forest while the men watched to see if she could take it. (She could.)

The rhetoric of childcare liberation is by now familiar to all of us, and yet still evolving into reality at Blue Mountain. The Kids (children?) Chapter traces the "ourstory" of children at the ranch from nuclear family to the present arrangement in which the children have their own sleeping house. School age children live at the river house 10 miles away and adults take turns staying there one month at a time. Communal childcare is at its best when a variety of people are putting good positive energy toward the children, rather than regarding it as an uninspiring chore. Both Myeba's and Jonathan's journal entries reminded me that the joys are released when we do what we want to do with children, and by letting go enough to be equals with them in the world.

"Helped build a 'house' for them on the front porch out of some boards, benches, two poles, an old sleeping bag and an old piece of carpeting. They loved it. . . picked up immediately on a place that was theirs."

Jonathan

and

It's hard for me to be with the children ..Hard 'cause of an attitude of my own I must seek to change: get 'em into something so I can do something else. (later playing ball) It was really nice to do that, to play with them, be in the sun together. .

Myeba

Blue Mountain is a minicosm of the sexual liberation movements everywhere - emerging gay consciousness, women getting together in a women's house, men reaching out to each other, breaking down the competitive ego games they have learned. It seems that no one escapes the upheavals of marriage break-up, new lovers coming and going, venturing into the sexual unknown.

The sexism involved in work must be encountered and overcome again and again. Myeba

However, it seems it is the Spirit of the work we do with men that makes the difference in the end. Gail writes of working at the saw-mill with four men:

"I felt a lot of support..I mean, I don't exactly want to be 'one of the boys,' but I think it's great when we can get to the point where we - women and men - can work together and learn from each other without the traditional condescension and oneupmanship and deliberate mystification that we're used to."

I feel close to Blue Mountain after reading this, knowing that others do the tight rope dance between the individuality we are so steeped in in Amerikan Kulture, and the collectivism we pay lip service to. This is all of our stories, really, whoever we are becoming - infinitely small segment of the pop-



offers a frustrating perspective after working with the firewood gathering crew:

"There is specialization built into our lives in funny ways. Most of the wood on the landings are big fir and pine. To cut big fir you must use a saw with a long bar. Long-barred saws weigh 40 pounds..It's physically very difficult for me to handle a 40 pound saw. I can do it but not for long. The massiveness of it decreases my skill and accuracy a lot. The men use the big saws, the women use the small saw. It is hard to avoid the macho snobbery that goes along with greater strength."

ulation - educated hippie farmers living the backwoods life in 1975. Are we crazy beyond belief to be returning to woodstoves and subsistence farming while a capsule speeds toward Saturn? Or are we ignorant visionaries, preparing for a day when life in the cities is no longer possible? Blue Mountain has no master plan for the future, but there are schemes and gleams in the eyes of those who continue to live there, cycling with the seasons. What will we become? Sometimes I think all of us potential astronomers and Pulitzer pundits will just grow a lot of broccoli and tell stories and play music late into the night, moving toward the Dawn. ♀

Times Change Press

This article is the first in a series of reviews Country Women will do of some of the alternative presses which are printing exciting material relevant to our personal and collective liberation. The inspiration came this summer when Country Women, in the persona of Harriet, Sherry, and Nancy attended the San Francisco International Book Fair. Its purpose was to introduce libraries and bookstores to the incredible amount of material being published by the counter culture in all its forms. The labels might run something like politicians, feminists, back to the landers, spiritualists, and the poets, but if the truth be known and masks lowered, what seems to be happening is that a lot of people were working really hard, almost like midwives, to give us the tools we need to create the social revolution that is necessary in America today.

I was amazed and regenerated by the quality, the sincerity, non-rhetoricalness, and strength of what was being written and the spirit with which that writing was being shared. Talking to the women from Diana Press, Second Wave, Shameless Hussy, Know, and Women's Press Collective, I was also dismayed at the fact that financially most presses were just breaking even (and that rarely included salaries). We must support as well as create our own media. Since many of these books won't be on the shelves of your local bookstores, I hope this series will be a bridge between these new publishers and Country Women readers.

"Times change and with them their possibilities; times change and with them their demands." This quote from the I Ching provided the name and rationale for Times Change Press which for the last five years has been producing some of the best pamphlets, books, and posters on what they call personal/political liberation. Their themes include women's liberation, communal living, anarchism, gay liberation, third world struggle, men's consciousness raising and youth liberation. Our lives presented by ourselves, the participators, from the inside-out rather than by professional journalists or sociologists. More than sellers of books, Su and Tommy's vision has been to help themselves and others "clarify unrecognized expressions of unfreedom, examine power relationships as closely, inter-relatedly, and comprehensively as possible believing people can recreate their freedom from resources within their own lives and in so doing recapture the power they have been robbed of or unwittingly given up."

I read almost all of the nineteen books they have printed and sat paralysed at my typewriter the last hour deciding on which three to focus on. Thus at this moment, aside from January Thaw, these three were my favorites but if you ask me next week...

Some Pictures From My Life: A Woman's Diary, M Marcia Salo Rizzi \$1.36

This is an extremely potent collage of diary entries, dreams, drawings and photographs that Marcia describes as "an emotional road map" of some of the places she has been. This non linear form allows her to cut right into the heart of life with a brutal honesty about herself, her art, her marriage, her struggles in the new left and women's movement. Her search to free herself is relentless. "It's a man finally who names the streets: superior/inferior, subjective/objective, active/passive, masculine/feminine, He's the MAN. He's inside me naming the paths I'm lost on. He's the patterns of my brain. He's the ringmaster, cracking the whip when I perform in my own magic circus, played out in my nervous system. He won't leave, he must dominate, he has to be ripped out. I'm a battleground. I'm frightened." Marcia's drawings, as powerfully as her words, portray the passionate depth of feeling, a nerve connection with primal despair that mirrors all our souls. Her rebirth is our own.

Amazon Expedition: A Lesbian/Feminist Anthology \$2.25

This is a primer, a source book, a collection of theory, politics, herstory, mythology, culture, celebration and definition of Lesbian-feminism-one concept. It is a beginning in creating a return to matriarchal values. Its beauty lies for me in the amazing variation in thought and form of essays which compose this book. From Ti Grace Atkinson's brilliant analysis of Lesbianism and Feminism; to Florence Rush's unfolding of the Parable of the Mothers and Daughters; to Beth Harris's retelling of Lesbian society in Paris in the 1920's; to Joanna Russ's exploration of the new misandry (man hating) and why it has become such a loaded topic while misogyny remains a comfortable part of our society; each writer adds her perspective. This is not a tourist book about Lesbianism but a joyful attempt at self definition.

Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly: The Lives and Writings of Victoria Woodhull and Tennessee Claflin, Arlene Kismet, Editor/Biographer. \$1.35

Both these books fascinated, inspired and endeared me to the remarkable women whose lives and fights they recount. Emotionally, as well as intellectually, I feel these women are my history and I know that the passion with which they lived watered the well of freedom we all drink from today. "Red Emma", outspoken anarchist feminist, is incredibly beautiful in her denouncements of liberal hypocrisy about prostitution, which she saw as a result of the economic and social inferiority of women. Her essay on Love and Marriage is as penetrating and relevant as anything written today. Repeatedly arrested and jailed for speaking in favor of birth control, turned every courtroom she could into a forum on the rights of women to control their own bodies. She radically opposed the suffragettes of her day who felt sexism would end with the vote, knowing that centuries of tradition would not be wiped out by legal reforms. She called for a revolution begun by women themselves. I could quote

her endlessly, but read the book. Ms. Shulman's short biography insightfully connects Emma's philosophy and the contemporary women's movement.

Likewise, Victoria Woodhull and her sister Tennessee Claflin fought every popular opinion of their day (the 1870's) as they lectured, wrote, and lived their politics. Their weekly-newspaper covered such issues as women's rights, socialism, marxism, spiritualism, "free love", and the labor struggle. This book is an intriguing look at the personhood and charisma of Victoria Woodhull, who received much of her writing in trances, ran for president, took over both cells of the N.Y. communist party and lectured to millions. The motto of her paper was "Progress! Free Thought! Untrammelled Lives Breaking the ground for Future Generations." Arlene Kisner as editor and biographer did an excellent job in conveying the feeling of this extraordinary foremother.

Some other fine books from Times Change not reviewed here are: Alta's book, Momma (\$2.00), a telling of her struggle to be both mother and artist in a world that doesn't give a lot of space for either; Unbecoming Men (\$1.75), a painful exploration by men of the sexism in themselves and their lives; and This Woman (\$1.75), a forceful collection of poems reflecting every aspect of her life. Barbara O Mary has long been one of my favorite poets.

A catalogue of books and posters is available. Send catalogue requests and book orders (with 25¢ postage for each) to:

Times Change Press
Box 187 W.P.
Albion, Ca. 95410

Manuscript inquiries and poster ideas also welcome. ♀

SOUR DOUGH BREAD

The difference between baking sourdough bread and any other kind of bread is very simply stated. For any other kind of bread you use a packaged yeast. For sourdough bread you use yeast from a culture that you've developed, that lives in your refrigerator and is called starter. The packaged yeast is really yeast spores which are activated by warm water. They are highly resistant to everything and thus can be stored a long time. The yeast in the starter is a living colony. Which brings us to the real and not so simply stated difference between baking sourdough bread and any other kind of bread. This living colony has to be taken care of, nurtured and developed. With care it can live for years, hundreds of years. You can develop in it characteristics that give your bread unique textures and flavors. You can become a fanatic. On the other hand, you don't have to. The essentials of sourdough bread baking aren't anywhere near as mysterious as they're made out to be; the fine touches - such as having steam in the oven at exactly the right moment to make the crust just so - may be, but those are, after all, fine touches. If you become a fanatic you'll develop them yourself and swear by them as devoutly as any other devotee. But in the meantime you can just enjoy.

The first step is to acquire the starter. The mystique has it that you have to get it from someone who already bakes sourdough bread (starter only comes from starter). If you have such a friend that is a nice way to begin. Your bread will have a sourdough character the first time, which is encouraging. If you don't know any such person, you can make your own starter. Begin as if you were making any other kind of bread. Soak a package of yeast in some warm water. It should be body temperature - test it with a drop or two on the inside of your wrist. In a large bowl

(not metal) mix together about 2 cups each of flour and liquid and about a teaspoon of sweetener. Add the yeast. Stir in with a folding motion. Move the spoon around the side of the bowl, reaching under the flour mixture, up and into the center. Rotate the bowl a quarter turn or so and repeat. Do this about 100 times. There's a knack to it and it goes quickly. This will not only mix it thoroughly but incorporate plenty of air into the mixture. Air is essential for good yeast growth. There's another reason for using this particular method of mixing: as the yeast grows and multiplies it forms a connected network all through the mixture. If you keep this network as intact as possible the yeast continues its growth without serious interruption and the bread rises better.

You now have what is called a sponge - flour, liquid, sweetener and yeast. No salt, oil, eggs or other ingredients which give bread its particular taste and texture, but which also somewhat inhibit the growth of yeast. If you were making ordinary bread, at this point you would cover the bowl with a wet cloth and set it in a warm place for an hour to get the rising started well. Instead you're going to cover it and leave it on the kitchen cabinet for four or five days. Keep the cloth damp to prevent the sponge from drying and forming a hard crust. It will rise so you must stir it every day. As you begin to stir it will deflate. This is because the carbon dioxide bubbles (the waste products of the yeast's growth) that have been trapped in the mixture are being released. Stir a little more to add more air. By about the fourth day it should smell distinctly sour. You now have a bowlful of starter. Take out about a cup and a half of it, put it in a pint jar or plastic container and refrigerate.

The starter will rise some in the refrig-

continued

erator so the container should be about twice as large as the amount of starter. It will keep for weeks, even months, in the frig. It's best if you use it often, every week or ten days. That way the yeast gets plenty of fresh air and exercise and stays healthy. Sometime when you haven't used it for several weeks you may notice that some liquid has separated and it smells positively foul. It's all right. Just stir in the liquid and use it as usual, perhaps adding a little extra sweetener. If you're going to be away for several months with no one to take care of the starter, you can freeze it. The yeast will lie dormant, with minimal activity until you take it out again. When you do take it out add a little sweetener and leave it out at room temperature for a day or two to get it restarted well.

Now back to the rest of the bowlful of starter. This is the day you bake the bread. It's going to take five to eight hours, but you don't have to be in attendance the whole time. First you add the other ingredients: more sweetener, about a tablespoon; 1 teaspoon salt; 2 eggs, slightly beaten (optional); 1 teaspoon soda; 3 tablespoons oil; anything else like raisins, cheese, slightly cooked whole or cracked grains that you want for special flavor and enough flour to make a dough that's manageable in your hands. Add the flour bit by bit until it's awkward to stir anymore with a spoon and then you're ready to start kneading. Flour the kneading board and your hands as often as necessary so the dough does not become sticky. It will probably take about ten minutes to knead the dough. It is finished when it is springy and elastic and the surface is velvety. Leave it a minute while you wash and dry the bowl. Oil the entire inside of the bowl thoroughly. Up-end the dough into the bowl; then turn it over. Run your fingers over it to be sure the entire surface of the dough is oiled so that a crust will not form. Cover it with a wet cloth and set it in a warm place until it has doubled in bulk. A shelf or cupboard above the water heater is an excellent place for warming. Or if your stove has a pilot, you can set the bowl on one of the off burners and rotate it occasionally. Don't set it directly on a hot surface as the yeast on the bottom may be killed. At 80° the first rising may take two to three hours. The dough will rise best in a slightly enclosed area that catches heat and is free from drafts.

When the dough has risen, turn it out onto the floured surface again. This time you are through with the bowl. There should be enough dough from this recipe for two loaves of bread, so saw it in half very gently with a bread knife. Cover one half and set it aside. You're now going to shape a loaf of bread. Squash the dough until it's about three-quarters of an inch thick. Try to keep it in a rectangle and to pop all of those little carbon dioxide bubbles. Squeeze the stubborn ones between your fingers. Those you miss will be-

come the holes that let the butter or sandwich filling leak through.

At this point every baker has her own way of turning this pancake into a loaf. I fold the two sides in to meet in the middle, making it as wide as a breadpan is long, then I roll it up from the back. The seams are tricky. On a truly beautiful baked loaf of bread they're practically invisible. If the seams won't stick together wet them sparingly with a little water. Oil a breadpan and pop the bread in SEAM DOWN. (If you've had problems with bread sticking when baked, use butter or margarine.) You can also shape a loaf without a bread pan. Do it the same way or however else you want and place it on an oiled or buttered cookie sheet. Now, oiling the top is up to you. If you don't the crust will be thicker. Make the second loaf.

Now it has to rise again, for about an hour. Hopefully it will reach the top of the breadpan and almost double in bulk. Sometimes mine does, sometimes it doesn't. If it doesn't it will still be good bread, just a smaller loaf. Don't let it rise much more than one and a half hours because at this point the yeast has expended almost all its energy and will begin to die. When it's risen cut a slit with a very sharp knife or razor in the top of each loaf to allow steam to escape. If you are not using a bread pan cut one or several slits in the direction you will want the loaf to expand. Bake in a 400° oven for 45 minutes to an hour. When the bread smells good and looks shiny brown, take it out of the pan and thump the sides and bottom. If the sound is mostly absorbed it's not yet done. If the thump sounds hollow, it's ready. Take the loaves out of the pans immediately and cool them on a rack. Air has to circulate all around them or the bottoms get mushy.

Hot bread is yummy, but restrain yourself about 20 minutes to let it cure. It won't cut cleanly until it's thoroughly cool - but that's what you save the second loaf for.

