

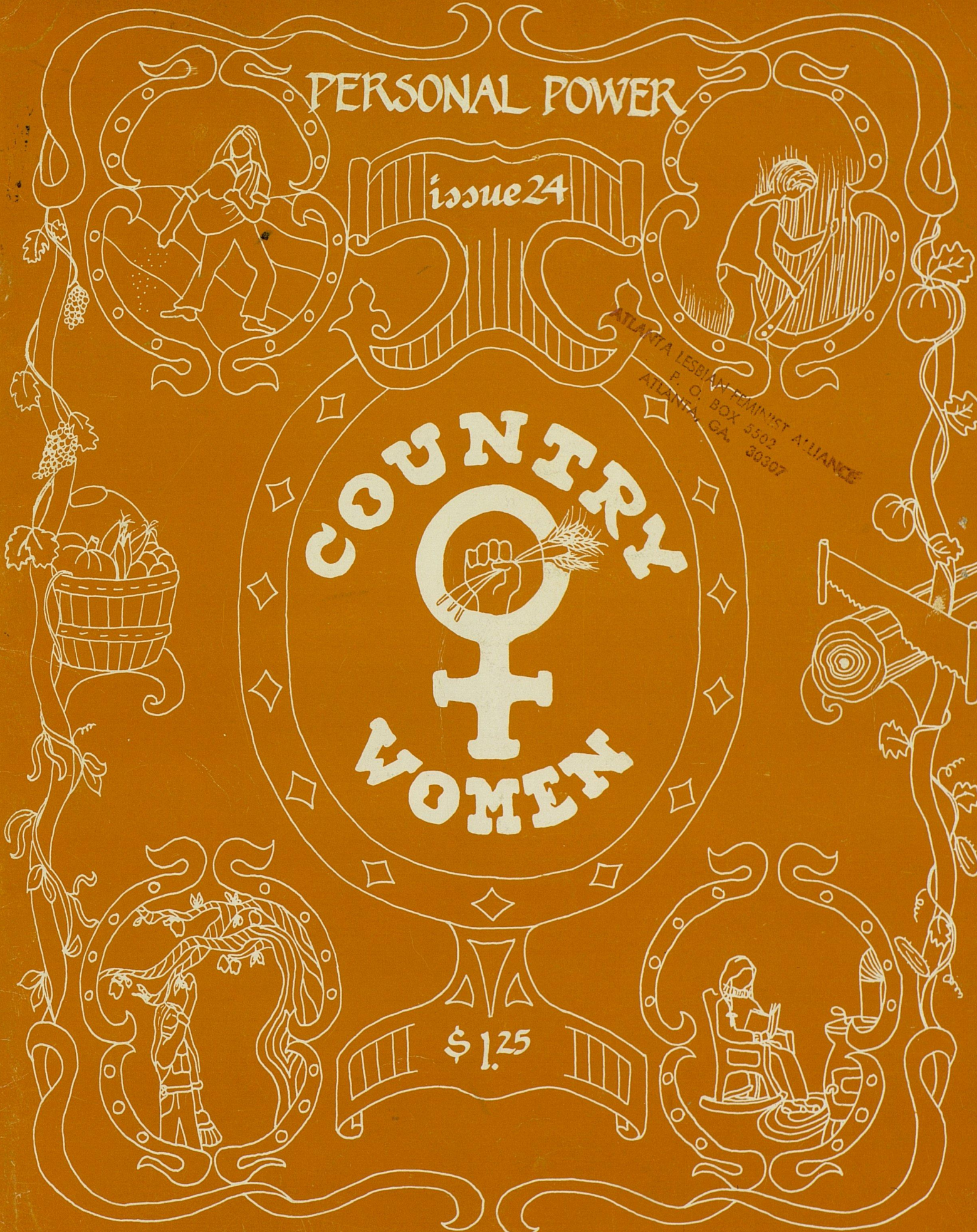
PERSONAL POWER

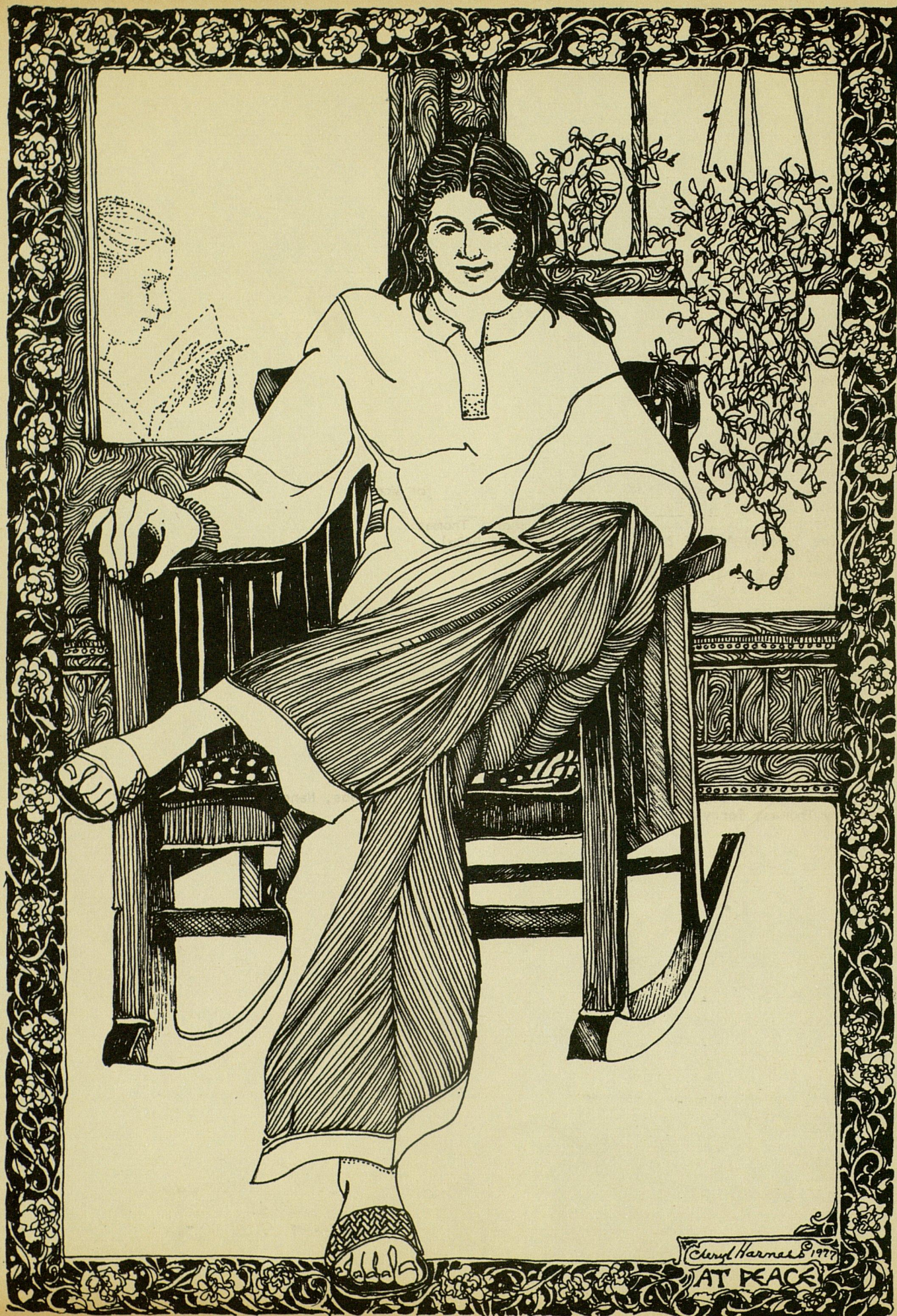
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WOMEN

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Clayd Harnes 1977
AT PEACE

THEME: PERSONAL POWER

- 2 The Air That Enables Me to Sing... Sara Gogol
6 Being is Believing... Sherry Thomas
8 Tidal Power... Kate McCandless
10 Of Cabbages and Kings... Harriet Bye
13 Poem: Journey with Barbara... Pat Henry
14 Lucid Dreaming... Sharon Hansen
17 Poem: Catching the Sheep... Judy Sinclair
18 If I Loved Me Half as Much as I Love You... Slim
21 Self Defense... Barbara
22 Poem: Rites of Ancient Ripening... Meridel Le Soeur
24 Crafting a Personal Ritual... Amy Oakwoman
27 My Power Does Not Diminish Yours... Sherry Thomas
30 Open to Living... Pat Henry
32 Self-Affirmations... Arlene Reiss
34 Repossessing Our Inner Life... Margo Adair
37 Spring Equinox... Harriet Bye

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P. O. BOX 5502
ATLANTA, GA. 30307

PRACTICAL ARTICLES

- 38 Compost Privies... Leslie
42 Book Review: Greasy Thumb Automechanics Manual for Women
43 Book Review: All Our Lives Songbook for Women
44 Plumbing: Installing Water Pipes... Sherry Thomas
48 The Queenly Art of Beekeeping... Kathleen DeBold
52 Dutch Ovens... Meredith Foyle
54 Farm Notes
56 Comfrey... Luna
61 Book Review: Country Lesbians
61 Country Women is Each of Us... Helen and Carmen
64 Contact

Collective for this issue: Amy, Arlene Reiss, Harriet Bye, Helen Jacobs, Sharon Hansen, Sherry Thomas, Slim, Tami Tyler

Help from: Camille Pronger, Carmen Goodyear, Carol Trent, D. Main, Ellen Chanterelle, Nancy Curtis, Diane MacDonald, Pamela