Now that you're hooked, and the bread is all gone, it's time to do it again. Take the starter out of the refrigerator in the evening. Mix up two cups each of flour and liquid, a teaspoon or so of sweetener. But instead of adding yeast, add the starter - all of it. Mix it thoroughly, cover and let it set overnight. In the morning remember to save out more starter! And there you are, back again at that bowlful of starter waiting to be turned into a batch of bread.

At this point it's probably time to talk about the potential of a batch of bread. It's almost limitless. I've been referring to the ingredients as vaguely as possible and primarily in terms of four categories: flour, liquid, sweetener and starter - because, provided you include those four things, anything you mix together and bake will be bread. The other crucial component is your imagination. White flour makes the smoothest bread. I usually use some in every batch because the

bread holds together and cuts better. By adding other flours (whole wheat, buckwheat, rye, rice) or whole, cracked or rolled grains (cracked wheat, rolled oats, corn meal, rice) singly or in combinations, you can vary the flavor, texture and color endlessly. Whole or cracked grains need to be cooked a bit before using. The liquid is usually water or milk. Milk makes the bread smoother, tastier, more substantial and heavier than water. Powdered milk is wonderful and doesn't have to be mixed up first. Honey is my standard sweetener, but you won't be a heretic if you use sugar. With buckwheat flour or rolled oats, molasses has a more complementary flavor, and in cheese bread I use brown sugar. Eggs make the bread lighter, smoother; oil makes it richer. Two or three cups of cheese will make instant cheese sandwich bread. Raisins or other dried fruits are especially good with rolled oats. Consider adding grated carrots, bananas, nuts, mashed potatoes, or just about anything you like.

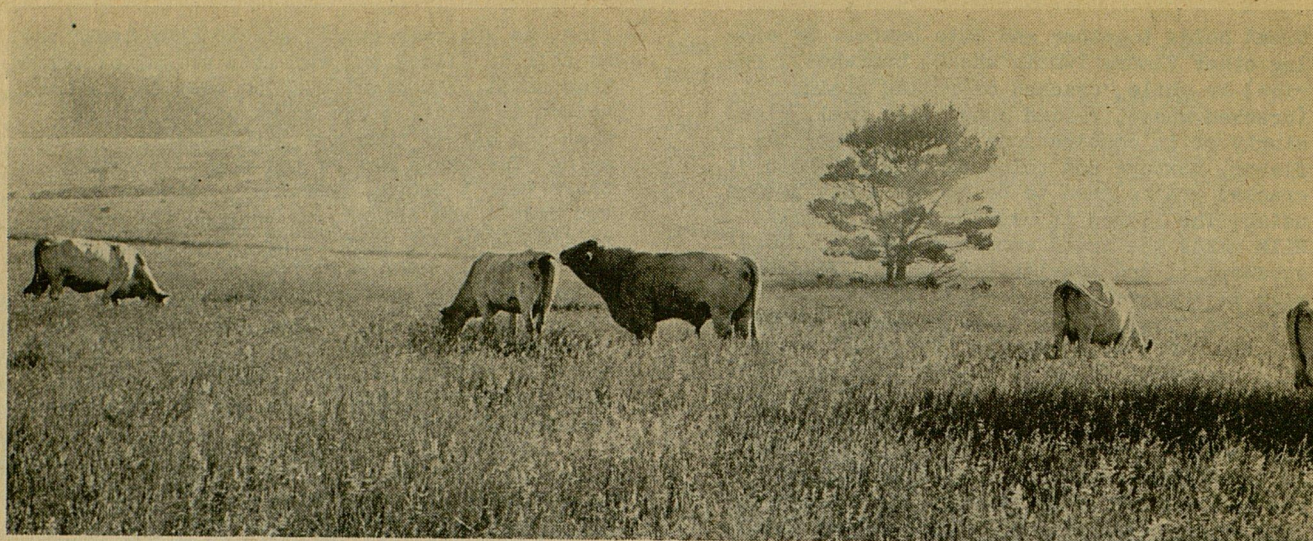
Sourdough bread produces a special breakfast bonus: sourdough pancakes. It's a great incentive to get up and get to work in the morning if you know that you have only to take out the starter and add salt, soda, eggs and oil to have breakfast on your way to bread.

Baking sourdough bread is a continuing creative experiment. Sometimes it will be "the best you've ever made." And sometimes it will

flop. As you bake you'll get to know bread and be able to figure out why it's better or worse than usual. You might want to keep an informal record at first. I can think of two things that can happen that are particularly discouraging. The bread may be too sour - probably there wasn't enough sweetener, either because you didn't add enough, or because the starter sat too long and used it up. If your starter smells really sour when you take it out at night, use a little extra sweetener and some rolled oats. If the starter has been sitting two weeks in the frig and you know you're not going to be using it for another two, add a little sweetener and let it set at room temperature for a few hours.

Another possible problem is that the bread may not rise well. This could be caused by the weather. Yeast doesn't work well on a rainy or otherwise humid day. It's also possible for your starter to get tired, particularly if you don't use it regularly. You can rejuvenate it by adding a little more yeast with some flour, liquid and sweetener and letting it set a few days before using. Please don't abandon it and start over. I did that once - baked a last batch of bread, adding a little yeast to make sure it rose, without leaving out any starter. That was the best bread I've ever baked. And it took months for my new starter to develop as much character as was in those two loaves of bread.





RAISING MOTHERLESS DAY OLD CALVES

An animal lover will find it most rewarding to raise these little orphans. The financial rewards are slim but you simply have to forget about translating time spent on farm chores into hourly earnings, or you will be heading back for the big city and it's swell-paying jobs faster than you retreated.

While auction places carry these baby calves, I cannot recommend them as a good source of supply. The poor little creatures, having been taken away from their mothers right after birth, transported in (usually extremely filthy) trucks, left overnight without food, whipped through the "ring" in the morning to be transported again by the buyer (and having been exposed to a variety of contagious diseases), are usually in such poor shape when they arrive at their new home that more than half of them may die during the first couple of days.

The much safer route is to buy them from a nearby dairy which, of course, has no use for bull calves. Sometimes, the dairy will even sell certain heifer (female) calves, either because they do not promise to be good herd-replacement material or because they are of mixed bloodlines. Mixed bloodlines come from breeding young heifers to bulls of a smaller breed, such as Angus, because the resulting smaller calves cause fewer calving problems and ensuing losses of calf and/or cow. These mixed breeds offer the advantage of being hornless (one bloody, costly chore eliminated!). Heifer calves do not gain weight as fast as bull calves do and will bring you a slightly lower price when you are ready to sell them. They are more reserved and shy than bull calves who crave your attention and affection. But a mixed Angus/Holstein heifer means no de-horning and no castration. One word of caution: Don't ever buy a Jersey bull calf (those pretty, honey-colored animals), because their

market value is almost nil, don't ask me why, there simply is no market for them. A Jersey heifer calf is very delicate and is hard to raise. It is cute enough to be almost irresistible, looking like a little fawn. But unless you want to raise it as your future source of milk, RESIST - it just does not pay to raise it. I raised one and I love her - it is mutual - but I intend to keep her as my own, private dairy, next spring, when she will have her first calf. I prefer the rich Jersey milk to other kinds.

Buying from a dairy might provide another, tremendous advantage: You might be able to talk the dairyman into selling you some colostrum - the first milk a cow produces after calving, which is simply loaded with antibodies and other ingredients vitally necessary for the calf's survival. Colostrum is a creamy yellow, much thicker than regular milk, and has a strange odor. Even if the dairy charges you quite a bit for it - it is well worth it! I once got a calf that was born into muck on a rainy night and became so sick that the veterinarian did not give him one chance in a million to survive. I got hold of some colostrum and asked the vet to tube-feed it to the calf straight into it's stomach because the poor thing was already too weak to suck and swallow. The vet thought that I had lost my marbles but he gave in. It saved the calf and the vet has told the story all over the county - it came back to me from various sources!

Commercial calf-raisers prevent calves sucking on each other and also make the operation more convenient by providing individual stalls for their calves but this requires quite an investment. One dairyman of my acquaintance keeps his little heifers chained, it makes handling much easier and they cannot reach each other but it is a sad sight. Other operators keep their baby-calves in

metal cages, 2 feet off the ground and too small for the animal to stand up or turn around in. This method may be the most convenient and cheapest one but I find it cruel. I also believe in the old saying: The more room an animal has to grow in, the faster it grows.

If you allow your calves to romp together and share a shelter, guard yourself against possible, light injuries. You might get a calf which is dumber than others and expects your anatomy to be similar to a cow's. So in order to show you that he is hungry, he might butt you where he expects the udder to be, i.e. between your legs. And he is hungry all the time.

Why do calves butt and cows kick (and butt)? The cow is equipped with a mechanism which enables her to hold her milk back or to release it. It seems that she is preoccupied at times and forgets to let her milk down, so the calf reminds her by butting her udder. Or the little glutton (and calves are gluttons) might feel that the milk does not flow as amply as he would like it to flow, so he butts the udder. If he does it fairly gently, the cow will just raise a hoof as a warning, but if he gets rough, she will kick him and that will make him behave - at least for a while.

Bull-calves should be castrated before weaning, especially if one intends to keep them rather than sell them right after weaning. Veterinarians and many operators employ the surgical method without using anaesthetics, which I find to be extremely cruel. A different method is available which I find more humane: A special apparatus (called an elastrator - about \$12) can be bought, which expands a tiny but extremely sturdy rubber ring to a size large enough to be passed over

the scrotum of the animal. The gadget is being released at a point as close to the belly as possible, thereby allowing the ring to snap back to its original and normal size and thus cut off the blood supply to the scrotum which will dry up and drop off in a week's time or so. Be sure both testicles have descended and are caught by the ring when you use this method - a half castrated bull is still a bull! The application of a disinfectant spray right after the manipulation is a must!

A lot of literature is available about feeding baby calves, primarily published by companies wanting to sell you their "milk-replacer", but practical experience often teaches us somewhat different and more successful methods. While I am in favor of one particular method, I still want to describe others which I have tried. There are four principal methods of raising the little bug-gers. I have tried all of them in succession and I shall describe them to you:

Method #1. Occasionally, you will run into a cow who is willing to adopt an orphan and raise it with her own calf. But these so-called nurse-cows are extremely rare. Some first-class heifers will adopt an orphan (they are still dumb and don't know any better, as the saying goes). People have dreamed up all kinds of tricks to entice a cow and fool her. For instance: When a cow is in labor, they will rush to get a calf and later rub the afterbirth all over this calf, so that the two calves smell alike and fool the cow into believing that she gave birth to twins. Another rather cruel trick is to have the orphan chased by a dog. If the cow has a strongly developed mother-instinct, she will call the calf to her for protection and the adoption has been accomplished. But most cows react sourly,

continued



Other people have devised a kind of harness which ties the two calves together. They hope that the cow will not kick the orphan who is nursing her simultaneously with her own calf because she will be afraid of hurting her own calf accidentally. But that trick does not work most of the time either - I have seen lots of cows kicking their own calves quite mercilessly.

Beware of the guy who swears he has a nurse-cow which he is willing to sell you for an outrageous price - nobody lets go of a nurse-cow! When she is so shook up and meek after the trip and rough handling when he delivers her, that she allows your calf to nurse her - it will take a day or two for her to get her bearings back until she is her normal, kicking, butting, ferocious self again. I had one such murderous beast cripple two calves for me with such lightning speed that the fastest possible interference on my part would have been too slow. She slung one calf six feet into the air while she smashed the other one against a wall. The day before, when I got her, she stood like a lamb and let them nurse her and the guy got \$500.00 out of gullible me. I was lucky to get \$300.00 when I sold the beast two days later. Oddly enough one Angus cow whom nobody had ever suspected of being a nurse-cow, adopted a calf without being coaxed - just entirely on her own. But you cannot count on that sort of thing - only one out of 30 cows might do it and if she is not a milk-breed, she won't even have enough milk for two calves.

Method #2. This one, I have found to be the most successful method: Buy a good Holstein cow for about \$375.00 to \$400.00, who will give you about three gallons of milk each in the morning and in the evening. Keep one gallon or so for your own use and feed the rest to five calves. There are two-quart plastic bottles with big rubber nipples for sale in the feed stores plus special wire baskets which can be slipped over a fence rail and will hold the bottle upside down for the calf to help itself to the most natural, healthy food there is. The milk should be fed immediately after milking to avoid cooling off. Remove the empty bottles immediately after feeding, or the calves will continue sucking on them, thereby filling their stomachs with air which is not good for their digestion and can cause bloat.

During the first few days of its life, the calf should not get more than one quart per feeding, increased gradually to two quarts. During the eighth week, start cutting down in order to wean it, which should take about ten days. Calves out on the range with their mothers have only pasture grasses as a feed supplement, they therefore need milk for 5-6 months. Keep some good alfalfa hay in front of it at all times, also some grain-mix (stock developer) which should be fed free choice but not in excessive quantities or you will have spoilage and a sick

calf. The manufacturers of 'milk replacer' recommend weaning the calves already at four weeks of age. I never had the heart to take their bottles away from them till they were eight weeks old.

I have found that I could eliminate a few chores and troubles, when the calves were about 3 to 4 weeks old, by pouring 2 gallons of milk into a tub and turning 4 calves loose on it at the same time, provided, of course, that the calves were exactly the same age and of uniform size, so that each one had a chance to get his fair share. This method eliminated the chore of washing bottles and nipples and it helped to break their habit of sucking each other's ears (or genitals) after nursing a bottle.

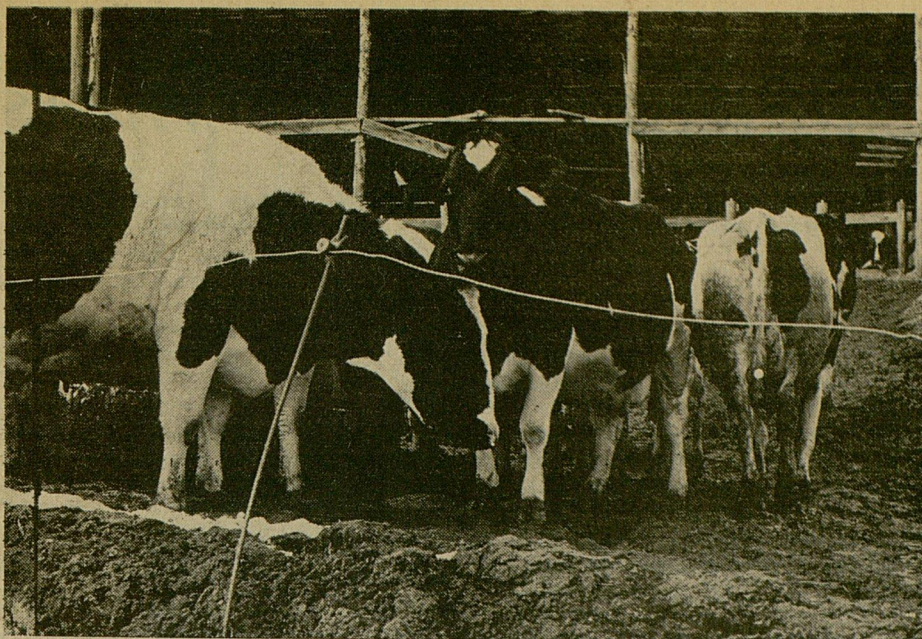
After weaning, turn the calves out to pasture and get another set of day-old calves. The most critical time is the first week of a calf's life. Scours (horrible-smelling diarrhea) is a common occurrence and weakens the calves to such a degree that they will die if left unattended. Every book I read and every veterinarian I consulted, recommended cutting down on the milk the moment scours occur. I followed this advice and have lost more calves than I care to remember. One day, when I had another batch of sick babies on my hands, I got desperate and tried the opposite method, i.e. I fed them all the milk they wanted for several days and the miracle happened: They all recovered and I did not lose a single calf! The principle seems simple, once you think it through: While the milk goes straight through the calf as fast as it drinks

it, some of the nutrients stick to his ribs, so, the more you give him, the more is being retained. Since the scours cause a sore, raw behind, it is more important during the fly-season to apply gobs of carbolated vaseline there or a special smear which keeps the flies off, or the calf might die in a manner too horrible to think about.

The scours are often followed or accompanied by pneumonia, probably due to the weakened condition of the calf. In these instances, Terramycin has been a great help to me in nursing sick calves back to health. While most people, including veterinarians, inject it, I prefer to give it orally. There is a clever little gadget available which you stick into the side of the calf's mouth. When you squeeze the handles, a pill is propelled into the calf's throat, way back where it cannot bring it back up and spit it out. These pills are huge. I dose orally because personally I hate to give injections and have found the other method effective and satisfactory.

To keep the animal warm while it is sick is of vital importance. I cover mine with empty feed sacks or old blankets and have installed a heat lamp about 3 1/2 feet off the floor, dangling on a chain fastened to a rafter.

Since a sick calf has practically no will to survive, it will die if left to itself,



whereas attention and affection work miracles. If they survive, due to your care, you will have a pet or even a pest on your hands. I had a heck of a time once keeping one of the little buggers from following me into the house!

Method #3. This method is most popular with Chicanos. It employs a platform, about a couple of feet above the ground where goats are being fed and tied up about twice a day and then the calves are being turned loose on them. It takes one good goat to feed one calf. I never employed this direct method because I felt sorry for the goats. To be butted in the udder by a 150-pound calf, is no fun for a comparatively small goat who is unable to deliver the powerful, discouraging kick that a cow applies. I milked my goats and bottle-fed their milk to the calves which, of course, meant a lot more work. As healthful as goat's milk is for humans, calves do not thrive on it as they do on cow's milk. And goats are a nuisance: two goats eat and ruin more feed than one cow does, while they only support two calves at best and a cow can support six calves. It is almost impossible to keep goats where you want them to stay - these Houdinis of the animal world will manage to get out of the sturdiest enclosure, they will break a chain fit to restrain a stampeding bull and the only place I can think of to keep them locked-up securely, is a bank vault, but that is, of course, not a suitable habitat for a goat! Once they get out and have a whole world of succulent plants to choose from, they will, invariably, devour your prize rosebush. If you have never seen a grown farmer cry, you would have had that opportunity three years ago when my Marechal-Niel-Roses had been converted into goat manure! I dearly love goats, i.e. those kept by farmers in New Zealand!

Method #4. Buy commercial "milk replacer", dissolve it in warm water, feed it to your calves and be prepared to lose about half of them to the scours, unless you are

luckier than I was which I doubt. This method is, of course, easier than milking goats or cows, possibly even cheaper but it did not pan out for me when I tried it on several, successive batches of calves. There are even some (rather expensive) machines on the market which keep the milk replacer warm all day long, so that the calves can suck on it whenever they feel like it. I do not think that this is such a good idea - the mix will sour and I have also noticed that cows do not allow their calves to nurse anytime they feel like it. And mama-cows know best!

Most dairymen raise their replacement heifers in this manner and with better results than I was able to achieve. This is due to the fact that they have colostrum at their disposal, in quantity and at all times. They are able to feed this precious fluid to the new-born calf three days in a row which gives the calf an excellent start, whereas my calves had to do without, or, if we were lucky, got one day's supply of it.

I have discontinued raising calves - I am just too much of a softie. It breaks my heart to sell them when they mature and who can afford to keep them for pets? I was unable to eat beef for more than a year because the sight of a supermarket meatcounter made me wonder: Might this be a piece of Bear, or Slim, or Blackie? Yes, they all had names, and Bear, the tube-fed little steer, knew his name and came running whenever I called him. When I had to sell him, I knew, this was the end of the line - I simply could not afford the emotional stresses which such partings caused.

In case you should decide to raise calves, do try to profit from my experiences and, please, do not hesitate to write me care of Country Women if you have a question. I have only skimmed the surface because I am too busy at this time to go into more detail, especially regarding the treatment of injuries and lots of other important things. ♀

Building Stone Walls

Moving earth and rocks
flat ones, round ones, crooked ones
heavy and small.

Once I carved wood
and worked clay
making figures and shapes
beautiful to look at.....

Spring time is a good time. The earth is soft, brown and moist, moving easily under hands, fingers and shovel. The kind of rock walls I'm into making are dry rock walls, terraced walls that keep the hillside from eroding.

I dig at the hillside where the first row will go. It's good to have flat rocks at the bottom; any size will do. I lay one row at a time, a yard or so long, working each one into the ground so that the tops are fairly even, pushing loose dirt around the rocks.

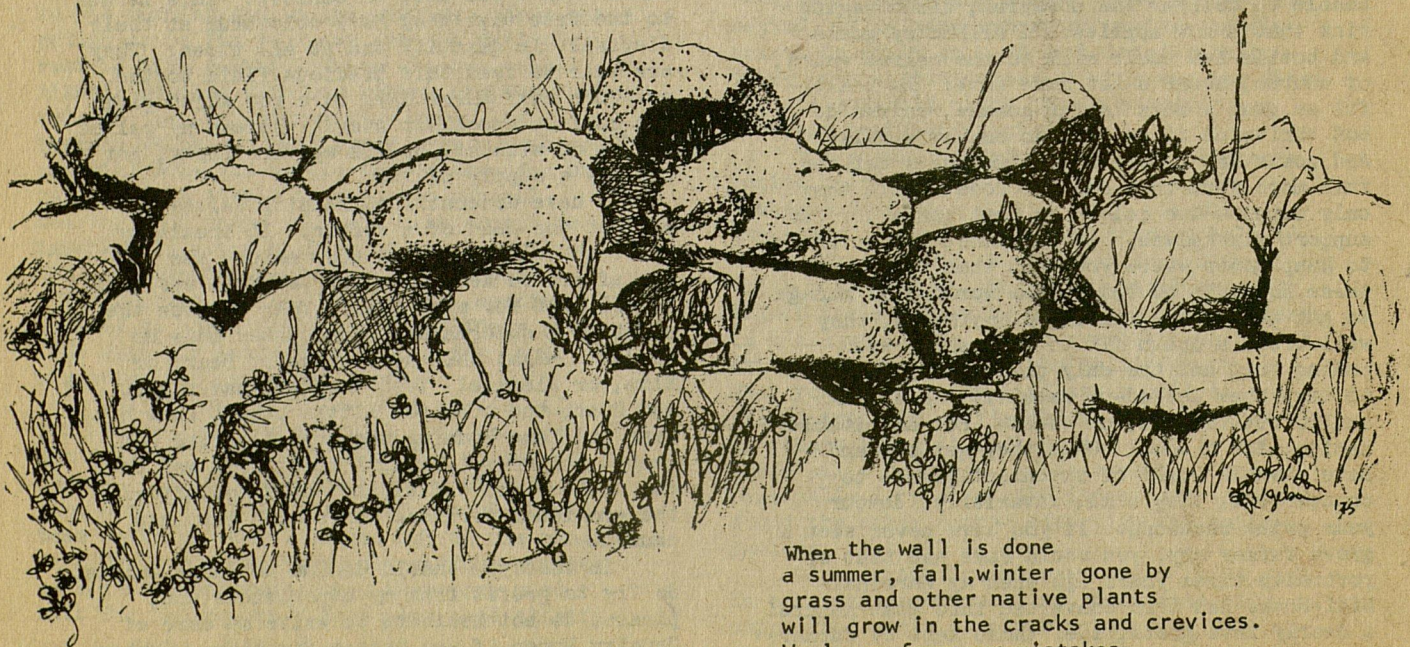
If the wall slants INTO the hillside, it will last a long time. The second and following rows should be set into the earth so that the bottom rocks stick out a little. This way the winter frost won't push the wall down.

All sizes and shaped rocks can be used together. Stagger the rocks so that they sit soundly between two below. There is the right rock for every space. Keep turning them around, trying every angle. Chink the small spaces with pebbles, little rocks, and loose dirt. I'm just beginning to use a stone hammer or small pick to chip off corners.

Sometimes as I'm going along I remember a rock I rejected, that will fit just right in another spot. Each one becomes a known friend, hauled and handled, turned and touched, dropped and picked up again and again until it finds its home. The wall grows sometimes slow, sometimes fast. It's good to have a pile of them to work from.

For the top row I look for big rocks flat on one side to hold fast and tie in the ones below. Sometimes I move along laying a few more bottom rocks now and then, so that the edge isn't square. That way there is always a place to work the next rocks in. If the wall is going to be sat or walked on, it's good to make it double rowed and to slope it in slightly, tying it together with a big rock that is part of both the inner and the outer walls.

BE CAREFUL NOT TO STRAIN YOUR BACK. Lift with your knees and legs or roll a big rock to its place.



When the wall is done
a summer, fall, winter gone by
grass and other native plants
will grow in the cracks and crevices.
We learn from our mistakes,
replacing the fallen ones.

A good stone wall will last lifetimes of me,
holding up the mountain for our vineyard. ♀

Roll Roofing

Before winter sets in with months of rain or snow, you may face a roofing project or two. Of all the roofing materials available, roll roofing is one of the most economical, easy-to-apply, and versatile choices. It may not be the most pleasing aesthetically, not the ultimate in durability, but it will keep your cabin snug or your chickens dry through the winter. It's a project you can take on alone or with a friend, and it requires little expertise. If the following paragraphs make the project look complex, rest assured: explaining it is harder than doing it! In the pursuit of thoroughness, I'm afraid I've forsaken simplicity. When you are up there on your roof, you will see how amazingly easy it really is!

Of many roofing choices (wood or asphalt shingles, hot tar, galvanized steel or aluminum panels), roll roofing is the cheapest. It has a fairly good lifespan for its cost. I've put on roll roofing that remained weathertight after seven years of rain-heavy winters. The "experts" in lumber yards and hardware stores will quote you a life expectancy as variable as three to fifteen years. For comparison, asphalt shingles (similar in composition, three to four times in cost) have a guaranteed lifespan of thirty to thirty-five years. Roll roofing may be used on any pitched roof. It is not suitable for a flat roof (here you must go to a built-up, hot tar roof). It can be put over any wood sheathing (plywood or boards, new or old). If you are re-roofing an older building, it's a good idea to remove old roll roofing or buckled areas of asphalt shingles before putting down your new roofing. Nails and layers of old roofing may cause your new paper to crack and tear. You can put roll roofing over a shingled roof that is too far gone for spot-patching with new shingles. It's a delicate situation, though, as the broken shingles, old nails and gaping holes will create no end of problems. If you must, go over the roof first and set or pull all protruding nails, remove loose shingles, and so on. If you are putting the roofing over new wood sheathing, be sure the sheathing is dry. Green or wet wood can shrink and buckle which will tend to tear the paper, leaving your roof less than weatherproof. One carpentry book I have suggests that wide sheathing boards will also cause buckling, and recommends that all roof sheathing boards be eight inches wide or less. Plywood is an excellent under-sheathing for roll roofing, and this combination makes a very economical and quickly-built roof for outbuildings and animal shelters.

ESTIMATING and PLANNING:

The first step in your roofing project should be estimating the materials you'll need. This

roofing comes in rolls which cover approximately one hundred square feet. The roll is actually one hundred and eight square feet, but an allowance is made for overlap. Roll roofing is applied shingle style, with each row overlapping the row below it so that the water sheds down and off the roof. If your roof is pitched enough to shed water freely, you can simply calculate the area of your roof and get the amount of footage you will need. If, however, your roof has a very slight pitch, you may want to compensate with more overlap per row. This will help prevent a back-up of water and leaking during heavy rains or melting snow. The conventional overlap is about an inch and a half; you may want to go to six or eight inches on a slightly pitched roof. Add the extra footage to your needs if necessary.

Whether or not you need extra overlap, you will always need more footage of roofing than the simple area of your roof. Each time you come to the end of a roll of roofing part-way across a row, you will need to overlap the next piece to prevent leakage at that joint. You may also want extra roofing to put a double layer over the peak of your roof, in valleys (intersecting roof lines), and so on. Be generous in estimating your needs, as you'll be happier with an extra roll at the end of the job than having to stop almost at the end because you've run out of roofing.

Roll roofing of the type you need is called "mineral surfaced asphalt roofing". There is another, similar type of roofing paper called "asphalt-saturated felt". This felt paper is used as a vapor barrier between inner and outer walls of structures, or as a layer beneath shake roofs. It is not totally waterproof and will not hold up as an exterior roofing material. In a financial emergency, the felt might get you through a winter at much less cost (one similarly-priced roll covers three times the area as a roll of mineral-surfaced roofing). You will have to replace it soon, though. The felt paper is lightweight, black in color, and smooth-textured. Roll roofing weighs about ninety pounds per roll, comes in a variety of colors, and its mineral coating gives it a rough, pebbly surface.

With your roll roofing, you need lap cement to apply under each overlap and over any exposed nail heads. This tar-like substance comes in quarts, gallons, and five-gallon cans. It is much more economical in the larger quantities. Left-over lap cement will keep for months if tightly sealed. Estimating how much lap cement you will need is difficult - it will depend upon your overlap and your enthusiasm in application! Generally, I think a gallon can will take you through

continued

three or four rolls of roofing. Again estimate generously and store your surplus rather than have to stop half-way up the roof.

Nails for applying roll roofing are special: short, squat, and broad-headed. They are always galvanized. They come in different lengths and should be chosen according to the thickness of the sheathing you are nailing into. A couple of generous handfuls per roll is the only estimating advice I can offer.

To keep the edges of your roofing down, you can use special metal flashing or wooden battens. This extra step will do much towards preserving your roofing paper and the sheathing below. It will hold the roofing flat, preventing wind damage, and it will help shed water at the roof edges, preventing back-up that can rot or mildew the sheathing. On animal shelters, flashed edges will discourage pawing and nibbling by the curious or bored. Of the two alternatives, my preference is the metal flashing. It sheds the water better and is durable and attractive. This flashing is called "roof nosing". It is creased along its length to form a ninety degree angle, and comes in standard pieces ten to twenty feet long. You will have a choice of different widths (two inches by one and a half, for example) and should pick the size that will extend down enough to cover your sheathing. Roof nosing can be cut to the lengths you need with tin snips. It is nailed in place with roofing nails or any small galvanized nail (four or five penny will do). If you decide to use wood battens, lengths of lathing or any thin, durable wood can be utilized. These will not help to shed the water and are used strictly to hold the roofing down.

Wherever you have a valley (intersecting roof lines) or a roof-wall joint (as when a shed roof butts up against a wall), you may want to use flashing. You can buy pre-formed "valley flashing" or buy flat flashing by the roll and cut and bend it to your needs. A double layer of roofing paper can substitute for the valley flashing. For the roof-wall joint, you can buy pre-formed "shingle flashing", which is a wide piece of flashing bent like the roof nosing to form a ninety degree angle, or you can use flat flashing. In this instance, roofing paper could be substituted but would be difficult to seal properly. If you have vents, a chimney or stovepipe in your roof, you will also want some type of flashing to make leak-proof joints. Special flashing collars are available in different sizes and for different roof pitches. If you can't find a ready-made collar for your particular need, you can improvise one with flat flashing.