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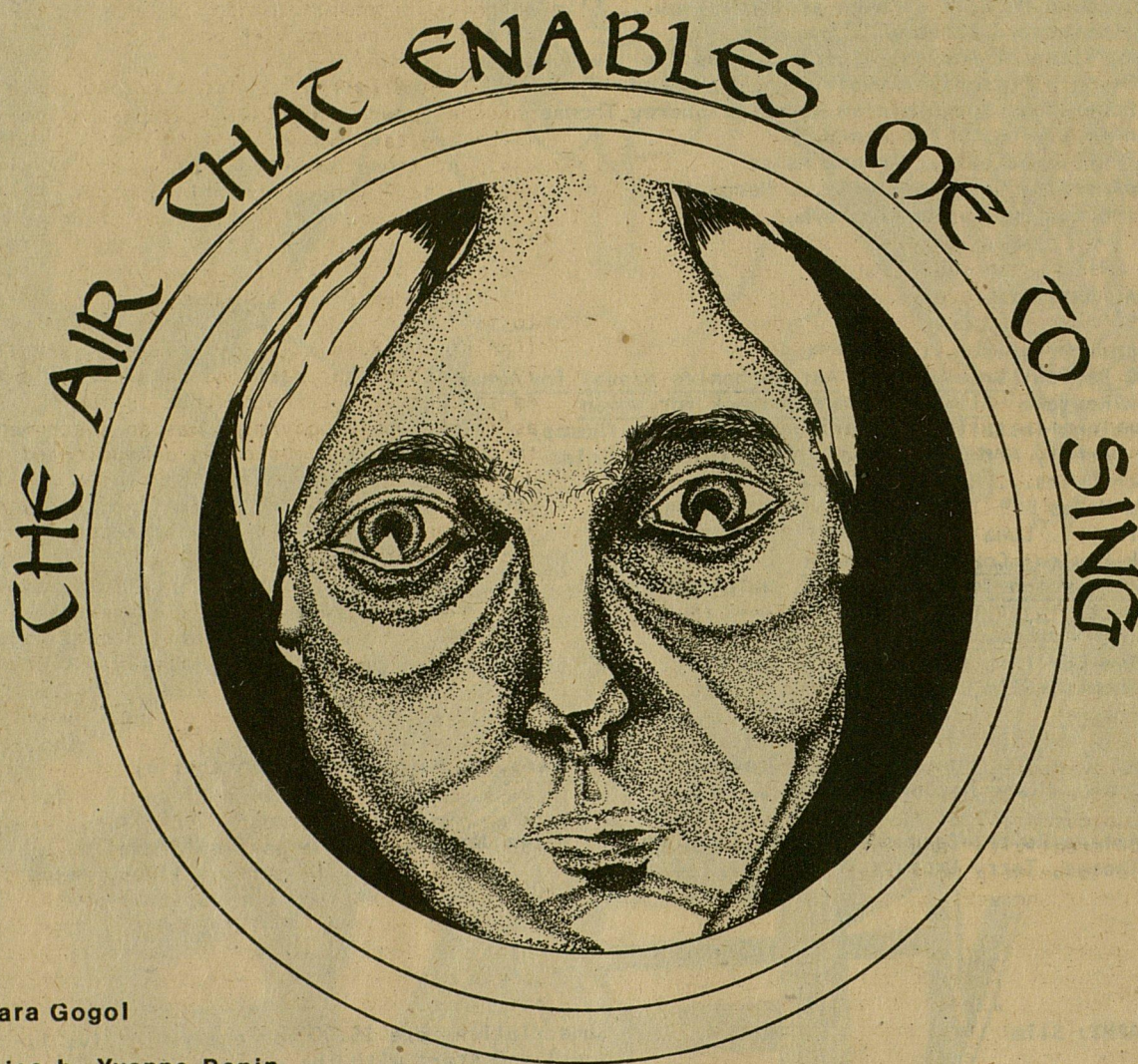
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By Sara Gogol

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What is personal power? There is no one answer to this question, yet all of us answer in our own lives. Our personal power is in our hands, our minds, our feet, our breasts. It is in our music, our poetry, our carpentry. It is in our lives, where mind/body, spirit/flesh, are interwoven into one texture.

This is my perspective on personal power. It comes from the interplay between what I've lived, felt, read, and thought about.

I found that when I thought about what, specifically, I meant by "personal power", I began by describing a metaphysics (way of describing what is the ultimate nature of reality).

According to this metaphysics, the world is made up of matter and energy (or spirit). Matter and energy are different, yet ultimately the same. This is a difficult concept, to say the least. It is like saying that this tree is matter, but it is also spirit, and ultimately they're the same thing.

The material world is essentially dualistic. In other words, the material world is based on the separation of one thing from another thing. This particular tree is distinct from all other trees; this moment of time is different from any other moment; this person is different from any other person. We think

in terms of dualisms, for we cannot think of something without conceiving it as different from something else.

The opposite of dualism is the oneness which has been called Universal Mind, Spirit, the Clear Light, the Tao, the Atman, etc. All these terms refer to a oneness into which all dualisms are resolved. This oneness cannot really be described in words, because words are essentially dualistic. It cannot be proven or disproven rationally, for the same reason. Yet numerous mystics have testified that this oneness can be experienced. Most of us, I feel, catch glimpses of this oneness. Through the medium of love, for example, I sometimes feel a sense of the oneness of which our separate selves are expressions.

I define "personal power" within the context of this particular view of reality. First, I define "power" as energy. This includes all forms of energy. Second, I define "personal" as the uniqueness of every individual, (really of every living thing). This uniqueness is not merely of what we usually call personality. To paraphrase Aldous Huxley, "I" am a unique combination of a particular moment in time, culture, a particular genetic inheritance.

I am unique, but what about the energy with which I run and sing? Is that "my" energy? Is it my air that enables me to sing? Are we not all sharers in the same energy, the same world? Is not our uniqueness simply the other side of our oneness? This is the paradox of "personal power". Personal power is the expression through each unique individual of the essential oneness of everything.

Personal power is expressed through an infinite variety of mediums. Carpentry, music, dancing, and relationships between people are only a few examples. Some kinds of personal power are given the name "creativity". I feel there is no essential difference between what is called "creativity" and what isn't; the real difference is between work that comes from my personal power and work that doesn't ("alienated labor").

One experience of personal power I wish to share happened about seven years ago. I was participating in a theatre group based mainly on the work of Jerzy Grotowski. Grotowski is an experimenter in the theatre. His idea of the theatre is that it should not be the repetition of a play, but a living event. This event takes place in the present; it is expressed through the actor's body/mind. The actor, through the medium of her organism, through her total involvement, becomes so fully herself that she is more than herself. Her body/mind becomes a living symbol of self transformed, of the union of body and spirit.

The discipline of this theatre involves intensive work with the body; strengthening exercises, expressing feelings through the body, vocalizing sounds rather than words. The aim of all our work was to act with full awareness, with full involvement, but without stopping to think (spontaneity). During this training I began to feel a sense of wholeness,

of aliveness, of energy in my body.

One exercise in particular is still vivid to me. The exercise was to burn like a candle. I was standing tall like a candle. I tensed my face, my neck, my whole body as strongly as I could, then suddenly released. I did this again and again. I remember the feeling of exploding into release, feeling of burning, feeling of energy bursting from me. At that moment, I was more than my personal self; my being was a medium through which this unique candle was created. It was a moment of strong personal power.

I have felt a similarly strong sense of personal power sometimes playing the violin. There are rare moments when I play as well as I can. At those moments, I play freely, without feeling self-conscious or judgmental. I am fully involved, yet feel a kind of detachment. I feel as if "I" don't play the music; rather, the music plays itself through me.

This way of thinking makes a lot of sense to me. Recently, I saw a great violinist (Christiana Edinger) play. I felt very strongly a sense of her personal power being expressed through self-transcendence in music. I felt as if her whole body/mind was an instrument through which the music was communicated. Somehow it was all made one. The violin was like part of her body. The music lived through her understanding, her love and her superb technical facility. Through her playing, I felt her power made one with the power of the living music, of the impersonal love which it expresses.

How are such moments of personal power achieved? Do I play music freely and joyously the first time I play the violin? Obviously not. This is another paradox of personal power, the paradox of freedom and discipline. The goal is freedom; to be myself as fully as I can, to express whatever as fully as I can. This freedom is only achieved through discipline, through much hard work in a particular medium.

Each of us, in our own lives, makes choices as to how we express our personal power. These choices are endless. Yet they all have something in common. In each person's life, this common meaning of personal power is the power to act, think, feel, be aware, make decisions.

So far the examples of personal power I have given belong to a category of personal power that could be called "work". I define "work" as personal power expressed through a medium where (if I have sufficient skill) I can control the effects of my actions. In reality, we never achieve total control over anything. But through certain mediums I can have a great deal of control. Carpentry, welding, violin playing, embroidery, and doing the dishes are all examples of "work".

The second type of personal power is quite different. I don't have a handy name for this one. I define it as the expression of personal power through a medium where I have the power to act but cannot (or only to a very limited extent) control the effects of my actions. The prime example of this type of personal power is found in human relationships.

cont.

I would define a good human relationship as being one between equals. In such a relationship, the individuals involved need to be aware (consciously or unconsciously) and accepting of the conditions under which personal power is expressed in human relationships. Essentially, this means that each person is free to act, but she cannot control how another person responds to her actions. In an equal relationship, I need to know who I am, what my needs are, and that I can take responsibility for my actions. This is also true of the other person or persons. We are separate individuals, each free to express our own personal power.

The relationship described above is very different from a relationship between two (or more) people who are not equals. This is a relationship where one person has power over another person. This introduces the element of force (physical or mental). When I have power over someone, I control their actions; I make them respond to my actions as I choose. This creates a distortion of the conditions under which personal power is expressed in human relationships. By using force, I attempt to deny that I can never control another person's free response to my actions. If I succeed in controlling another person, I destroy their integrity, rob them of their personal power. By so doing, I also rob myself. I deny my own ability to relate freely, with love, with my own personal power.

An unequal relationship which many of us have been involved in is the "rescuer-victim" relationship. These are roles people play; they are different from real situations (if I'm drowning, I'm a real victim; if someone drags me from the pounding surf, she's a real rescuer).

The essence of being a "victim" is feeling helpless, feeling as if you didn't have any personal power. The essence of being a "rescuer" is treating someone who really isn't helpless as if they were helpless. The "rescuer" does for the "victim" what the victim really can do for herself. In a situation where someone is really being rescued, the victim is really helped by the rescuer. But in the "rescuer-victim" game, when someone is "rescued" they are left worse off. This is because when someone "rescues" a "victim" she maintains a situation where the "victim" is deprived of her own personal power. The "victim" maintains this situation by continuing to allow herself to be robbed of her personal power.