Besides your flashing, you may want to buy a can of "wet patch". This is a plastic-like roofing compound that is particularly good for sealing flashing/roofing or flashing/wall joints. It has an advantage over lap cement in that it remains pliable and will not dry and crack; nor will it soften and run in hot weather. It can be used under and over the flashing to form a permanent gasket-like seal. Wet patch is too expensive to substitute generally for lap cement, and should only be used in these special instances. Wet patch is also useful for mid-winter roof repair. It can be applied in the rain to seal a wet,



leaking roof. This unique quality should find it a place in your emergency cupboard, if not in your roofing project.

Once you have calculated the materials you will need, you can save a lot of money by shopping around a bit. The price of roll roofing can vary two or three dollars per roll from store to store. Currently, roll roofing sells for about nine dollars a roll; lap cement costs about three dollars a gallon; roofing nails are eighty cents per pound. Flashing is sold according to weight, width, and composition (aluminum being more expensive than other metals).

PUTTING ON THE ROOF:

With your materials in hand, you should gather your tools. Each person will need a hammer, carpenter's apron, and wooden paddle (or putty knife) for applying lap cement. You can also use a common measuring tape, a chalk line, a utility knife, and a pair of tin snips. Sturdy ladders and/or scaffolding for a high roof may be necessary. A few three foot lengths of 2"x4" or 2"x6" will be useful if you plan to cut your roofing paper to size on the ground. Wear your least favorite clothes for this job - lap cement is invariably attracted to a treasured shirt or pair of jeans, and almost inseparable after the fact. It's good to wear soft shoes or go barefoot or in socks; boots tend to dent and crack the paper. Sneakers are not good roofing footwear unless they have non-skid soles. A rag in your pocket for lap cement disasters is the final

addition to your gear. You're ready for the roof!

Roll roofing is inclined to crack and split when cold, so choose a sunny day for your project. As lap cement will melt and run when it gets too hot, a medium-warm day is best working weather. Fall provides ideal roll roofing days: bright, comfortably warm, and with a touch of winter in the air to lend credibility to your work. Standing your rolls of roofing and your lap cement in a sunny spot for an hour or two before beginning work will soften everything to a nice, workable pliability. As soon as your chores are done, your materials warmed, and your roof sheathing dry of dew or frost, you can begin.

Roll roofing is applied from the bottom edge of the roof up to the peak in horizontal rows which overlap one another shingle-style. A roll measures thirty-six feet long when unrolled. If you are roofing a large building, you will probably want to lift up each roll intact and unfurl it in place on the roof. Several rolls can be "stored" up there if they are lying perpendicular to the ridge of the roof. If your roof is a small one, or if you are working alone and find the intact rolls difficult to manage, measure and cut your roofing on the ground. You will need a fairly flat, clear area for this pre-cutting. Be careful not to step on the roofing when you have it unrolled - tiny stones or a stray roofing nail can puncture your roofing under the pressure of your foot. If you weight down one end of the roofing with a 2"x4", unroll past the desired length and weight that end similarly, you will be free to measure and cut. Run your tape along one edge, nick the paper to mark your length, then repeat along the other edge. You can then snap a chalk line to mark and even, accurate cut. Slide one of your 2"x4"s under the chalk marked paper and you have a firm, even surface to bear down on when cutting. If the weather is cold and your utility knife makes a ragged cut, try using tin snips. Roll up each piece as you cut it so that it can be easily passed up onto the roof.

Any valley on your roof must be flashed before the roofing paper is put down. The paper will then overlap the valley and shed water down and off the roof. At this point, too, you have a choice to make about your roof nosing. Normally, the roof nosing goes under the shingles along the lower roof edge. It forms a drip cap for the shedding water. With roll roofing, though, the nosing can serve a double purpose as a drip cap and to hold down the edges of the paper. If you want the nosing just as a drip cap, apply it now. If you want it to hold your roofing in place, apply it as the last step of your roofing. Roof-wall joints will be flashed after the roofing is in place, so that water can shed down the wall surface and onto the roof without leaking back into the joint. Chimneys and vents will be flashed as you come to them. Basically, arrange your roofing and flashing in these areas so that the upper edge of your flashing is under the roofing paper and the lower edge is over the paper. This will create the shingle-style shedding desired. All roofing paper/flashing joints can be sealed with wet patch (my first choice because of the continuing elasticity), with lap cement,

or with any similar roofing or caulking compound

Whether you use the whole roll or a pre-cut piece for your first row of roofing, it is best to unroll the entire length you are using before setting any nails. One edge of the paper will have a colored line or a margin of unsurfaced (plain black) paper which is your overlap guide. This edge should be the upper one when the paper is in place. If you need an extra-wide overlap, measure down and snap a chalk line where you want the overlap to be. It is helpful to work with a partner in placing the paper. When the piece is in place, it should be tugged gently from each end until all wrinkles smooth out. You can then begin nailing the upper edge of the paper. Place your nails a half inch or so down from the edge, and space them roughly every six inches. (I don't know if this is conventional spacing, but it works well.) If you plan to use roof nosing or battens, the sides and bottom edge of your roofing will be dealt with later. If you don't plan to use these, nail down your edges all around and place a dab of lap cement over each nail head. This will prevent leakage where the exposed nail penetrates the roofing paper. The next step is to apply a band of lap cement along the entire upper edge where your overlap will be. Be moderate in your application - too much cement will run all over; too little will make a poor seal. Your second row of paper should be slid down over this cement and lined up with the pre-marked line or chalk line. Try to keep each row straight and in line to avoid creeping diagonals. The lower edge of your second (and following) row is usually not nailed down. The weight of the paper and the sticky lap cement are enough to hold it in place. If your roof is exposed to exceptionally high winds, you may want to forsake convention and nail the lower edge of each row (cover all exposed nail heads with lap cement). Otherwise, nail just the upper edge, which will then be covered with lap cement and overlapped by the row above.

Whenever you need two or more pieces of roofing to make a row, allow for a generous vertical overlap. The end of the first piece should be nailed down and lap cement applied. The second piece which continues the row should overlap six or eight inches at least. The side edge of this row is also nailed down, and the seam coated with lap cement or wet patch.

If your building has a peaked roof, the final row of roofing paper is left until the end. The second side of the roof is done from the bottom up, too, and the final row of paper which covers the roof peak is saddled over the peak, lapping both sides. You may want to put a double layer of paper here, or cover the ridge with metal flashing. If you have a wall/roof joint the flashing is applied over the roofing paper at the end. A thick coating of wet patch under the flashing will make a gasket-type seal. The flashing is tacked to the wall and along the roof.

The final step in your roll roofing will be to apply the roof nosing along all edges of your roof. You can then sit back and admire your work: a trim, practical and thrifty roof. It should last you many years. ♀

WORMS in domestic farm animals

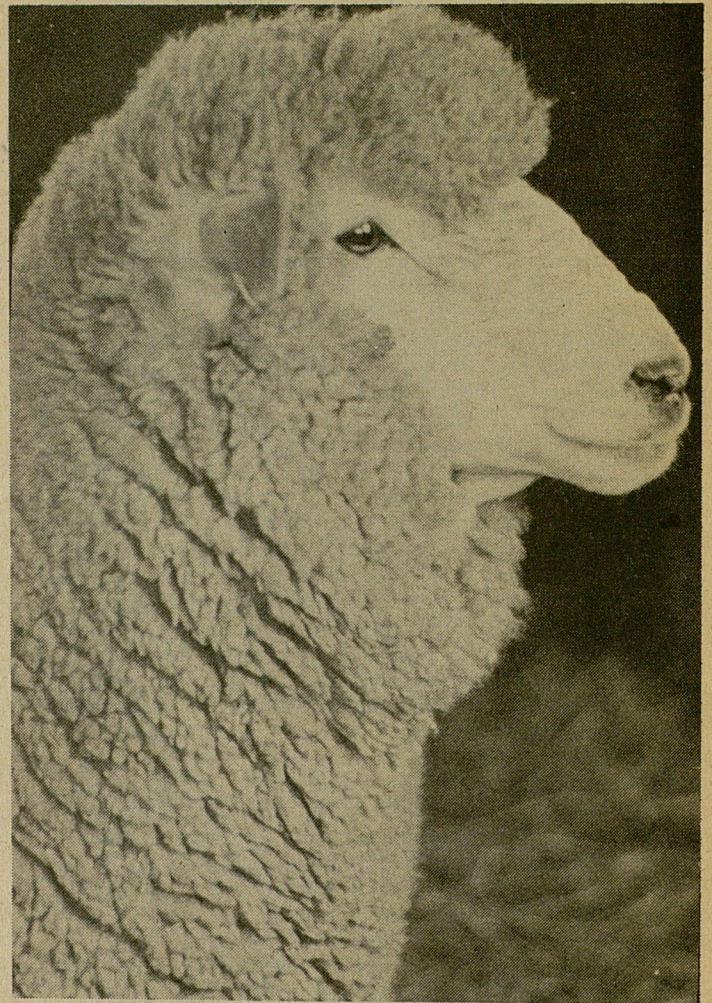
Internal parasites may cause your animals a wide variety of problems, from general unthriftiness or poor weight gain, to more acute parasitic disease and death. There are literally thousands of parasites that infect farm animals, many of them relatively harmless, some deadly. Protozoa that live in the blood stream, flies whose eggs and larva invade tissues, blood sucking ticks - all are examples of common farm parasites. The parasites usually called "worms" are probably what you think of first when parasitic disease is diagnosed.

The subject of "worms" is large and complex, for there are many types in all kinds of animals. With some basic information you can be more aware of what symptoms to look for in your animals and what type of management practices can reduce parasitic disease. This basic understanding can then be enlarged through reading, and consulting local farmers and veterinarians.

The three major divisions of worms are the Trematodes - flukes that live in blood, liver, or lung; Cestodes - the tapeworms that are found in both farm animals and pets; and Nematodes - a category that includes the roundworms, pinworms, strongyles, lung worms, hookworms and many others. Each type of parasite has a distinctive life cycle, sometimes extremely complex, and each can be a problem for the animal owner.

I will limit the scope of this article to a particular family of worms, the Strongylidae or commonly known as the Strongyles. Much about their life cycle and control clarifies problems in the control of other parasitic creatures, and they are a large part of what you may be dealing with as "worms" on your farm.

The strongyles are nematodes. This means they are unsegmented and have various other characteristics different from the common earthworm. Their life cycle is typical of most nematode worms. The egg develops and eventually contains a first stage larva. This larva hatches and normally passes through at least four moults. During the first two moults the larva feeds and grows outside of the host. When the third stage is reached the larva migrates a short distance, usually climbing nearby grass blades, and is ingested when animals graze on the infected grass. The larva may just migrate to nearby food or water. If the conditions are right for the parasite inside the host, it develops into an adult which lives and mates in the stomach or intestine. Here it lays thousands of eggs which then pass in the host's feces, and hatch and develop there until migration to the grass or food. This is the basic life cycle, and of course there are many variations on this theme.



Now this may seem to be only of academic interest, but knowledge of the life cycles and habits of these worms gives insight into their points of weakness. The trichostrongyles are a group of strongyles that live in the gastrointestinal tract of sheep and cattle, for the most part. A characteristic species is *Haemonchus contortus*. It occurs in the abomasum of sheep, goats and cattle, in most parts of the world, its common name being "stomach worm" or "wire worm". To develop the eggs must be deposited in warm, wet conditions; they are destroyed by dryness and heat. The larva generally flourish in what the textbooks politely call the "fecal pad."

The main disease the worms cause is anemia, for both the fourth stage larva and the adults suck blood from the gut. With a sudden severe infection, this can cause rapid death, especially in young animals. In the more chronic cases, the animals get "bottle jaw" - fluid collects and forms a pouch under the

jaw and along the belly. Weakness, hair loss and sometimes digestive upsets (profuse watery scours is common) will be seen. These symptoms are seen, in one degree or another, with all the trichostrongyle species. With *Haemonchus*, the anemia is particularly bad, because of the large amount of blood consumed by the worm. It can be seen as white skin (under the wool of sheep) and pale mucous membranes (gums, vulva) and teats. Sometimes, with a low level infection, all you may see is lethargy, or poor weight gain or poor milk production.

How do you know when you see these symptoms, that it is parasitic disease your animals are suffering from? The most obvious sign is finding the tiny worms in the gut at post mortem. If none of the animals have died, you can take a fresh fecal sample from several different animals to a veterinarian, who will do a microscopic examination and tell you if the animal has strongyle eggs in the feces in sufficient number to indicate disease.

Now that you've recognized the problem, what do you do about it? In vet school, we learned all the latest chemicals to give "wormy" animals and how they worked. That would easily take me another article to relate. Since I am basically against the use of these toxic substances, both for the health of the animal and of the environment, I can't write about treatment. There are herbal worming medicines, a classic one being garlic. Until I've tried both in practice and can comment from experience I'd rather not write of the treatment, but of how to keep your animals from needing it - control of the parasite.

It makes more sense to protect against nematode parasites than to treat a problem after it has occurred. The primary protection is keeping the animals well fed and in good condition, so their natural body immunity can fight infection. Overstocking your land should be avoided. The more animals in one place, the more eggs accumulate on the pasture, and more infective larva are eaten. The infection becomes concentrated and may build up to such a level that it will cause disease.

Pasture rotation is valuable - the animals can graze on clean pasture while on the infected pasture larva and eggs die from exposure to sun and wind. Young animals are most susceptible to infection, because they have no immune reaction to fight the parasites. What may be a minor infestation in the mother may develop into disease in the lamb, calf or kid when it is weaned and grazes on mildly contaminated pasture. Therefore, the young should be separated from their mothers as early as possible and put on clean pasture.

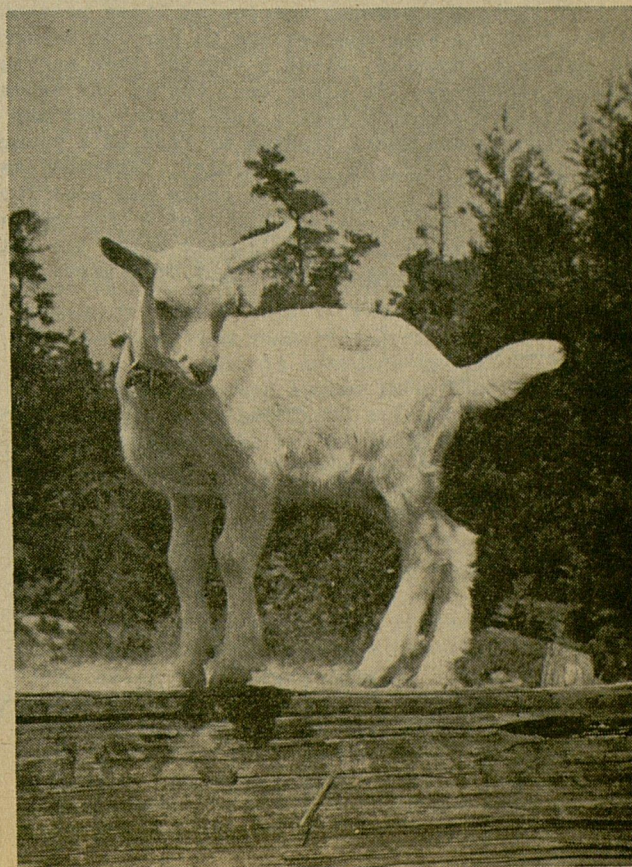
Wet and moist pasture, edges of ponds, etc. should be avoided, for these are the conditions the larva like the best. Animals in infected places should be watered from watering troughs surrounded by graveled areas. Stabled animals should have feed and water kept away from the floor and feces. Strongyles can travel several inches, so make sure infective larva can't migrate to the feed from

the floor. These suggestions come from Soulsby's book on parasites (see references), and he includes another - regular treatment to reduce worm levels. This may be necessary in certain species of animals, or certain parts of the country. Your particular evaluation of your situation, your veterinarian's advice, and what the old farmers in the area do about worms should be your guide.