The above relationship is one I think a lot of us are or have been stuck in. Women, especially, are trained to act out the role of "victim". I've spent a lot of years in that one myself, and still am not all the way free of that role. The only way out, I think, is to take your own power and refuse to be either "rescuer" or "victim". This also means respecting the personal power of other people and refusing to see them as either "rescuer" or "victim".

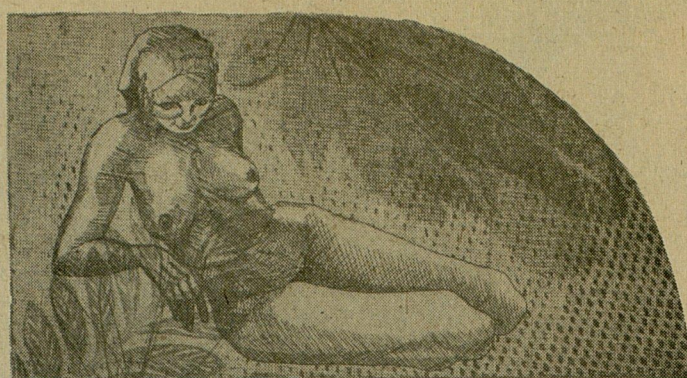
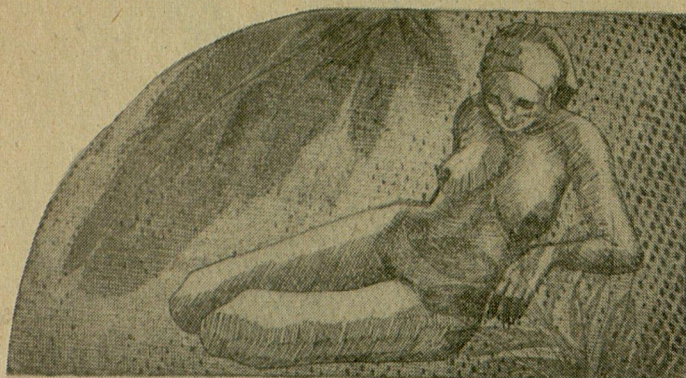
Why do some of us get stuck in intrinsically oppressive relationships that stunt our growth? Why do we choose to be "rescuer" or "victim" rather than equals? Why are we all not free to express our personal power in our own way?

These are not easy questions. But they are vitally important for all of us. I have no easy answers. I feel each individual is responsible for her own actions, for how she expresses her personal power. But I also feel we are shaped by the society we live in; we can only act within that society.

We live within a society that sees the body as disgusting. Where the larger body we all live within, this planet, is not cared for lovingly but ruthlessly plundered; where women are defined as inferior to men; where a tiny minority of people have power over the rest of this world's population; where unequal relationships, such as boss to secretary, are the norm. This society only encourages a privileged elite to develop their personal power, often only in particular specialties (i.e., nuclear physicists, concert violinists, etc.). The majority of us are simply not encouraged to develop ourselves as human beings. We are encouraged to be wage slaves, to be consumers, to deny our stifled creativity, to think we are content.

We live and grow within these oppressive circumstances. It is not surprising so few of us do express our personal power fully. It is not surprising we do not always relate to each other as equals. It is profoundly hopeful that we are able to unlearn so many oppressive patterns in relationships and see each other sometimes as equals. It is profoundly hopeful that we are able to develop some of our potential as human beings, to express some of our personal power, despite the oppressive conditions under which we live. It is, I believe, a sign of how deep our need is to express ourselves, through love and work, as human beings. ♀





Leona Walden

BEING IS BELIEVING

By Sherry Thomas

Today was a day of doing nothing and doing nothing with a paralyzing sense of inadequacy and failure. I began drinking at five and spent the night reading a murder mystery, trying valiantly not to think of anything at all. Turning over to sleep, my own voice returned. "You have nothing to say about personal power, you know only self-doubt and failure". Sitting up, I realize that that is it precisely: in trying all week to write about being powerful, I have been made to face my paralysis and despair. I cannot speak about power now but only about the dark side of the moon, the demons which accompany my quest for power.

This is ironic in a way. As this issue approached I knew confidently that I was a woman of power. I can remember at age nine asserting to my classmates that I thought everyone should know their own worth and acknowledge it; this was not an encouraged position in the fourth grade. Since then, except for a few years when I mostly saw myself as someone's wife, I have usually rated my self-worth highly. I am blessed with a gift of being able to see visions and to bring them alive on the material plane. I sit in sunny grass and dream of a book; a few years later the book is written, published, alive in the world. And so with a magazine and with a farm.

Yet for all my arrogance, what I really have to speak about is tortures of self-doubt, of the continual process which is personal power. For no amount of external validation will supply the inner resource which can transform vision and consciousness into realization and actuality. This transformation is the essence of personal power to me. What I am investigating here is not access to cosmic energy, or even the experience of centeredness but the *interplay* between centeredness and action, the expression by the individual self of the energies one has access to. Expression in infinite forms, through work, art, personal relationships, one's presence and demeanor, *however* one manifests one's unique and personal vision. In my experience, personal power seems not to be an achievement that remains once experienced but rather an ever-deepening spiral of self-awareness and investigation. The further I have gone, the greater the joys and the more frightening the

demons. Whether from internalized or external repression, the experience of one's power often brings with it fear, guilt, and apology.

Self-image is a useful tool for access to personal power. Realizing one's visions is sometimes a slow, daily process of immediate tasks (a year of fencing 80 acres before this farm ever had a sheep). Self-image becomes a means to sustaining the vision. "I am a farmer" is an affirmation of a reality that is in the process of being realized. In their turn the daily realities, small victories of gaining new skills, new realizations, and new experiences, enhance the self-image and transform the vision. In mastering a skill that has previously been inconceivable, I am washed in a momentarily unconquerable sense of power: I can do *anything*. The concept of the possible explodes. For women especially, non-traditional physical work, having been so deeply taboo, has a tremendous potency which then gives energy to the creative and interpersonal aspects of our lives as well. As one's sense of possibility and one's experience of accomplishment grow, so do one's visions in an ever emerging web. The fabric of one's life becomes an interweaving of self-belief and the dream with the more immediate daily actions. I dream of a farm, and in my dual nature of visionary and creator, bring the reality forth: a pasture fenced, sheep sheared, a shed built, a garden harvested.

The day came when I found that self-image had become a cage rather than an expression of my internal reality. My dreams and growth had taken me elsewhere but my sense of assurance remained tied to the old images. What are you doing sitting here, you should be out farming. It was only after a painful and confused year that I could really and truly hear a voice within say "I don't want to farm (now?)". With that realization came a mass of guilt. There was guilt towards the numerous living creatures dependent on me for their survival. A farm is not created nor ended in a year; nor are animals a work one can take a year's sabbatical from. Then came guilt from within; my own self-image became an accusation of who I was supposed to be. There was the guilt of social images and morals, internally voiced: how dare you put yourself first; you must serve others,

serve others, serve others. The parent within me became a dictator and I could no longer find my own movement, know my own center. I stumbled blindly doing what I "should" and trying to make myself believe that it was also what I wanted (or at least that it would be good for me).

However, the true inner light once seen can hardly ever be put out again. And so what happened in me was bursts of self-belief, an intense attraction towards glimmers of new vision and identity. In brief periods of self-permission I would dare to think of the half written book lurking in my desk drawer and in my unconscious. I began to believe that I was at an age when I had to pursue the writing with seriousness and dedication if I was to master the craft enough to unite vision with product. The moments of integration, the time actually spent writing, became almost unbearably ecstatic for me, a more profound wholeness than I had known before. But the guilt remained. My joys became furtive within myself.

Is this schizophrenia only my own personal disease? Being a woman, raised to always be other-oriented, has contributed to a schism between serving myself and serving others. Even within the left and women's movements, I have learned to transfer caring for a husband and children to caring for society, for the earth, for others vaguely generalized. The belief that pursuing my own work is the *only* way I can contribute meaningfully to others is an act of such outrageous effrontery that it is nearly unthinkable for me.

I envision living my life with vivid focus and clarity, giving absolute freedom and permission to my best creative energies; with these mind images comes an experience of delight, my body loosens, my heart literally sings. Then blankness. It is a great effort for my mind to even form the words for these ideas of living for self-fulfillment. My conscious personality has taken on the internalized voice of guilt, denial, and repression; my most visible and obvious self is actually waging war on a new self that struggles for emergence.

Part of what is changing that invokes such powerful responses is a transformation from product orientation to process orientation. The farm vision was validated by a whole system of morals and politics: the farm looked like work and felt like work; its products supplied the needs of others; its existence defied the corruption of our society and our planet. But the creation of art doesn't look like, and sometimes doesn't feel like, work. Vital hours spent dreaming, planning, are not so clearly justified by external values. Art is by its nature a commitment to process. It is the effort to directly connect the unconscious and the conscious, to make the unique and personal vision manifest. Though the pages of my novel grow, my focus is with the daily labor of creation. The thing itself, the pile of paper, is the least of the process and of the accomplishment. Writing demands an absoluteness of self-belief in the moment of creation. This self-belief is the essence of personal power. Hear-