I hope these few suggestions help you to prevent parasitic disease in your animals. Clearly, if you have some of the described symptoms in your sheep, goats or cattle, and you look at your feeding or grazing practices and notice potential places for parasitic breeding and infection, you will have a good lead to the diagnosis of the problem.

In future articles I would like to write about other types of worms in ruminants, dogs and cats, pigs and chickens. For a more comprehensive and thorough look at the field you should refer to Helminths, Arthropods and Protozoa of Domestic Animals (Sixth Ed. of

Monnig's Veterinary Helminthology and Entomology) by E.J.L. Soulsby, published by the Williams and Wilkins Co. (Baltimore). This is a detailed book, but with good practical advice. Also, Veterinary Parasitology, by Georgi, is a good reference, especially well illustrated. For advice on herbal worming, and a host of other herbal cures, Herbal Handbook for Farm and Stable by Juliette de Bairacli-Levy is the only reference I know of specifically for animals. ♀



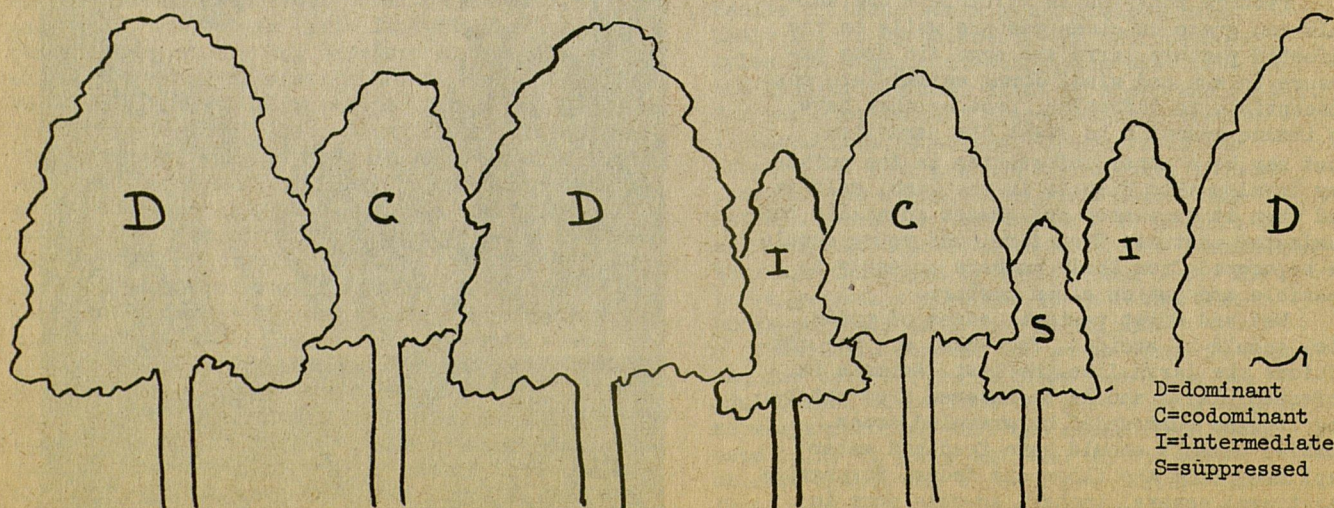
FORESTRY

In an ideal world, we would all be hunters and gatherers, and only occasionally cut a tree for a boat or a teepee pole. Then we'd know exactly what to cut because we'd have lived in the forest all our lives and we'd have all the knowledge our foremothers handed down to us. But we're not there now. We don't have that knowledge and sometimes we need to get other things out of our forests. We can, at least, try to make the things we do fit in with and duplicate the natural changes in the forest, and damage it as little as possible. This article is sharing some knowledge I have about forests and things you can get out of them, and ways and places to find out more, to help you learn to use and live with your trees.

I ECOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES

For any one piece of land, there is one forest type - a group of tree species that normally occur together, or sometimes a single species, that would grow there if the area was undisturbed for a long period of time. This forest type is called the climax. What the climax type is depends on the climate (growing season, precipitation and distribution of precipitation, and temperature) and on the soil (how much water it will hold, how much air, how quickly water drains out of the soil, depth, rockiness, and sometimes available nutrients). There are also effects of topography which interact with these - windy ridge tops, low areas that collect water or cold air, south facing slopes that get more sunlight and so are hotter and drier. Pioneer species are those which come in after a disturbance such as fire, windstorm, or insect outbreak, that leaves a large open area, or which grow on soil newly formed, deposited or exposed. In some areas, particularly extreme environments (hot, dry, boggy, cold) the climax species and the pioneer species are the same, while in more moderate environments there can be several forest types that replace each other, each growing up under the previous type, until the climax type is reached.

A lot of the ways trees grow are related to their position in the successional series. Pioneer species are generally intolerant, which means they require full sunlight and not much competition from other plants to grow. They can also take high heat and extreme drying from the sun as seedlings. Most later, successional trees, on the other hand, require a cooler seedling environment and not as much sun. Pioneer species also generally occur in even-aged stands, where all the trees started growing at about the same time (within twenty years of each other). More tolerant trees can occur either in even-aged stands or in uneven-aged stands, where trees of different ages are scattered throughout the stand. Pioneer or climax species occur in multi-storied stands, where there is one group of trees of about the same age, and another or several other groups that are much younger, but about the same age within that group. It can be difficult to tell whether a stand is even or uneven aged, particularly if there are several species of trees present, since different species grow at different rates and trees of the same species can be very different sizes at the same age. It's important to know what you have, however, since a younger tree that's shaded by an older one will grow up and fill the space if you remove the older one, but if the trees are the same age and you remove the larger one, the smaller is probably pretty weak anyway and may die from sunscald or wind-throw and probably won't really recover and start growing as fast as a younger tree. Within an even-aged stand there are four crown classes - dominant, co-dominant, intermediate, and suppressed. Dominant trees stick up above the others and get sunlight from above and also form the sides on the top of the crown. Co-dominant trees are sort of the average big tree - they get sunlight from above and partly from the sides. Intermediate trees are usually slightly below the main canopy and get direct light only from above and suppressed trees get no direct light from above.



There are some relationships between seed type, method of seed dissemination, and position in a successional series. But there are not any generalizations that adequately cover different species. You need to know about these relationships to get natural reproduction, and you can find out either by watching, or from the Woody Plant Seed Manual (see references), or both.

II FOREST USES

Forests are generally nice places to be, and they are useful just for that. It is easier to get around in a forest that's been pruned or thinned; if you walk on paths a lot you can put down bark chips or some other mulch to reduce soil compaction, prevent erosion, and protect tree roots. Paths and roads are also less susceptible to erosion if they run sideways to a hill instead of straight up and down it, and if they have waterbars or dips to carry water off the surface on steep parts.

There are many kinds of food and useful products in the woods. There are edible nuts on walnuts, beeches, hazel bushes, pines (if they have large enough seeds to be worth the bother) and oaks (if you leach the bitterness out). Most berry bushes seem to grow in clearings, openings and edges, and herbs useful for medicines or teas can grow anywhere. Any species of maple can be tapped for maple sugar, though sugar and black maples have a higher sugar content in the sap, so there's not so much work involved in processing. Exactly what there is depends on where you live and what kind of forests you've got. Euell Gibbons' books are useful; check your local library and community college - sometimes they have courses in which learning can be a lot easier than from a book. Once you've found some plants you can use, you can encourage them by giving them more room or creating environments in which they'll grow - raspberries and blackberries like brushpiles near water, blueberries grow in open, dry areas in the Northeast, etc.

Wildlife and fish are also important sources of food to protect, since a lot of things people do to forests hurt them. Small clearings, edges of roads and openings are used by many different species of wildlife and birds. Others are adapted to climax forests, and react badly to disturbance by people. Many species of wildlife use dead trees or large, old live trees with crooks and large branches as den trees and roosting and nesting areas, so you'll want to leave some of these when you cut firewood or harvest trees. Nuts and seeds are important wildlife foods, so you will need to protect and/or encourage the trees that produce them. Fish can be hurt by silt in streams from soil erosion, or by increased water temperature from removing vegetation from streambanks. If you build a road across a stream with fish in it, make sure fish can get through the culvert. Talk to the State Department of Fish and Game about rare, endan-

gered or threatened species in your area, about whether you have them and how to protect them.

Grazing animals in forests has caused serious damage in some areas through soil compaction, siltation and pollution of streams, destruction of small trees and erosion caused by removing most of the vegetation from an area. They also compete with wildlife for some of the same resources. You can graze a goat or a cow on roadsides or in openings, but they do have great potential for damage, so make sure the animals are carefully supervised.

Probably the major use of forests by people and the use of most managed forests is wood and wood products. This general category includes firewood, fence posts, teepee poles, logs for log cabins, and anything you sell wood for. Both growing and removing wood to sell is pretty complicated, so I'll get to that later. (The Foxfire Book talks about a lot of ways of using wood, particularly those species that grow in the southern Appalachians.) Practically anything woody will burn and can be used for firewood. Wood burns better dry, though most will burn when it's just been cut if the fire is hot enough. Conifers (trees with needles) in general, and pines, in particular, tend to be pitchy and pop in the fireplace and get soot in your chimney. Soot can be a fire hazard, but can be eliminated by burning rock salt or various chemicals sold in stores in your stove or fireplace. Some hardwoods burn slowly and give off a slow, steady heat (oak, maple, beech) while others burn faster and hotter (aspen, birch). Branches or trees cut in pruning, thinning or logging can be used for firewood.

Wood for posts and building materials should be peeled so that it dries faster and rots less. It must be dried and treated with creosote or something similar if it will be in contact with the ground. Wood lasts longer if it is not in contact with the ground at all. You can get poles that don't taper much (for teepees or whatever) by cutting the suppressed trees out of an even-aged stand. This will also help the other trees. It's easier to remove bark if you cut the tree in the early spring when it's just started growing, and peel it immediately.

To manufacture lumber from your trees for building materials or for sale, you can buy a portable sawmill but it costs a lot. You'd have to cut a lot of trees and do some serious logging to have enough wood to make it worthwhile. However, wood sells for a lot more as lumber than it does as logs so it could be worth it, and it keeps logging trucks out of your forest.

Pulpwood is chemically processed and made into paper. Pulp plants are notorious polluters, heavy energy and chemical users, and our society uses too much paper anyway. So you may not want to support the system by selling your trees for this. But if there's a pulp plant in your area and you want to cut small trees anyway, they can be sold for paper. Many species can be used for pulp, but any one

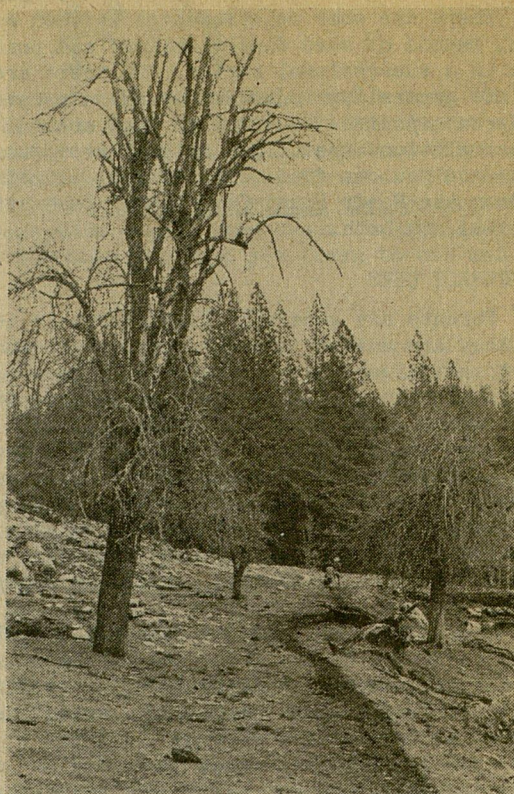
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mill only takes a few. They buy trees down to a minimum size, usually approximately 8' long and 5" top diameter inside bark.

If you want to sell your trees as logs you have to deal with the whole question of logging. Logging requires roads and skid trails (where trees are dragged to the road), causes slash (tops, branches, unusable logs), and damages uncut trees. It can cause erosion by exposing the soil and also soil disturbance. Slash can be a fire hazard and also cause a buildup of insects which then attack live trees. You can alleviate some of these problems and have more control over what's going on by doing the job yourself. This requires a certain amount of equipment and skill, but it also greatly increases what you get paid for your trees. One Man's Forest, by Rockwell Stephens is a very sexist book but it does talk a lot about practical details of logging and woods work in general. (It's mainly about the east coast, but much applies to the West, too.) The other alternative is selling the trees on the stump. If you do that, have clear legal provisions in the contract to protect your forest and make sure those provisions are enforced. You need advice from a professional forester, and/or a lawyer to do that right.

Growing trees for lumber can be a complicated process, because lumber companies pay very different amounts for different kinds of trees. They also buy logs for veneer and plywood bolts, and the standards are similar. The ideal lumber tree is tall, large in diameter, straight, sound (no rot) and has no live or dead branches or scars on the lower bole. To get a tree straight and without many branches, grow it in the middle of a dense forest. Hardwood trees, in particular, bend towards the light if they have space. In a dense forest, however, trees grow slowly, which means you have to wait longer before you can get money for them. You also get less money because all your trees are smaller, and a small tree is worth less than the same amount of wood off a larger one. Some trees die because they're crowded out so they can't be sold, and the whole stand is generally weaker and therefore more susceptible to insects and disease. So forests are thinned to keep the trees growing well without losing quality in the process.

If you have a dense clump of trees or a whole stand that's dense, you might want to do this. To thin a stand, first cut out the suppressed trees, then the intermediate and possibly some co-dominants until the stand is a desirable density. This can be approximated by cutting until the crowns of the trees don't touch and they all have some space to grow into. Leaving good, healthy trees is more important than precisely how far apart they are. If the stand is very dense, you might want to thin it lightly once and then come back to finish up in a year or two when the trees have had some chance to recover from the shock. If you have hardwoods, thin lightly or find a guide to tell you how much you can cut. Talk to your



State Forester about that. Trees may also be pruned to eliminate branches on the lower bole, and often forests are cut over in such a way as to leave a good density of the straighter, faster growing trees of the more valuable species. In much of the Sierra Nevada, there used to be periodic light fires which thinned out the forest. But now fires get put out, and so much fuel has accumulated that when there is a fire it isn't a light one.

A stand can be regenerated by one of several kinds of regeneration cuts. If it's being managed as an uneven-aged stand, it can be cut so that each tree is replaced by a new one; this is called a "selective cut." In selective cuts, in addition to removing large old trees that are ready to be replaced, you thin smaller trees so that you will always have the right proportion of trees in all size classes. In even-aged stand, regeneration cuts can be made by several methods: "seed trees," in which most trees are removed and a few scattered ones left to produce seed; "shelter wood," which leaves a thin stand of large trees to provide shade and shelter for seedlings; and "clearcuts," where all trees, except sometimes very small ones, are cut and the area is planted or left to seed in naturally. It's also possible to cut off a big old stand with little trees underneath it; this is called "overstory removal." On shelterwood or seed-tree cuts you have to go back into the stand later and cut off the trees you left. Regeneration cuts in even-aged stands can vary in size from five trees to any number of acres. But more than five or ten acres in most forests doesn't look very good. If you

don't have much land to begin with, you may want to limit your cuts to, at most, one or two acres. However, when you clear only a small area, the amount of shade of surrounding trees increases significantly, and this can create problems for intolerant types of trees. In all of these cutting systems one objective is to remove and sell trees that are going to die anyway. But you don't want to be too efficient about this, as some trees that die become snags for woodpeckers and owls.

III PLANNING - INFORMATION & ASSISTANCE

To figure out how you want to deal with your forest, the first thing to do is to find out what's going on now and why. You can figure a lot of that out just by looking carefully and watching changes. Look for stumps, fire scars, old dead trees, or brush. Watch the young trees and see what grows where, and see if the young trees are the same species as the older ones. You can usually get an idea of how healthy a tree is by looking at it: how far down the stem the branches go (compared to others of the same species); size, color, and density of the crown; scars, rot, or signs of insects or diseases and general feel. Look for wildlife signs; learn about the understory plants and watch where they grow. Your local branch of the Soil Conservation Service can tell you what kind of soil you have and what will grow on it, and possibly can help you plan what you want to do. Every state has extension foresters who go around advising private woodland owners, mainly about growing timber. They vary in how much they're willing to advise one person or group, but the more you know to start with the more you'll be able to get out of them. Your county extension agent can tell you how to find a state forester and possibly give you some other information. There are also private consulting foresters in some areas, they'll tell you a lot, but they also cost a lot, and they vary in how concerned they are about the environment. Make sure you find someone you can work with, who understands your interests. The Forest Experiment Station for your region of the county has many free publications on forest types in your area; you can write and ask them for a list (see references). Do things yourself - thin, cut away brush from small trees, plant some trees and see what happens. State forest nurseries provide trees very cheaply if you have enough land and can convince them that you know what you're doing. Trees grow slowly, but you can see some effects in a year or two. Be patient and listen.

If you have comments or questions or thoughts about any of this, if you know something about forests you could share or if you might be interested in having me come look at your trees and help you figure out stuff about them, write me: Sue Hilton, Box 728, Arnold, California 95223.

References:

1. Gibbons, Euell, Stalking the Wild Asparagus. It's in bookstores.
2. Minckler, Leonard, Woodland Ecology, (Syracuse University Press, Syracuse, N.Y. 13210, \$9.50. This is an expensive book but a very good one. It's mainly about forests east of the Mississippi, and talks about major uses, general ecology, and specific forest types. It also has an incredible appendix of sources, which you can go to for information. Try your library or the library of a nearby school that teaches forestry.
3. Stephens, Rockwell R., One Man's Forest: Pleasure & Profit From Your Own Woods. Stephen Green Press, Brattleboro, Vt. \$4.50. As I said, this book is very sexist. It's also very east-coast oriented, but it's fairly ecologically concerned and very practical about tools and machinery and where and how to get help.
4. Wigginton, Eliot ed., The Foxfire Book. Anchor Books, Doubleday and Co., Garden City, N. Y. 1972. Lots of neat stuff about working with and making things with wood, though not really written as a womanual.
5. U.S.D.A., Woody Plant Seed Manual Agriculture Handbook. This is a book you might want to borrow from your local forester. A new edition just came out, but the old one is still useful. It's too big and expensive to want to buy for yourself.

Forest Experiment Station addresses:

North Eastern Forest Experiment Station,
Forest Service, U. S. D. A., Folwell Ave.,
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101.

Northcentral Forest Experiment Station,
Forest Service U. S. D. A., 6816 Market St.,
Upper Darby, Pennsylvania 19082.

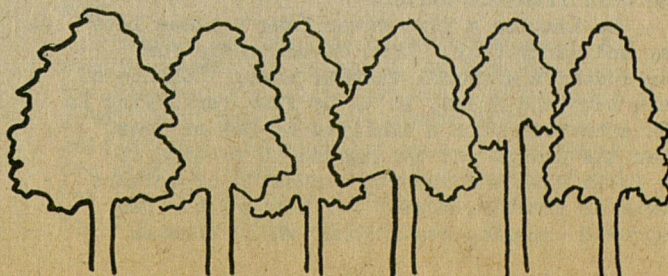
Southern Forest Experiment Station, Forest Service, U. S. D. A., Federal Building,
701 Loyola Avenue, New Orleans, Louisiana 70113.

Rocky Mountain Forest Experiment Station,
Forest Service, U. S. D. A., 240 W. Prospect Street, Fort Collins, Colorado 80521.

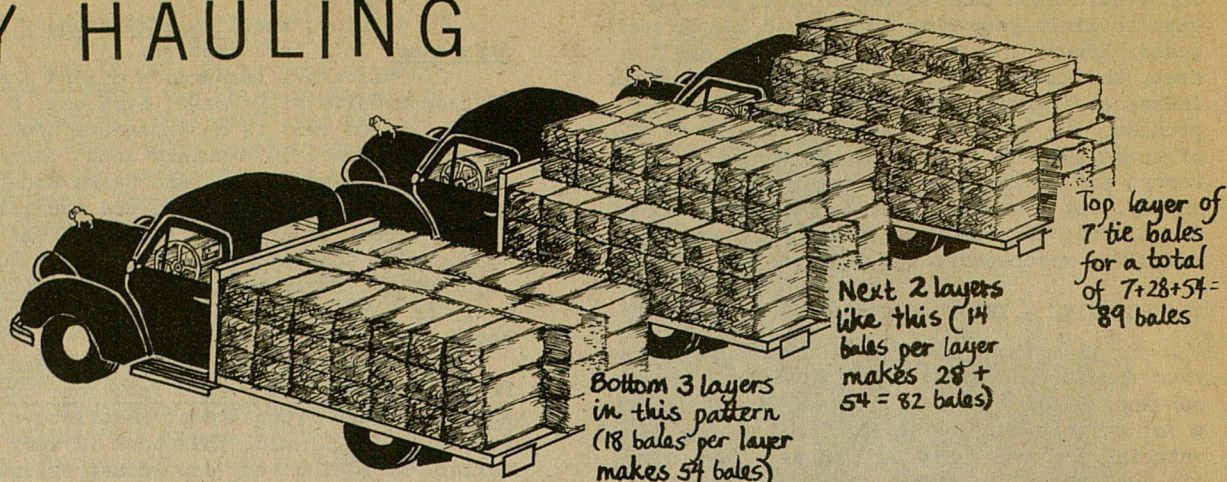
Intermountain Forest Experiment Station,
Forest Service, U. S. D. A., 507 25th Street,
Ogden, Utah 84401.

Pacific Southwest Forest Experiment Station, Forest Service, U. S. D. A., 1960 Addison Street, Berkeley, California 94701.

Pacific Northwest Forest Experiment Station, Forest Service, U. S. D. A., 809 NE 6th Ave., P. O. Box 3141, Portland, Oregon 97208. ♀



HAY HAULING



Yesterday a month long sunny haying season ended for us and, as if in response, a gardener's rain fell in the night to indicate its passage. Now there will be time to write about the growth, harvest and storage of hay; now that the hay dust is gone from my nose and only a few hayseeds remain to be picked out of my clothes.

To grow hay is easy of course, even wild grasses will do if you've no others. Almost every area of the country is suited for some species of domestic perennial hay crop. Here in the Ozarks, on acid soils, it's fescue or orchard grass plus ladino or crimson clover, the grass for bulk, the clover for protein. In the West, on alkali soils, alfalfa is the choice and makes the best hay in the world. If you want to plant the proper hay for your locale, ask your three nearest neighbors what they grow and follow suit.

A flat field will be best when it comes to gathering the hay. The soil must be plowed and prepared, as for any crop, with tractor or horse drawn implements. This will vary in time of year and pounds of seed per acre with the area and species grown. If you've no implements it is usually easy to get a neighbor to plant for you in exchange for labour, part of the hay crop or money.

The cutting season varies with place, species and each particular year's weather pattern. The essential knowledge is the Make Hay While The Sun Shines. In the western states this will be all summer long and there may be several cuttings of alfalfa. In the midwest it's more of a scramble between thundershowers after the grass is tall, but hopefully before it's all dry and the clover's so long it'll tangle in the mower and break the belt from the strain.

So imagine a fine clear dawn between late May and early July. Turn on the radio for the southern Missouri weather news. "Chance of rain zero and folks, it'll be fine for drying in the afternoon with a humidity of 30% or less." When the dew is off the ground it is time to go forth with the several thousands of dollars worth of tractor, mower (or better, the new improved crimping conditioner which crushes

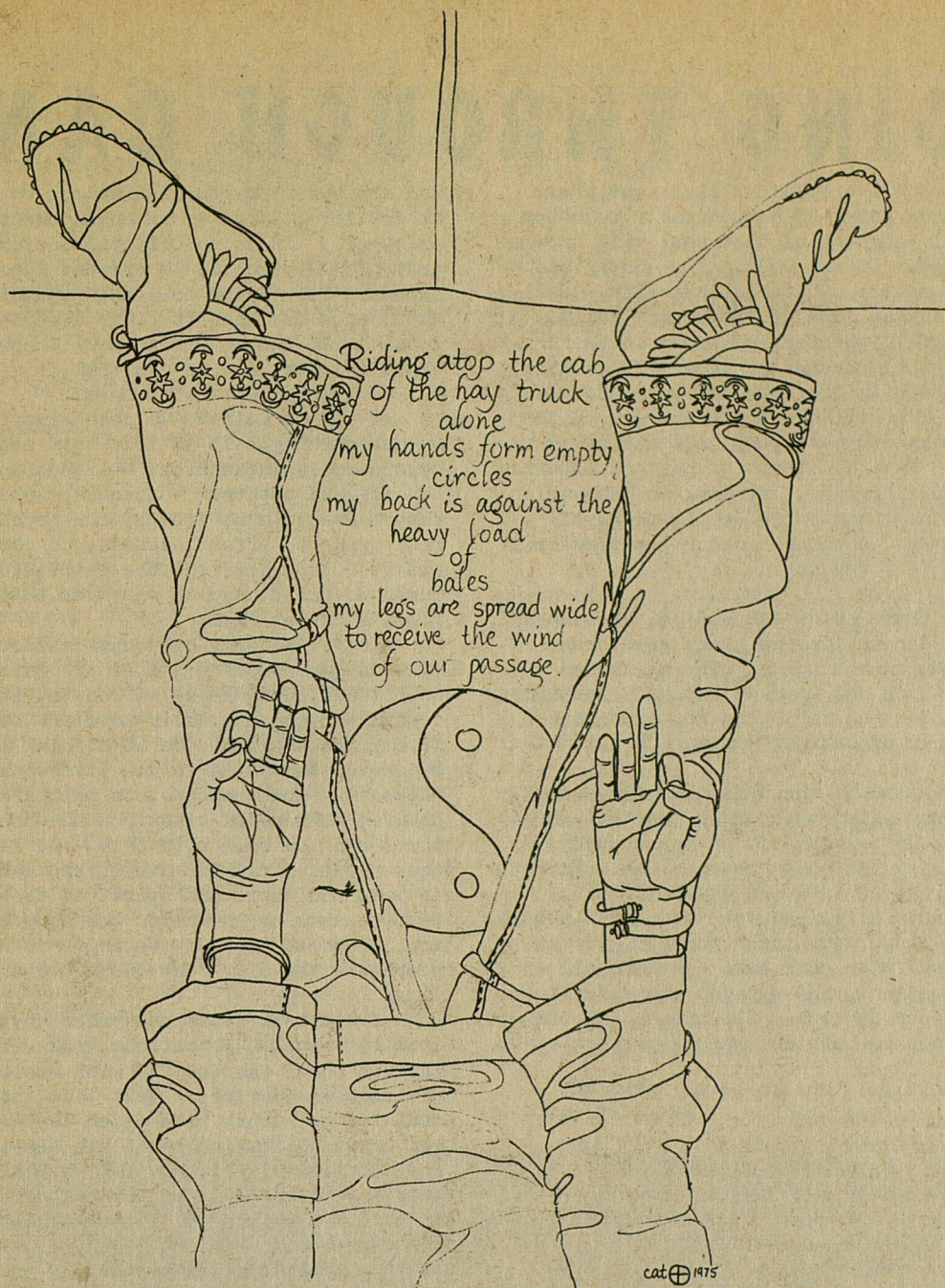
the stems of the grasses so they'll dry quicker, if it ain't broke again) and the rake and the baler, all in John Deere Green, Ford Blue or Case Red (the matter of which brand being almost as important as a choice of political party or religious denomination).

And the tractor roars forward, the mower cuts, the plants fall to the ground and dry and are raked, still drying, into long windrows around the field and caught up by the baler and tied with knots of Tanzanian twine and are shat out by the baler to lie in disorderly rows awaiting daredevil crews of haulers in flatbed trucks with ice chests full of Dr. Pepper who throw the bales up and stack them on these trucks and drive them to the barns and unload and restack them and drink Dr. Pepper repeatedly until sundown or the hay is in or it starts to rain.

Later in the fall when the field's grown up a little again it can be lightly grazed until winter when it's time to start feeding all the stored hay until springtime comes again.

But perhaps you lack (as we do) the field space and implements to grow hay, even maybe, the money to buy the several tons of baled hay needed by a barn full of animals. There is always a shortage of hay haulers and it is quite customary to take out pay in hay. Instead of the high overhead for machines, seed and fertilizer our only investment has been a 1948 Dodge flatbed truck (\$60 plus upkeep) and a few pairs of work gloves. We are one of the daredevil hay crews mentioned above and this is what we do:

When the hay is ready to bale, which might be the same day or the next day after cutting, we put on loose fitting long sleeved shirts and our gloves, get a jug of cold water and go out to the field, as few as three or as many as eight of us. The driver goes into low gear through the field. The loaders (one to five people) toss the bales (which weigh 50 to 80 lbs.) onto the truck bed. Sometimes with a small crew we're able to use a mechanical loader (a conveyor belt attached to the truck) but it's no faster or funner than a large crew of sweating



women and men. The stacker (one to three people) arrange the bales in the pattern shown. This is not done layer by layer as drawn but from front to back through all the layers so the loaders will have a lower toss to make.

At the barn the bales are thrown to the ground or onto a conveyer (hay elevator) which takes them to the loft. They are re-stacked on their sides so the twine won't rot.

The key to moving all these bales is to lift with the knee, not the back. This is called bucking. Most women equate the energy expended with giving birth. It's hard work.

In the Ozarks the wage paid per bale is 1/5 to 1/6 the retail price of the bale.

Thus in areas paying 15¢ a bale to haul, hay costs 85¢ a bale. Where haulers get 20¢ the hay is 95¢. In practice this worked out to \$2.15 an hour per person for us. One crew I know were paid this as an hourly wage. We made \$310 and 4 tons of hay after expenses for a month of occasional afternoons work.

Haying is hot, tiring work but gives a strong feeling of being on the continent among the grasses, the wind, the smell of hay, the grinding of engines, the summer heat, the cold drinks, the stifling heat of dark barns, the waiting animals. It's a good way to get hay, to get strong and mark the passage of a few weeks of sunny days. ♀

MERGING THROUGH DANCE

"The dancer of the future will be one whose body and soul have grown so harmoniously together that the natural language of that soul will have become the movement of the body. The dancer will not belong to a nation but to all humanity. She will dance not in the form of nymph, nor fairy, nor coquette, but in the form of woman in her greatest and purest expression. She will realize the mission of woman's body and the holiness of all its parts. She will dance the changing life of nature, showing how each part is transformed into the other. From all parts of her body shall shine radiant intelligence, bringing to the world the message of the thoughts and aspirations of thousands of women. She shall dance the freedom of woman." Isadora Duncan

As long as there have been bodies, there has been movement. And as long as there have been people, there has been dancing. The glory and magic is that if you can move at all, any part, you can dance. You can merge, by means of your body, into a world of harmony outside the limitations of form.