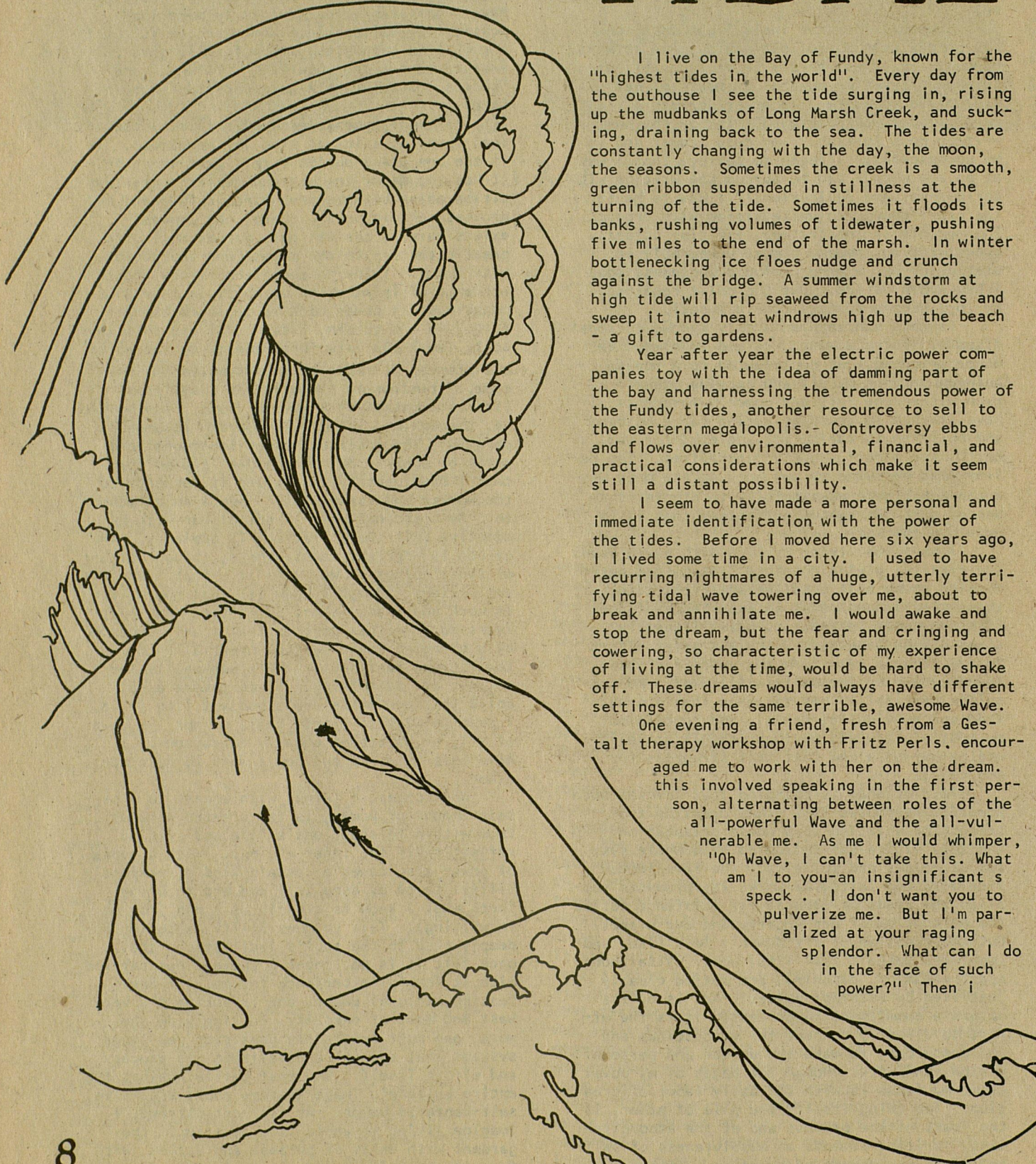
ing the inner voice, I also have to listen to it. I have chosen a very difficult and tortured path towards self-actualization. I haven't found another way. I seem to need to believe that I will *die* if I don't listen to the voice of the inner self. My recent behavior has been so painful as to make that possibility believable. Now since it is a matter of life and death, I can finally give up another bundle of "shoulds," "how-tos," and "that's goods" that I have carried since infancy.

In these recent weeks of crisis, I have been spending a lot of time in the garden. It is the one place on the farm I want to go to. It has become my teacher and healer: the transition point between product-consciousness and process-consciousness. Here, the process exists purely; one can only garden well with great attention to the moment and the action, with *focus*. Thinking about the garden the experience of integration of multiple levels of consciousness comes back to me in dazzling form. In the garden, I can still the conscious self, touch the life-force energy of the earth and plants. I dream of lush jungles and they grow. Standing in the midst of them, I am literally bathed in a wave of love, flowing from me, through me, to me. The garden becomes a painting, the intersection of impersonal and personal power. But the garden is also work that I can identify and value; it connects to the worker and farmer self-image I am attached to. My conscious self is not at war with my creative self there; rather, it applauds. The garden is work and feeds others, though neither of those things is why I do it. That I don't yet *believe* (though I know it) that the writing is work and feeds others is part of what paralyzes me. Another part is that I am frightened by a changing image system, especially moving towards one that appears more personally indulgent and satisfying. I was taught as a child that one makes one's bed and lies in it. I seem to want to change beds, or not lie down at all, or something equally outrageous. I have made my world and now I want to make another.

What comes, I think, with access to a certain amount of power, is far greater demands from within to shape one's life and self to reflect truly the inner visions. With a sense of power also comes a certain kind of responsibility: to go as deep as I can and to bring forth what I know as clearly as I can (for me in writing). This responsibility (a choice so deeply tied to the soul's inclinations that once felt it is no longer a choice) has carried with it fearful experience for me. In manifesting personal power, one is asking the very best and most of oneself. To simply do the work, one must constantly construct new image systems that support and validate the process and effort itself. One must battle against the entire culture's image systems about assertive, self-centered women. At its most extreme, I imagine living my whole life as I am in the garden: with unity of purpose and action, with focused attention, with great clarity of motive and choice. ♀

By Kate McCandless

TIDAL



I live on the Bay of Fundy, known for the "highest tides in the world". Every day from the outhouse I see the tide surging in, rising up the mudbanks of Long Marsh Creek, and sucking, draining back to the sea. The tides are constantly changing with the day, the moon, the seasons. Sometimes the creek is a smooth, green ribbon suspended in stillness at the turning of the tide. Sometimes it floods its banks, rushing volumes of tidewater, pushing five miles to the end of the marsh. In winter bottlenecking ice floes nudge and crunch against the bridge. A summer windstorm at high tide will rip seaweed from the rocks and sweep it into neat windrows high up the beach - a gift to gardens.

Year after year the electric power companies toy with the idea of damming part of the bay and harnessing the tremendous power of the Fundy tides, another resource to sell to the eastern megalopolis. - Controversy ebbs and flows over environmental, financial, and practical considerations which make it seem still a distant possibility.

I seem to have made a more personal and immediate identification with the power of the tides. Before I moved here six years ago, I lived some time in a city. I used to have recurring nightmares of a huge, utterly terrifying tidal wave towering over me, about to break and annihilate me. I would awake and stop the dream, but the fear and cringing and cowering, so characteristic of my experience of living at the time, would be hard to shake off. These dreams would always have different settings for the same terrible, awesome Wave.

One evening a friend, fresh from a Gestalt therapy workshop with Fritz Perls, encouraged me to work with her on the dream. This involved speaking in the first person, alternating between roles of the all-powerful Wave and the all-vulnerable me. As me I would whimper, "Oh Wave, I can't take this. What am I to you-an insignificant speck. I don't want you to pulverize me. But I'm paralyzed at your raging splendor. What can I do in the face of such power?" Then I

POWER

would switch my seat to face where I'd been and answer as the Wave. "Absolutely nothing. I can obliterate you without a twinge. I can smash you to bits. I am beautiful, reckless, and utterly beyond you. Get out of my way, if you can. I don't care."

As I spoke as the sneering, scintillating Wave, I was struck and shaken to feel that tremendous destructive force as my own. That was obviously and painfully reflected in how much of my energy I blocked and twisted with self-negating habits. What I was much less able to accept or deal with was the awesome beauty, the splendid uncontrolled natural force of the Wave that was also mine to be claimed and integrated. I continued to have the nightmares and replayed over and over the tired old games, "Well, I may not be the embodiment of the bad Wave, but I certainly don't have any good Wave-power in me."

I wanted to get further into my images of the Wave. Two Wave chants and drawings of each came to me during a time of winter solitude. These became talismans for me through changes and new perspectives, as I gradually made the connections, merging with the Wave. I saw how polarized my power images were: good-bad, creative-destructive, feminine-masculine, and I saw the layers upon layers of fear and denial of both in me.

The Wave dreams I have now are different from the old nightmares. Sometimes they pummel me about, envelop me in their turmoil, bash me into things. It feels awful, but I survive. I am less afraid to experience pain and confusion; I flow with it, and emerge whole. Once, in a dream, I sat with my Aikido teacher, slightly

touching, while the Wave hurtled over us. We sat still and calm until it receded. That dream left a feeling of centered stability. As I've regularly recorded my dreams, I've come to appreciate how powerful the imagery of my dreamworlds can be in reflecting the state of my energy/power/ki. It has become a valuable tool,

checkpoint, and friend in my growth into full power.

Recently, while reading in Patricia Garfield's Creative Dreaming about flying dreams, I realized I'd never flown in a dream, perhaps afraid of losing what groundedness I have. Then I saw that I've experienced the feelings of well-being, lightness, freedom, and effortlessness of motion that she describes in flying dreams in several of my underwater dreams. These have been in different settings, very sensually delightful, exploring the wonders of movement underwater without any stress over breathing. Often there are beautiful colors and shimmering light effects, amplifying my identity with water/womb/security - the good Wave.

I've come to feel I am the Wave - All the Wave. Yet I also ride the Wave, inhabit the Wave, transcend the Wave - my human form - always changing. My storms and furies are ultimately as neutral as those of the sea. They transform me, sometimes harshly. My evolution now is towards learning to channel the wondrous fluid energy that is me so that it less and less crashes in on itself and more and more expands into creation.