Inner motivation is the dynamics of movement, revealing both an individual person and the common spirit of life. It is you, not just your body; and in this dancing the body does not lie. From the trees and grasses, from the waves that run through all of nature, we can feel and learn about this movement. Touch and handle the air, caress the earth and sand with your feet - we are all dancers. When we feel, and express those feelings in movement, we are dancing. Ultimately, in our dancing, we do not imitate but become perfect nature.

Movement involves, on one level, sensing, clarifying, and stating oneself; a means of self-integration with the world. As an art form on this level, it is an expression of our inner feelings transformed by imagination, a symbolic form revealing the inner vision. The other level is movement which transcends our individuality so that we lose our sense of ego. Principally, to reach the harmony of merging into the celestial rhythm, the dancer must know abandon.

Dance is sensuousness - not intellectuality. The emphasis placed on the intellect is so overrated in this culture that we must tear down inexorable walls to find the true importance of our body sensuous intelligence. Sensuous movement is largely effortless, and effortlessness is distrusted. One can do what is not desirable, and herein lies the danger. Conquered movement is never sensuous; as Erick Hawkins says, "tight muscles cannot feel." And in not feeling they cannot love. Sensuousness is living in the present, without alienation. The intellect is about living. If we obey the laws of nature in movement (art in its first function - to be what it is), we cannot lie. When we start to portray something else (art in its second function - to communicate), we can lie. I maintain that the function of beauty is to heighten perception, to lead oneself

and any observers to liberation, to wisdom. As an art form, dance is an enlargement of human existence. It is an Oriental notion that the artist's function is to present ideas of enlightenment. The dancer does not emphasize her own experience but uses it to be a messenger of the spirit. In dance, we can tell the whole truth, which is love; and we can tell it with the most real self, which is with love.

I do not believe we need always be sensuous in our dancing. It is true that sensuousity disappears with tension, but tension is also part of life and nature. Volcanoes explode. What is important is to be free of the psychological resistance to effortlessness, to cooperate with gravity, to understand the intrinsic beauty of human movement, and to remember that tight muscles cannot feel.

In the dancing of young children, the movement is harmonious expression. Later, inevitably in this culture unless we concentrate fully on counter-acting it, their movement becomes imposed from without by all the tightening influences. Encourage the children you live with to be bodily expressive and sensuous, to maintain their natural connection with free movement. Dance with them, run and roll with them - at all ages. Let them retain for their own lives, and help resummon in you, the magic and spirit of the dance, the potential merging freedom of the body and soul. The soul inspires the body to begin to dance. When it possesses the body completely, we are truly dancing.

I doubt if dance need mean anything beyond itself. People, as nations, make themselves known through their dances. As with music, there are no language barriers. What I do know is the kinesthetic truth with which Isadora was in touch and on which Hawkins bases his technique, now even scientifically verified, that human movement starts in the pelvis and spine, not in the extremities. The pelvis is the body's center of gravity. The essence of movement is in transition, not position. Kinetic means pertaining to motion. Kinesthesia is the sensation of movement. Each of us has a kinesthetic sense. This sense enables a person to "feel" in one's body someone else's movement. The receptors are in the muscles, the tendons and joints. These receptors work in conjunction with visual sensory data and rhythmic sensations of time. This is the sense that is operating when we feel tight by watching another's tightness; when we understand the sensations felt watching a friend doing somersaults; when we feel relaxed and ready to dance at watching beautiful dancing.

The pelvis is the center of gravity of the human body structure. It is the center of energy and control. When we are properly aligned, the body parts in balance, our energy is used efficiently. Under the pelvis, the legs are the supporting structure and the feet the supporting base. The toes are for balance, not support. The line of gravity for proper alignment (viewed

from the side) goes from just behind the ear, through the shoulder, the middle of the hip, the front of the ankle, through the foot. Just as emotions start in the center (heart, lungs, viscera) and are followed by reaction from the extremities (hands covering heart in emotional pain), so all movement in any part of the body starts from the body center.

So, what is the way out of the impasse of rigid, uncentered movement? How do we do it in the country, away from movement classes? How can our bodies keep in shape, as it seems they must, to be vehicles for the soul's pure expression? First, we have to get rid of the stiffness and get soft. Then, we can extend and get strong from a solid center. To train the body to know perfect, unthinking responses to the soul seems the dancer's highest goal. Body/sensuous intelligence. Technique helps give form to what is discovered.

Whenever possible, dance outside. Go off by yourself or with people with whom you feel entirely unselfconscious. If you are in the country, open your arms and legs and chest and face on a beautiful day to the wide, encompassing sky. Roll in the grass or the dirt. Stretch all over. Forget about thoughts for now and let the experts of living in the present found everywhere in nature draw you into their wisdom. As much as possible, be without clothes and absolutely without shoes. The intelligence and sensuousness of the human foot is one of our highest evolutionary features. Feel the earth, dense and solid, supporting you as you ride along in the heavens on this round space-ship. Run and be still. Skip around a tree and throw your arms around it. Dance with it as it sways and responds with the air. Let the breeze play with you as with the grasses. Bend and move by its power. Lie quiet and still, face to the sky, body spread out in

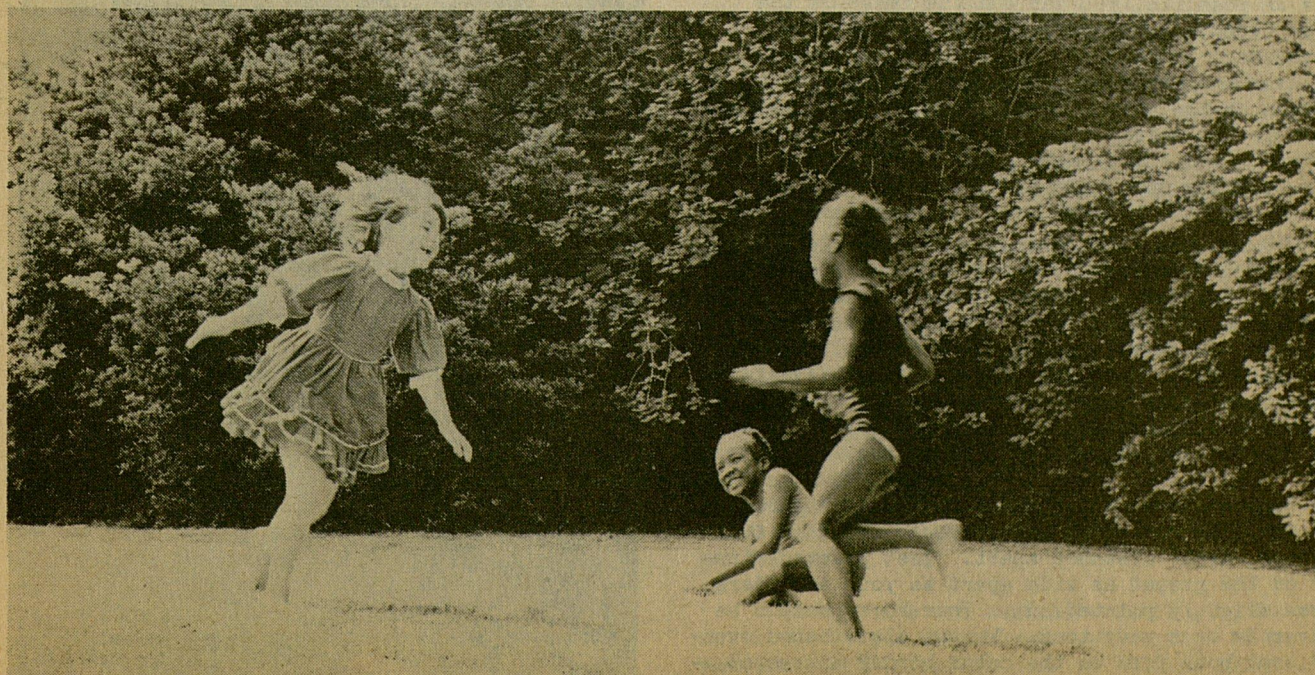
wide trust. Let go of the tense muscles, breathe slowly and deeply, relax into the earth. Feel the energy circling out from and into your heart. Lie on your stomach, belly to belly with the earth. Expend your energy, rest, and regain it. If you cannot run, walk with open arms and up-turned eyes. Turn in circles. Vary your focus level. Feel the air, cup it in your hands. If you cannot walk, dance with your arms and wrists and fingers. Whatever is movable, dance with it! In these times, try to forget about how you appear, even to yourself. Feel yourself from the inside out. If you're not in the country, go to a park. Go wherever you can where nature reigns and surrender yourself to her. Let her summon the power in you that will take you dancing to ecstasy.

Sound too romantic? After your beautiful day dance, try it on a less appealing day; see what your moving body is called to do.

The exercises and practices in the rest of the article are to help us better understand our bodies' potential ways of expression. I hope to at least touch on each vital area, but this can only be a beginning. Also, you must rely on your kinesthetic sense to complete the gaps left by the words alone!

A few general concepts to keep in mind: on a technical level - think pelvis. Let your weight rest into the pelvis, your movements originate from the pelvis. Movement energy is circular - it originates from and returns to its source. Just as energy gets trapped in corners, movement energy gets stuck at the very end of straight lines. Keeping these two directions of energy-flow happening simultaneously results in stability and efficiency in all aspects of our moving life; in our work as well as our dance. Allow your whole body to be what it is. Let the movement happen without too much interference from thought. Try

continued



working with closed eyes sometimes to be free of irrelevant stimuli. Know the wisdom of simplicity - barraged senses cannot perceive.

In whatever movement you make, you are heading toward resolution. It resolves itself in transition to another movement or in completion of its own circular energy. Beware of stopping an exercise without letting the energy settle - do not drop it.

Movement results from muscles contracting and decontracting. The only time you are totally relaxed is in a prone position, as simple standing requires many muscles working to keep the body vertical. When you feel pain, in movement or position, it is a muscle. The key to eliminating the pain is relaxation.

EXERCISES:

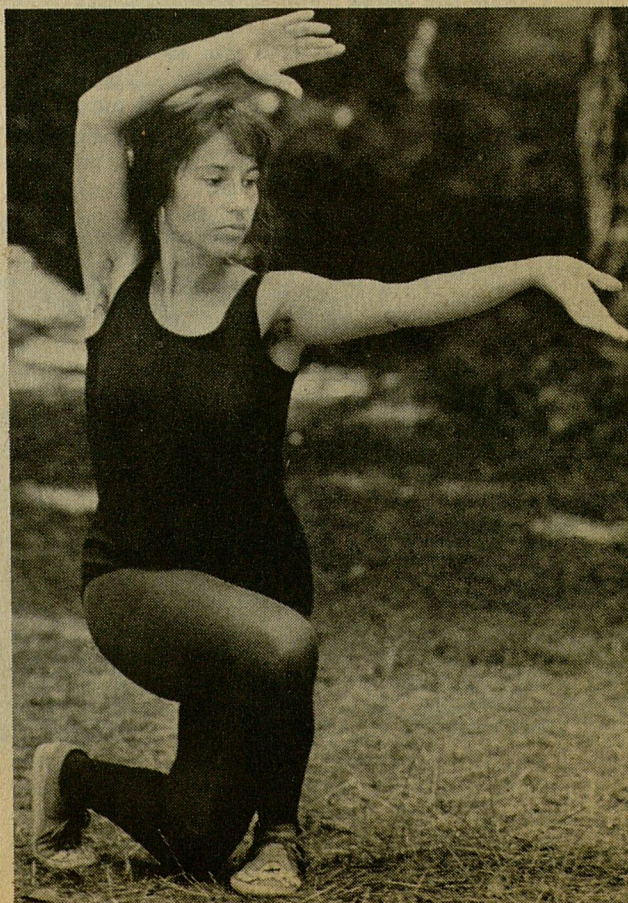
To practice, find the most spacious room or platform that you can. If outside, try to find a surface on which you can slide the most smoothly. Give yourself enough time to get involved. Try these exercises alone, with a friend, or in a group. Perhaps the easiest way to relate to written instructions is to have someone read them as you do them. If you can, try them without clothing. Let your whole body breathe and feel the air.

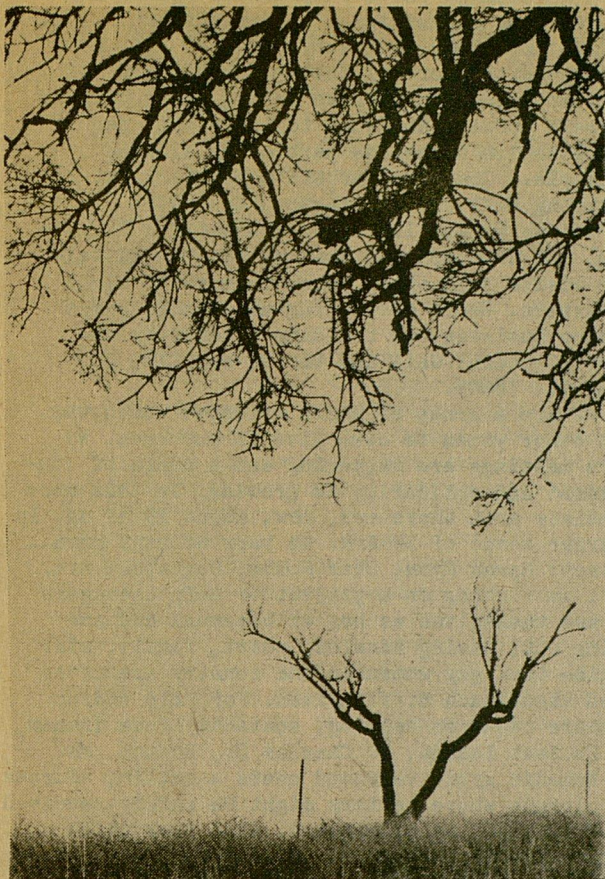
The place to begin is with the breath, that which keeps the life circulating in your body. Janet, a beautiful, dancing, spirited woman from Berkeley, wrote me the following: "Infants breathe in the lowest part of their bellies and as people get older the breath initiates higher and higher until we die and the breath never even gets down the throat, so a "key" to long life is going back to the beginning pattern." In all positions, standing, sitting, lying, think of your breath and movement centers being in the same area. Inflate the pelvic balloon evenly in all directions on the inhale, and let it deflate on the exhale. "Though the breath effort should begin from as low as possible, you can add the image of the ribs becoming gills, oh so soft." There is never need to let the sternum/chest get hard; holding the chest only stiffens your movement. "Focus on the actual feeling of the air passing through the corridor of the nostril and on out, beyond, into space, making waves, infinitely! Try watching one!" To illustrate for yourself the connection between breath and movement, let your arms rise to the sides on the inhale and fold center on the exhale. Now try it the opposite. Do you feel the strain the second way as opposed to the ease of the first? Keep doing it until you feel in touch with the differences. Opening movement responds to inhale, folding to exhale. Experiment with various movements. Breath is soft; your body is soft; living bone is soft - it responds to the breath circulating.

Stand in your natural supporting posture. If there is more than one of you, stand in a circle, arms' distance apart. Feet planted firmly on the ground as wide apart as your shoulders, toes slightly pointed out. Your knees should be directly over your toes. Weight distributed evenly over both feet on the outer border and metatarsal bone (that's in front of the instep and be-

fore the toes). The knees are relaxed, pelvic girdle balanced, rib cage high, chest and shoulders relaxed and low, head balanced and held as if suspended. Feel your steadiness. You are so well balanced that you cannot fall over. Root yourself. Become a redwood tree. Everything is supported by the spine which goes into the pelvis. Is your scalp loose, face relaxed, teeth unclenched? Is your neck loose, arms, hands and fingers hanging free? Take a moment to touch your collar bones; trace their line to the sternal socket directly in the center. By means of the ribs, the sternum (breast bone) is connected to the spine. It is from this sternal socket and thus from the spine that the arms hang - from the center of your body. From the sternal socket through the collar bones through the shoulder joint, they hang. Your shoulders should be lower than the sternal socket. If they're not, they are held tense. Check in a mirror. The shoulders are not a body part! They are joints. It is like wearing a yoke with the arms as two milk pails hanging from it.