Our dreams are ours, right at the center of our aloneness/connectedness; they take us to the source of our power. We are living transformers of this energy, whether we use it to raise goats, paint pictures, or organize labor unions. The more channels that are opened to its flow, the higher levels of transformation will take place. The potential is unlimited. And truly I believe this personal approach to power has more potential, even in large-scale energy crises, than Fundy Tidal Power ever will. ♀

OF CABBAGES & KINGS

By Harriet Bye

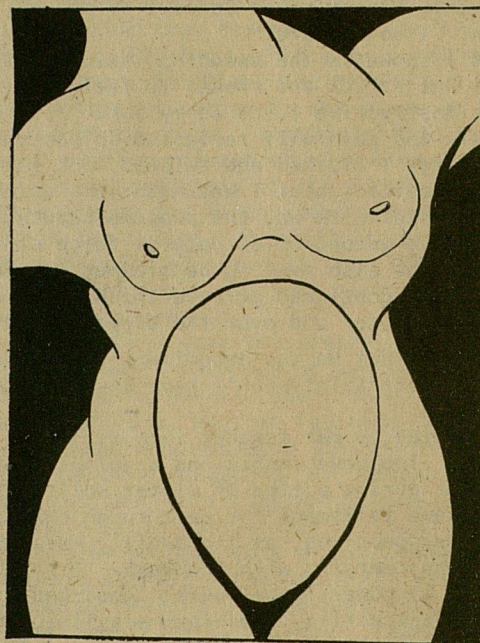
Power is most often defined in terms of action or, as a friend said, "the energy to achieve the effect I intend". Webster's definition of power is 1) the ability to act or do, 2) vigor, force, strength, 3) authority, influence. This issue was specifically called *Personal Power* to separate it from what I shall call "invested power". Invested power is socially or culturally bestowed authority and elicits deference (deference to perceived power). It has to do with such things as money, status, race, gender, class, education, job position, looks, heterosexual privilege, and indeed, the whole social hierarchy that is used to keep people locked into a complicated system of one upmanship. The wish to attain invested power is what drives one to "make it", and the desire to "make it" has traditionally been the property of the male world. A woman's path has been to make it by whom she married, for a female supposedly shares the invested power of the male she is attached to (e.g. my son the doctor syndrome).

It was invested power that the beatniks of the 50's and counter-culture hippies of the 60's tried to turn their backs on. Seeing the extreme alienation and hypocrisy of their parents' lives, they asked for something more. In droves, they followed one guru or another and dropped out seeking simplicity, bliss, and greater well-being in a less material lifestyle. This was called downward mobility. Now the question is, "can one develop and maintain her/his own sense of personal power when one separates oneself from the acceptable, validated forms of power and the material and psychological comforts they offer? Can we as individuals keep firm to a belief that must be primarily supported from within?"

My estimation is that it is possible but hard. In 1977 I see all sorts of people who wanted nothing to do with invested power most actively seeking it. Drop-outs have returned to school, got degreed and pedigreed. Friends who did lay-out for underground newspapers are now working for *Penthouse* and the *New York Times*. Their motivations seem to divide into three areas with some overlay. The first is personal gain: a feeling of achievement, comfort, and resuming one's "rightful place". The second is a desire to achieve political power in order to effect social change. The last is survival. I am not yelling "copout" or pointing fingers at this time but trying to describe a social phenomenon I see. I am also trying to set the context in which I can relate a recent battle I had with the external and internal forces of authority. The catalyst was a trip East during which I felt constantly confronted with my own lack of invested power. It began by coming out to my parents as a Lesbian. I cried and they tried to be supportive - a reversal of the usual script. I couldn't

Graphics by Yvonne Pepin

figure out why I was crying until I realized that what they were saying was, "It's OK, we love and accept you even if you are a little deformed". There would never be respect or appreciation for my choice. They could only

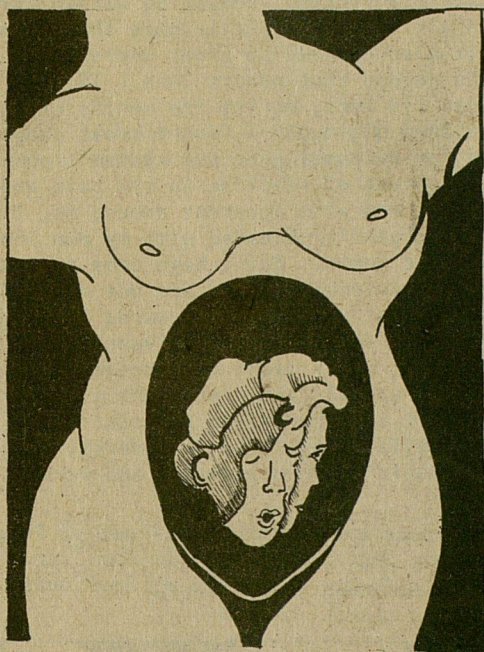


see me through their lens. From my parents I went to visit my 28 year old Chicago cousin, a wealthy lawyer and art patron. After that it was my brother, 30, a PhD, Fulbright recipient and part-time single father with complete childcare arrangements, meaningful work, respect, and infinite possibilities before him. I could see his future female students falling in love with him because he was *it* - the great daddy/teacher, a god/father figure backed up by 3000 years of patriarchal academicians. Hardest of all in one sense was my 43 year old cousin, an architect, mother of three, patient and creative, liberal and good. She was all that I was supposed to have been.

There I was, a twice-divorced single Lesbian mother - a woman alone. No specific job, no titles. There was a certain amount of curiosity in my life as a country woman - my dexterity with hammer, saw, seeds, and pipe-wrench. But mostly I was considered an oddity. A cousin exclaimed, "They grow all their own food; isn't that wonderful!" My life was reduced to quaintness and, because I had sworn that I would not be too judgmental and would not raise myself by criticizing those around me, I smiled and accepted it. But as the vacation wore on, I grew more and more aware of the strength of invested power and success and how it affected my own sense of personal power.

Inwardly I became jealous and discontent while outwardly I maintained my own but there was definitely a split. I wanted respect and recognition.

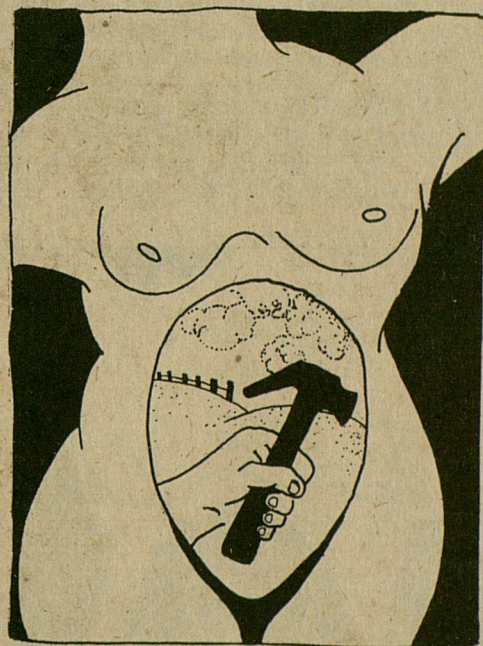
Of course, on one hand I knew that this was all the spoils of a system that I didn't believe in. On the other hand I began to think of ways I could achieve some of that kind of power. Should I go back to school? Become a feminist lawyer, a psychologist, a skilled professional and beat them at their own game? My mind raced on. Wasn't it time to make something of myself? But, wait a minute! I already was something: a creatively potent woman who has spent the last eight years of her life developing physical and mental skills to cope with and care for herself and the environment. I had used my power in search of a clarity of vision to untangle and cease the worship of false gods that I had inherited. Why was I now again caught in this



quicksand of self-negation? I felt as if someone had made a doll to symbolize the child/person I had been and then stuck it full of pins and nails, each representing a way that I should feel inferior. Now, as an adult, it took all my mental strength to extract these painful weapons. I wanted to undo the spell, to use feminist theory to revalue myself and my work for its essential meaning, not for the approval I might receive for doing it. Indeed, I was not going to receive approval or respect for challenging the system and it was foolish of me to think I would.

I began to re-examine my recent interactions with power and this is what I came up with. First, our lives are in part controlled by those who economically dominate this country. Power by virtue of position, i.e., that of bosses, politicians or teachers, is real because we need or want something from them such

as jobs, money, or a grade. They have control to the extent that their reward or punishment matters to us. But there is also another kind of domination that exists. This is psychological domination and involves giving one's personal power or sense of self over to the power authorities and then accepting their hierarchical definition of who we are. Mythically this destruction of self can be traced to the Kronos/Saturn stories of the Archetypal Father who eats his children as soon as they are born in order to avoid the possibility of a challenger. As children (especially as girl children) we are taught to submit and not to battle with the Father, to give in to his authority, to identify with the conqueror, and to be afraid of dealing directly with experience. What this ultimately means is that the conqueror or Daddy winds up inside of us. The stronger ego dominates and the hostility that was first directed against Daddy gets turned around and directed towards ourselves. This is called internalized oppression. Women have been saddled with their own special brand, termed masochism, that manifests itself in self-denial. The weak ego feels constantly guilty because, besides having a negative, paranoid self-image, it also has to deal with an ideal ego image (the Father within) that relentlessly persecutes it. Powerlessness has been psychologically assured and the weak ego will be easily dominated by anything that reenacts the power of the disapproving Father. For many women this becomes personified in the lover/husband.



Psychological oppression is paralyzing. A slave that recognizes her/his position can begin to fight back but a slave that accepts the rightfulness of this position remains passive. Fighting back or bucking the system is called "deviant behavior".¹ It is a refusal to con-

cont.

form to the normal socialization processes. Most people give in to the rules; they believe the authorities. Their growth becomes paralyzed; their egos remain weak. For white, middle-class men there are more rewards associated with accepting the rules than for women. For those of us who do rebel, who do not accept the Father, we must remember that there is always a degree of relativeness about how complete our rebellion is, alternating between those times of freedom and creativity when we truly have access to our own personal power and those times when we are definitely reacting to authority power.

Being a Lesbian is a flagrant example of rebellion against Daddy. It is on one hand refusing to accept a sado/masochistic script for our personal relations. (I am speaking in generalities here since not all heterosexual relationships succumb to that script, but the model is strong). Seeking a place of one's own as a self-identified woman outside the socially acceptable roles is also considered deviant behavior, and history has shown us that deviant behavior in women is punished. Witness the murder of nine million witches. Consider also the terminology developed for defining a strong willed woman: bitch, castrator, fury, man-hating dyke, bluestocking, virago. As Phyllis Chesler points out so well in *Women and Madness*, characteristics, such as aggressiveness, that are considered necessary for a healthy male ego are considered neurotic and deviant in women.

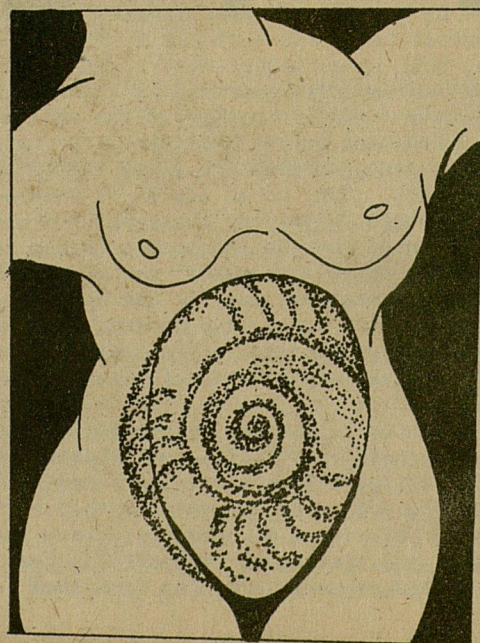
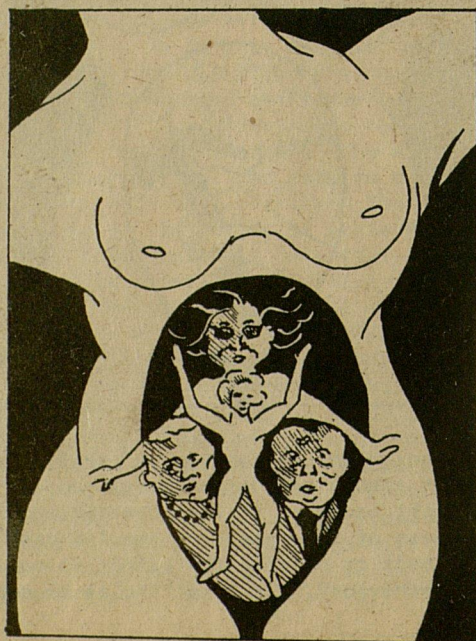
To survive as a deviant (and I now use the term positively) in a world of conformers, you must be able to separate out what you believe from what others believe. It is necessary to sustain your own positive self-image rather than the image others have of you which might be humiliating since most people are afraid of deviants. One way to resolve part of this conflict is to relate to a deviant group or community. In total isolation the creative individual often goes insane or succumbs to the

pressure of the larger group. Yet deviant communities must be careful not to become a new "Daddy" by reinforcing a different set of acceptable images, and thereby rob the individual of her own power or subjectivity. For a woman to experience her personal power she must have a sense of her own identity separate from the group identity.

Feminist and Lesbian culture have offered individual women a mirror in which they can see themselves reflected as empowered individuals free from the misogyny of the larger culture - as whole beings capable of dealing with the unknown.

The closer I looked at my reactions to the invested power of those around me, the more clearly I could see Big Daddy inside me yelling that I wasn't rich, strong, creative, acceptable enough. By comparing myself to others and using a patriarchal measuring stick, I was not only robbing myself of power but also helping to create a victim. Competing within the system might make me a little more the "winner", but it also created an order where I win only to the degree that others lose. This is not my desire. In fact, during the months of this internalized dialogue, I fought great pangs of guilt for succumbing to the system's power at all. Instead of reacting to the pain and poverty that was also apparent around me, I was self-indulgently obsessed with my own inner doubts and fears. But I have come to realize that deep intense changes are not made in one step and that my progress towards freedom, self-acceptance, political effectiveness, and access to personal power might more resemble a slowly ascending spiral than a straight line forward. Finally, I can appreciate feminist analysis for the essential tool it is in understanding the relationship between invested and personal power.

These ideas are further developed by Peggy Allegro's *The Strange and the Familiar: the Evolutionary Potential of Lesbianism*. ♀



JOURNEY WITH BARBARA

Driving into sunset past frozen landscapes.
The sky turning from pink, to red to blue, to deeper blue.
Barbara is beside me.

She is thirty-three.
(Her birthday was Thursday.)
Slight wrinkle seams extend from her eyes.
Threads of grey like spider webs caught in her hair.

Intent on driving she tells me of her life, her pain.
The words come easily, so giving.

She'd lived in the Berkshires for a year
in a cyclical struggle of poverty ---
having a shitty job
having a car that always needed fixing
having children that needed feeding
unable to live without working
unable to work without driving
unable to fix the car without working
unable to work
She'd supported herself and her two children
with fifteen dollars a week for food and gas.

And she laughs.

Dumbly I thought at first meeting her.
Awkwardly I think now,
But also triumphantly.
Triumphant because she has found herself,
Confirms herself in each small triumph.

Driving across frozen landscapes.
Bright promise of spring day behind us.
Setting sun before us.

Pat Henry

Lucid Dreaming

By Sharon Hansen

I have been working with my dreams since childhood, remembering them carefully and tuning in to the messages they held about myself and my life. Over the last few years, a whole new turn of events has taken place in my dream life. I read a chapter on sleep and dreams in Jane Roberts' book, *Seth Speaks*, urging people to break up the pattern of long periods of wakefulness followed by a long period of sleep, because this tends to encourage a strong separation of waking and sleeping consciousness. It was suggested that shorter periods of sleep interspersed with activity would enable the conscious and unconscious parts of the mind to more fully integrate with each other, assist in dream recall, and provide many other benefits to mind and body.

The concepts excited me and I experimented with going to sleep around 9:00, then waking around midnight and staying up for several hours reading, writing letters, playing music, moving around my house. I'd go back to sleep for a few more hours in the early morning. With this pattern of sleeping and waking, I began having a new kind of dream in which I was aware in the dream that I was dreaming and could take control of situations to a great extent. Knowing that I was out of my body was a very freeing feeling; I would often immediately choose to take off in joyful flight, my favorite thing to do in dreams. Gradually I discovered that this lucid dream world (as I called it) was very much influenced by my desires and thought. I was not at the mercy of whatever was happening but took an active role in the creation of events around me.

I dreamed that I dived deep into an indoor swimming pool and then tried to come up for air. I realized I couldn't make it to the top of the water before my lungs burst so I took a breath of air under water and discovered I could breathe just fine. It felt cold swimming around under water and I wished it was warmer; it immediately became warmer. I became excited as I realized that I was dreaming and that what I desired was happening. I sensed I'd better be careful and precise in what I wished for. I wished for the water to be just three to four degrees warmer and it was. Surfacing, I saw a group of people around the pool dancing and talking. I thought it would be nice if music was playing, then saw a friend pull out her guitar and start to play. Three other musicians walked in and started to play. I got so excited that I lost my lucid state and slipped into an ordinary dream state for a while. Later I regained it and found myself back in the room with the pool, talking to a friend and eating a plate of food. I looked at the plate and wished there

was a piece of steak on it and stared intently at it to make it happen. Then I remembered that that technique hadn't worked in other dreams and looked away and continued talking to my friend. The plate grew heavier in my hand and I looked and saw a piece of steak on it, swimming in juice. It was delicious.

I had felt an incredible power in this dream which I used for seemingly small pleasures: warmth, music, food. But as I look back on it, it makes sense that I should test out such power on simple things first as I'm just learning how to use it and don't know its qualities or understand its nature yet. Such experiences of power and control in my dream life help me believe more deeply in the reality of my power of choice in waking life. They seem a clear message advising me to recognize that my life is in my hands and to make my choices carefully and with full consciousness of my self-created existence.

Another thing that started happening with these explorations was a blurring of the edges of waking and sleeping consciousness. Sometimes I would slip rapidly from a wakeful state into a lucid dream where I knew I was dreaming. It felt like a meeting and melding of these two states of mind, the conscious and unconscious, which had been relative strangers for so long. For years I had remembered parts of my dreams in the mornings, but never before had I thought consciously about waking-state experiences during dreams or used their lessons. I was able to remember ideas in dreams about which I had thought or read before going to sleep and to try them out in the comparatively freer dream environment.

An interest in whales and a desire to see them up close was gratified by this dream: Finding myself in a lucid dream state, I remembered that I had wanted to see whales and flew over to the sea. I focused on inviting a whale to appear and one did but the head and tail were in the same place. I was doing something wrong. Relaxing, again I called to a whale and shortly a huge one began to surface until its whole body was lying on top of the water. I felt a certain reluctance on the part of the whale as it continued to pull its huge body right out of the water and into the air so I could really "see" all of it. Then it plunged down into the water and swam away. I jumped into the water to follow it but it was gone.

That dream showed me what a novice I was in the use of these tremendous powers. Instead of tuning in to whales and letting them guide me in the way to approach them, I had exerted my power "over" my environment and forced them to approach me. First, I saw an unreal whale with head and tail in the same place and then a re-

luctant whale who split as soon as possible, unwilling to hang around and make acquaintance.

Fortunately I'm able to learn from mistakes in these dream states. I had several conscious dreams in which I tried to make something happen by focusing intensely on the desired event, such as trying to start a fire by pointing my fingers at a pile of wood and willing it to burst into flame. It didn't, and I was disappointed. Then I gradually learned a technique of thinking of the desired experience or object, relaxing completely and believing that it would happen; it did, (as with the steak mentioned in one dream described previously). Often, I used this technique to start flying. Then I started applying it to appropriate situations in waking life. By relaxing into focusing rather than tensing I didn't wear myself out. This was very helpful to my piano playing as tension had always been a problem when playing; my muscles would often start to hurt too much to play as long as I would have liked. Remembering how it felt in the dreams to deeply relax and yet also focus on attaining something, I loosened up at the piano. I had always felt doubts about my ability to go beyond a certain point with the piano. These doubts had created a strong blockage in my musical growth which has now begun to break down. My helpful unconscious also supplies dreams in which I play wonderful music, far beyond my present waking ability, to inspire me and show me what I'm capable of.