So, back to your stability...soft chest, shoulder blades not pinched, abdomen and stomach not taut. The vertebrae of your spine should be balanced like building blocks, one on top of the next. There is a natural curve to the spine; feel the balance; do not slump nor arch. Open your pelvic floor (genital and anal muscles relaxed); let the overflow of energy escape here; let it hang loose. Your thighs hang from the pelvis, snuggled into the thigh socket - they





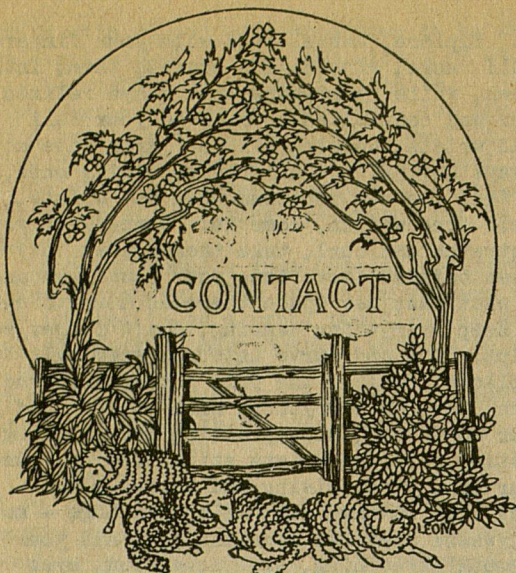
are soft over slightly bent knees. Your calves too are hung for balance. Hang by your hands from a tree limb sometime and notice your body parts hanging. Think of a plumb line. Each of the vital energy centers in your body, chakras, are located corresponding to points on the spine, the head, and one over the head. Keeping your spine straight gives maximum efficiency to your energy centers.

Stand awhile with closed eyes. When you feel you are truly planted begin to sway in a small circle around your feet as if a redwood tree in the wind, your body moving in one whole piece. Increase the circle as much as you can, maintaining your central balance; then decrease it until you are perfectly centered again. From this stable position we can begin to explore the movement potential of every part of your body.

The following series is an all-time favorite. It's a perfect one for hearing the sequence slowly read as you do it, with pauses now and again in the reading. The collapse at the end means let your whole body go of all its support and drop to a sudden squat over your feet. Do not sit, rather collapse over your toes. O.K. You can do this eyes open or closed or both. The more people on this one, the more fun. Stand with everything perfectly still; mouth relaxed and slightly open. Begin with only your fingertips very slowly and controlled exploring their range. Fingertips only! Everything else stays unmoving. Slowly, with the same controlled speed, move into your

fingers. Explore, dance, feel with your fingers their full range; stretch and squeeze them; intertwine them, while everything else stays relaxed. Very slow and controlled move on to your full hands and wrists, keeping all the parts once moving, always moving, and all the remaining ones, quiet. Feel the new horizons when the wrists, with their free motion, come in. Dance with your hands, stretch and curl, take them places they've never been before. Move into your lower arm and elbow - what vast new space there is here to explore. Keep everything dancing, don't forget your fingertips. Dip and curve into now seemingly contorted places; explore the full potential; bend and reach, keeping everything else still. And into your whole arm, slowly diving and climbing and twisting with the wrists still turning. And into your shoulders, rising and lowering and circling, arms waving, controlled and huge - moving everywhere they can possibly go. Add your face - mouth stretching, nose squeezing, eyes widening; think only of the feeling, energy flowing strong and unceasingly; faces you have never made before, fingers curling, slow and deliberate. Into your neck and head, rolling and stretching; chin in places never known before; arms circling; all those parts moving it matters not where - explore, explore; the space is infinite. Into your upper back and chest, bending and arching, slowly, slowly; dipping to the side; don't forget your face. Into the vast new spheres of the lower back and waist, circling slowly, twisting, discovering; reach as far as you possibly can. Keep the wrists moving, nothing stops once it starts. Carefully, slowly into the waves of your stomach, in and out and around. And into the infinite pelvis and hips; rolling around, sensuous, slow, careful. On to the thighs, knees, dipping and dancing and rocking. Into the lower legs and ankles, everything swaying and rolling and twisting and turning over the feet; shoulders circling, head swinging, slowly, lovingly, caressing the air; diving around the free movement of the ankles; facing every possible direction. And smoothly freeing one planted foot, let it twist and curl and stretch and kick and bring your leg way off the ground, in any way; just move, dance, explore, abandon your tension - go crazy. Bring the foot down, caressing the ground, and off again; don't forget your hips and belly. And on to the other foot and into the toes, slow, controlled, deliberate; arching and squeezing and bending and loving; absolutely every part moving, dancing, in totally unpatterned, unthought-out movements; treating your entire body to unknown possibilities. And now, with everything moving, go a little faster; don't forget your ankles, dancing and twisting. And a little faster...get used to the new speed. Let your voice out; hoot and howl, grunt. And a little faster...and a little faster...and faster...and faster and faster and faster and SHAKE IT ALL OUT...EVERYTHING...shake and shake and shake and shake.... and collapse.....

You now have two months to catch your breath until the second installment, which will be more exercises and improvisations to help us merge through dance. ♀



C.W. POLICY: Because of limitations of "contact" space and our postage permit, we cannot print any goods or land for sale, nor can we specify rent. We can offer services. And we print only places looking for people, NOT people looking for places. Thanks.

- Photographers who took pictures at the Country Women Festival - please send photos with good contrast to the magazine for use in future issues.

- I have a small cabin that I built in the woods of Maine and have a garden and cut wood. I would like to share what I am learning with another woman. I could provide room and board for someone in return for help in the woods. Write before coming. Contact: Barbara Cleveland, Box 19A, Orland, Me. 04472

- We are four gay women and two children living on 17 acres with a house in the Santa Cruz area. We are looking for other feminist women committed to building an all-women's community here. Call or write for more information. Mickey Welch, Redwood House, 1330 Redwood Dr., Santa Cruz, Ca., 95060. (408/423-1777)

- I would like to meet a woman 50-60 who likes animals and country life and who might want to share my tiny rancho (modern conveniences!) in beautiful surroundings near Nat'l. Parks. Employment possibilities exist in neighboring towns to provide or supplement income. I am 58, single, semi-retired with an extremely modest income. Contact: Gerda, 22891 Ave 184, Strathmore, Ca. 93267.

- I just bought a far-out house in Joshua Tree, and am looking for a woman to share it with me. I'm 35 and have bone cancer. I'm on crutches. What I'd like to find is a strong woman, mentally, who can cope with the fact that I have cancer, and who would do stuff like cook, clean, shop, some yard work, and drive me to L.A. for treatment every three weeks - in exchange for room and board. Preferably with car, but for sure a driver's license. This would be part-time and other odd jobs are available in the area. I'm a writer and make my living at it, and basically need a helpful and supportive roommate. Contact: Mars Birnbaum, Box 163, Joshua Tree, Ca.

- I am looking for a responsible blacksmith who wants an apprentice to learn the art. I am willing and ready to go anywhere. I have been working in the horse industry for 4 years and have experience in harness making and schooling of draft horses, and want to learn with people interested in horses as part of an alternative lifestyle. Contact: Barbara Schechter, Rt. 1, Armstrong Mill Rd., Lexington, Ky. 40503

- We two women, living on a beautiful 88 acre farm, one hour west of Austin, Tx., would welcome visits from other women farmers or might-be farmers. We're developing an organic garden produce business and building a cabin by the river. Contact: Gail and Carla, Box 216, Bertram, Tx. 78605.

- We are a group of women oriented women who want other women to come live in our area. Women's meetings are happening and a sense of commitment and solidarity is growing. In this more immediate area there are, now, about 25 of us. In a larger scope of NW Ark. we know of many more. Contact: Sarah Moon, Star Route, Dogpatch, Ark.

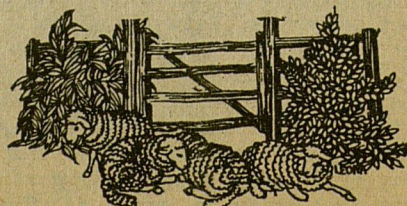
- I am working on a project to help teenagers who see themselves as gay or bisexual and are coming out, having hassles, court, family, etc. Imagine that gay women in the country are often asked about such difficulties. For help and/or to share ideas on helping, contact: Linda Graham c/o Project Lambda, 70 Charles St, Boston, Ma.

- Nomadic gypsy vagabond needs a mailing address in Colorado where letters might be safely received and forwarded, at my expense. Also from which letters may be postmarked on occasion. Will trade fabric scraps for quilts, seeds, etc. for trouble. Contact: Kate Meadows, Box 4161, Fresno, Ca. 93744

- Woman electrician, with Ca. elec. contractors license and tools, has just moved to Mendocino Co. and needs people to work with. Contact: Juanita Malouf, Box 113, Ukiah, Ca. 95482; 485-0253

- CONFERENCE ON WOMEN'S HISTORY to be held Oct. 24-25, at the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul, Minn. will include teaching women's history from elementary to college level, sources, women's environments, different roles women have filled in history. For information, contact: Rhoda Gilman, Women Historians of the Midwest (WHOM), 612-296-2264 or WHOM, Box 80021, Como Station, St. Paul, Mn. 55108.

- The Women's History Research Center is proud to announce that its "Women and Health" collection is now available on microfilm. Interested institutions, groups and libraries should contact: Marie Spatola at Women's History Research Center, 2325 Oak St., Berkeley, Ca. 94708.



Country Women is all of us

After months of discussion, we have decided to raise the price of Country Women to \$1.00. The subscription price will remain \$4.00 for six issues, however, and we hope that any woman who finds a dollar an issue too much for her budget will subscribe instead.

We have raised the price partly because printing and paper costs have steadily risen over the last two years. Country Women is the only small magazine of its size that still costs 75 cents, as far as we know. But the most important reason we are raising the price, and why it took months to make the decision, is that this is one step in beginning to pay subsistence salaries to the women who do the business work to keep the magazine alive. After three years of volunteer labor (and small financial donations these last few months), we have become politically committed to the importance of supporting ourselves and each other in the work that we do for the women's community. Some of us have worked full time jobs for money, while working at least part-time for Country Women and trying to keep a farm together.

Raising the price is one step in raising money for salaries. We've also talked about working with distributors, taking advertising, seeking grants. We'll keep you informed as we make other changes and we'd appreciate your comments and suggestions. Dealing with money has already proved an exciting, difficult, frightening task. We are struggling now within our collective to learn how to deal with money in non-oppressive ways. In trying to understand our real needs for money and to use "need" as a major criteria for who gets how much, we have come closer to sharing our lives than we have in our other collective work these last three years. It is hard work - coming to value what we do and say "yes, this deserves support", learning how to transform the archetypal symbol of power into something that does not divide us, but brings us to deeper understandings. We want to share this process with you; we hope you will support the price increase and help us in that way.

FUTURE ISSUES

In the last issue we published a plea for graphics and photographs which for some reason worked! Women who felt shy, or "not an artist, but..." pulled drawings and prints and photos out of closets and drawers and sent them to us. This issue is almost entirely new contributions and unpublished artists. But we've used up a lot of what we received. So please send us more! Or if you've never contributed, join us now and become a part of Country Women! All art work will be returned.

Likewise, we want to encourage you to write for Country Women. No one who writes for the magazine is "a writer", some of us have never written anything but a few letters. We need practical articles, especially from other parts of the country besides California. And we know that almost every woman who lives in the country could write at least one practical article about something she knows (soap making, dyeing wool, growing flowers or perennials, raising ducks, etc., etc.). Won't you do it?

We also, of course, want new voices for our theme section, too. Upcoming issues are:

COUNTRY POLITICS - local politics, developing alternative political structures, politics of ecology, the political meaning and implications of our lives, the effect of national politics on ourselves.
(Deadline - November 30)

MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH - What is health? What is the reciprocal relationship between our bodies and our emotions, our bodies and our psychic states? How do we relate to sickness? Send material on our opinions and explorations of healing on all levels.
(December - January)

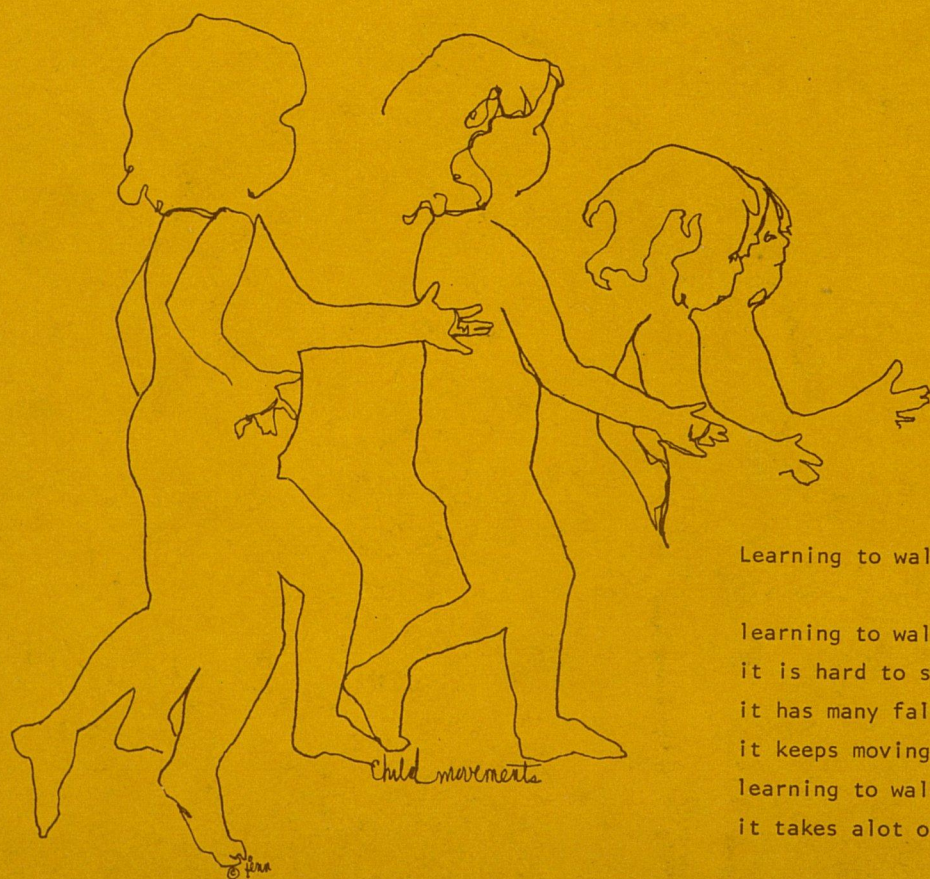
Anthologies

Photography - portraits of country women and their lives. We are particularly interested in series about the same women and photographs of women working. Deadline is November 30. Box 90, Philo, Ca. 95466

Fiction for Children - short stories or works. Send to: N.O.T.A. Ranch, Star Route 1, Box 38, Covelo, Ca. 95428

Country Women's Fiction - short stories or fictional prose. Send to: Box 508, Little River, Ca. 95456

COUNTRY WOMEN
BOX 51
ALBION, CALIFORNIA 95410



Learning to walk

learning to walk is like a relationship.
it is hard to start
it has many falls
it keeps moving & changing.
learning to walk is like a relationship,
it takes alot of work to get there.