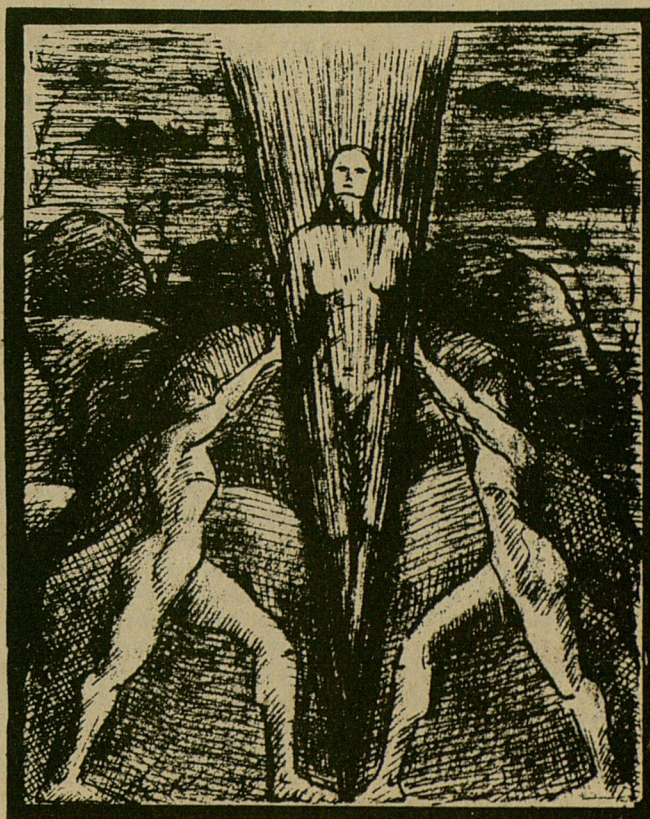
One of the most exciting feelings about this dream work is that my unconscious and conscious minds are real helpmates eager to share their unique qualities with each other. I experience a deeper trust of my whole self from seeing myself learning in dreams what I consciously direct myself to learn and then carrying those dream lessons over into waking life. We have a cultural heritage of fear of the "dark" or unconscious side of the mind, of its ability to overwhelm the conscious self and make us do things we don't really want to do. In me, this fear has given way to delight at seeing these two diverse aspects of my self work together for growth. Making friends with my unconscious means I gain more access to its incredible powers, my source powers. It remembers everything I've ever experienced, (whereas the conscious mind can only handle a certain amount of memory before it clogs up and has to let some slip away into the vast unconscious storage vault). Its resources of creativity and vital energy appear quite unlimited. When such energy is pouring through me, I'm capable of unusual feats, such as staying up all night writing this article after a full day's work in the garden. "Unlimited" is a key word for me. The conscious mind deals with the material world and its limitations. Events happen much more slowly and sensibly than in the quicksilver world of dreams. The unconscious deals with the unlimited astral plane where seemingly anything goes. Movement is tremendously freed with no physical body to restrain me and yet, I can still experience all "physical" sensations deeply (from tasting and smelling, to pleasurable lovemaking).

Learning to consciously find my way around in the unlimited universe of the unconscious is both thrilling and full of uncertainty. Sometimes in dreams I want to go from one place to another and don't know how to do it. Once I tried to go visit my friend Pam. Flying out of my house, the terrain below me was different from what I knew in waking life. I didn't know which way to go and couldn't find her. This desire to go to a particular place in dreams has been frustrated a number of times. Then one night I dreamed a new way to do it.

I walked into a dark house towards a table on which there was a chain saw. Suddenly I felt fearful and wanted to be out of that house immediately. I didn't even want to walk from where I was back to the doorway. Shutting my eyes, I thought about what it looked like outside the door and willed myself there. Opening my eyes I was there, with no sense of movement, just an immediate transference of location. Ecstatic, I thought of where I would feel the safest and the answer was in my own house. Again, I shut my eyes and thought about what my house looked like, opened my eyes and found myself awake in my bed.

I was sorry I had awakened myself as I wanted to continue with the experiment. Since then, I've had several dreams in which I practiced that new-found ability of instant transference, a gratifying experience which helps take the terror out of formerly scary dreams.

Besides learning to effectively escape fearful situations, I'm also learning to face them with interesting results. After reading
cont.



Bertha Schenker

an article in *Altered States of Consciousness* by Charles Tart on Senoi dream techniques, in which they encourage each other to actually approach *fearsome* experiences in their dreams, I had this dream:

It was night as I pulled up before a bridge and got out of my car. Walking towards me was a full-size tyrannosaurus rex, fangs bared. I turned to run away but I remembered reading about facing your fears in dreams and decided to try it. I walked towards the monster and the closer I got the smaller it became until, as I got right up to it, it had shrunk down to a toy cloth alligator lying on the street.

That dream and others in a similar vein help me to deal in waking life with the difficult task of facing my fears and encountering, rather than avoiding, them. I push myself to try things that I want to do but which have been too scary, such as playing with other musicians. I was always afraid I wouldn't be good enough, wouldn't learn new pieces fast enough or keep the rhythm well enough. Such confidence-crippling doubts are being eaten away as I gain a new sense of capability from trying to play music with others and being successful at it. A self-image of slow learner and stiff fingers is being replaced by a quick-learner self-image and loosening fingers.

Usually to have a lucid dream, I have to create the space for it to happen by thinking about it, desiring to have one, perhaps reading or talking about it. Some nights, I direct myself to have a lucid dream before going to sleep; sometimes it comes, sometimes not. It works easiest if I've slept awhile and wake up in the middle of the night and then direct myself to have one. They always occur in the early morning hours, never at any other time of night.

Absorbed as I am in the excitement of lucid dream exploration, I also learn much from other types of more usual dreams. They show me aspects of myself and my actions that are hard for me to look at and give good advice on what to do or not do. Sometimes this occurs negatively; recently, in the midst of breaking up a love affair, I've had dreams living out extremes of jealousy and hatred that I then didn't have to live out in waking life. I got a good look at the behavior and at what it produced in the dream. I had no wish to re-experience it in waking life. Dreams are very honest; if I can't face what they show me about myself then it's myself I'm afraid of. Dreams often help me out in my relationships with others. I live with a group of people and am often not able to relate in a continuously satisfying manner with all of them. If this goes on too long I build up a real sense of alienation from one person, basing my feelings and attitudes towards them almost totally on projection and imagination. At such times, I've sometimes had helpful dreams in which the negative feelings between myself and that person were emphasized. Or we might in one dream be deeply loving with

each other and communicating quite well. In either case, I can and have used the dream as a prop to go and break the ice with my friend. In talking about the dream usually more than a superficial conversation is engendered which helps us move through the built up feelings of alienation.

Another example of direct assistance that I have received from dreams was when I was feeling jealousy in the midst of a marital divorce. I tossed around on my bed seeking relief from my pain. Before going to sleep I asked for advice in my dreams and this is what was given to me:

I found myself walking down an institutional corridor with no windows, passing through numerous sets of double swinging doors until I came to a dead end and a black hole. Standing there, I knew that my alternatives were to jump into the hole or go back through the swinging doors down that corridor. I knew I had been there before and that I had previously chosen to go back down the corridor. Here I was again being offered the same choice. I quickly jumped into the hole closing my eyes and hugging myself. I feared claustrophobia and the unknown, but feared the endless walking through that dull corridor even more. Floating slowly down, there was no sensation of being hemmed in by anything and I finally opened my eyes to a vast panorama of earth below me and sky all around. I was floating several miles above the earth and could see for hundreds of miles in all directions - cities, mountains, forests and agricultural areas stretched away below me and the sky was clear of clouds giving a tremendous feeling of spaciousness.

This has been one of my all-time favorite helpful dreams especially when I get myself into a tight spot and know I'm going to have to make a real leap to get out of it.

Dreams are a continuing gift from the deeper parts of myself to my conscious self, keeping me in touch with my wellsprings and helping to sustain in me a sense of creative responsibility towards my life. They are invaluable tools for growth and learning, providing inspiration in times of doubt and often quite practical suggestions for behavior which will help me move through a difficult energy blockage. As I learn to use their messages more effectively in my waking life and feel the excitement of the adventure I experience while dreaming, I know that this is all coming from my Self rather than from an Other. I am developing a sense of strength and wholeness that helps me to live more deeply and vitally.

Dreams are an unfailing channel of access to my personal power, not unfailing in being always available for there are times when I'm not so tuned in to my dream power, but in the sense that through my whole life they've guided and empowered me and I know will continue to do so for as long as I live on this earth. ♀

CATCHING THE SHEEP

Walking out over pastures,
Sharp sea sighing in our hair,

Stark cry "Here sheep",
And "Here sheep", clanking the bucket.

They come, sweet simple eyes,
Suspicious of me, the stranger.

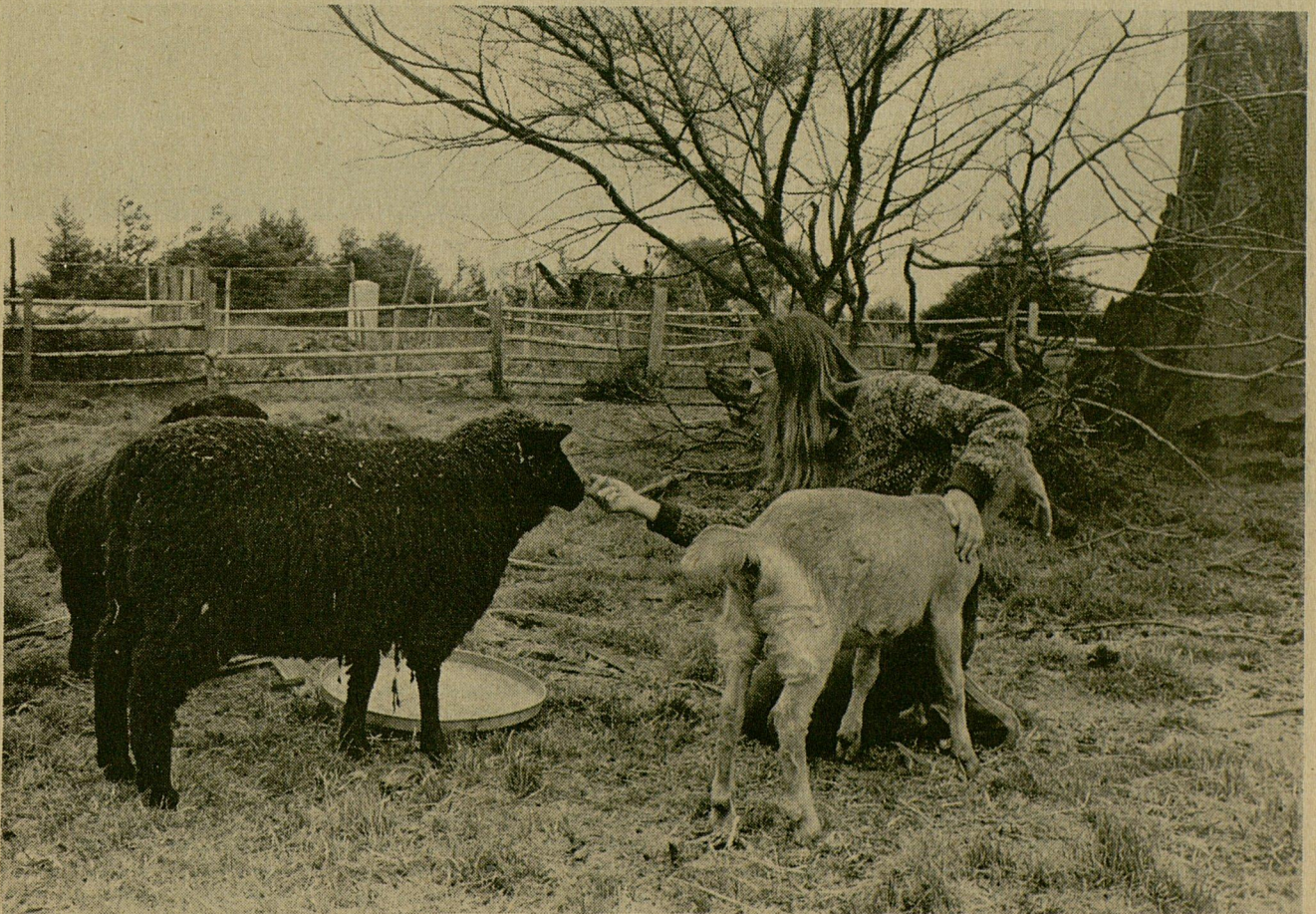
Hands over bodies for signs of birth.

For one old ewe, flanks sunk with age,
A prayer:

"Forgive us, gentle lady,
for using you so.
Safe passage".

Safe passage, indeed.

Judy Sinclair



Ann Banks



If I Loved Me Half As Much As I Love You

By Slim

"I am going" I announced flatly, "to write some crap about personal power".

"You're not going to write crap, Slim", he said. "You're going to write the truth".

And gently, already convincing me, "You can do it".

The truth. That seemed like something worth sharing. In some ways I resented mentioning and being encouraged to discourse about romance as the enemy of personal power.

"Lookee, I know a lot about personal power, I've pursued it, I've done a lot of research, I've got some great quotes". So why should I have to sit down and write about my perennial submission to another? Willa Cather writes that there are only two or three tales of human existence. and we keep playing them out with as much fury as though they had never happened. It is such a tired tale.

But really there's not all that much I need to say or can convey about personal power. If you can envision it, if you will it and intend it, then you shall have it. If you can't and don't, you won't. Tools and support are important. Talking and thinking about it may help. Risking it does it. If you want to travel a path with heart, choose a path with heart. If you want to get your energy flowing, just kick out the jams. Door jams, log jams, traffic jams, what kind of a jam have you gotten yourself into?

My consideration of personal power "coincided" with my first consummate rejection by a man I really wanted. The same waves that crested in the elation of BE HERE NOW and ALL IS

ONE sucked me back under and I was CRAZY as never before. I lost control, I suffered disbelief and an excruciating desire not to BE ME that allowed me to touch bottom in some amorphous way (would that there were a bottom to bounce off of), and declare "I am bankrupt".

All the while my head kept chugging, looking for the lessons hidden in the pain. "How can this devastation render me more powerful"? I clung to a resolve to confront and attend to all that I was feeling. I tried sincerely to follow the teachings of "more enlightened" ones, yet they taught me that you cannot try. (Try to pick up a cup. You will find that you either pick it up, which is not "trying-to-pick-it-up", or you are paralyzed, your hand poised in mid-air. I tried to synthesize the admonitions to struggle yet to let it be, and in approaching understanding *I was thrown back upon myself*, upon feelings that have been warped and distorted by layers of cultural dictates that spawned a lifetime of pitting my protests of worthlessness against the futile protests of friends ("But, Nancy, how can you not see how beautiful you are") transcended only in times of affirmation by my chosen love supreme.

We used to go to the dance, then cut out early to drink bourbon and coke, she in the front seat with handsome athlete and me in the back rounding out the quartet. I knew I did not deserve to be there, that I was tolerated because I was Judy's best friend. I was not adequate. She had long red hair cut in a "V", and if you spoke to her from behind she would turn her entire body in the manner of one encased in a neck brace, so as not to separate the strands of her magnificent flaming mantle. We giggled in pubescent horror at the notion of him putting his penis inside you. The Beauty and the Brain. She didn't mind that I was bony and stoop-shouldered and shy. The boys did.

Self-abasement has been my forte. I am ready to concede that people generally have a lower opinion of themselves than is warranted by reality or shared by their friends. But I still purport to personally suffer the greatest schism between my "real" worth and my "sense of self-worth". In order to verify that the schism exists and that a self-image that would drive me to suicide is in error, I have to convince others that I am impressive and lovable. Impressive, hence lovable. This necessity is how I motivate myself. If I can just make myself better than. . .

She was more openly preoccupied with power than anyone I knew at the time. "I want to be powerful so that I can get next to the people I want to learn from". We afforded each other a wary emulation. I was perplexed that this brilliant woman who could release the energy of years of discipline in a single three-hour concert had any truck with the likes of me. She was perplexed that anyone "so unworthy" as the man who rejected her could embark on a painful and all consuming journey through death and rebirth. Ultimately, she journeyed to the third world and got next to a family of musicians by becoming their slave.

Ultimately, I may indulge it, that I might despair of it. I shall arrange all my eggs in one frail basket and set it on his doorstep in the dead of night. Although I want love and approval from everybody, my all consuming purpose in life becomes to create a desirable self in the eyes of lover. My beauty is in the eyes of my beholder. I may be dancing magically at a boogie, my feet moving so fast that I too am dazzled, or delighting in a loving conversation with an old friend, and with the feeling of liking there comes the thought, "Gee, if only he could see me now", or sometimes, "Just wait till I tell him how admirably I've been enjoying myself".

I lie on the floor of my cabin, breathing and following a Reichian technique into a rhythmic shaking throughout my body, and finally into deep sobs. In a waking dream I feel myself a vessel releasing suffering back into the wholeness from which it came. Immediately I imagine myself relating this to my beloved, diminishing it to the transmissible, and it is clear, "I create lovers as walls to my own expansion". Fully conscious of the irony, I transmit my revelation to my beloved within two hours, ignoring the awkwardness of collaring him in front of the local market as I pass on my way to work.

In my emerging dependence, I make backassed efforts to turn control of my life over to him. Not only "Will you make me happy and whole or wretched and lonely?", but "Shall I go or not?" I joke brashly about A Woman Under The Influence pleading, "Just tell me what you want me to be, Joey. I can be anything. Just tell me what you want". I hope he is pleased by my clever joking.

I am giving him power, power he doesn't want. It isn't as though he was unwilling to teach me. He lived the honesty I espoused, coaxing me to say what I really felt (admissible?) just to see if the world fell apart. Urging me to "push against my patterns". I could relinquish the power I acquired through sharp dress and a sharp wit, and so discover that I didn't need those. On the whole, he felt quite satisfied with his life and himself, no matter what others might say, and I could have that too, he assured me. And reassured me. We got caught in an endless cycle in which the more I demonstrated efforts toward self-reliance, the more he gave me the support I needed, and the harder I tried to be self-reliant in order to win that support. I begged him the gift of myself. cont.

Before she had taken a woman lover, or any for that matter for some time, she was given to co-counselling a great deal about her brothers, the archetypes without equal. Her brothers, it seems, were expending less energy on her, and a new crisis was afoot in the realization that this had always been the case. The energy for these deep and dear relationships had all come from her. She was crushed, she was woeful, she suddenly burst out, "It's mine! I claim it all, all the projections, all the love, the beautiful others I created in my fantasies, I claim it all"! And she was joyful.

So bankruptcy was the gift. When you got nothing you got nothing to lose. So long as we reckon we stand to win by a given set of rules, we continue to play by that set of rules. We continue playing long after we stop winning. Or we continue to amass hollow victories. Sufficient explanation for "why we keep doing it to ourselves" and why in the midst of my (to me) thrilling insights I must chronicle the stranglehold romance has had upon me. My most basic rule has been "If you have known me and made love with me, don't reject me. Don't two-time, don't leave me. That cannot happen to me".

With a '56 pick-up and a will born of passion, she smashed their little cabin to splinters. She had not, after all, shared in its creation in order to find him lying within with another. He was perhaps taken aback in the few days it took him to fully comprehend the lessons and opportunities afforded by this nasty turn of events. He smiled a lot at his new friends and neighbors and family. She would just as soon have done more, and resented people's gullibility and hypocrisy. She hurt a lot.

The darkest hour is just before dawn. It occurred to me in this winter of my discontent that my world must not be empty without you, babe. Cracks of light?

When he was already into celibacy but not yet out of my clutches, he listened, as I listened from afar, to her confiding in the darkness of the sauna that this last year of celibacy had been one of the best years of her life. When sexual desire passed through her, she remembered to breathe. Having disentangled this element from her relationships, and patiently noticed what was happening, she was perhaps ready now to choose sexual union, as deliberately as she had chosen celibacy.

Aesop's fabled monkey had to let go of the rocks to get her hand out of the narrow-mouthed jar. This woman let go of sex. Another let go of adulation, while that one relinquished pre-eminence. The other clung to being right (hence wronged). The crux of all this learning involves letting go of your particular attachments.

She described herself at 59 as an adolescent. She abandoned her husband, her home, her subordination to her children, and offered up her silvered wisdom, "I've just become aware of the pain that comes from hanging on to something when it's time to let go".

For me, letting go is at the heart of achieving personal power. My times of peak experience (times of being swept from one reality into the next in a matter of a few hours or a few days, times of growing) have been times of confronting a resistance (to a person, a value, a posture); of shedding that resistance, sighing with relief, (aah, this feels much better), and almost immediately encountering a new resistance cropping up in its place (ah, nuts, do I have to let go of everything?).

Reading *The Teachings of Don Juan* as the subway pulled me across the bottom of San Francisco Bay, I took a look around me and experienced the enormity, the infinity, of my aloneness. It was exhilarating. I thought, "When you become the wisest person you know, you feel very alone". It was triggered by reminding myself that Don Juan could be a woman. I could be Don Juan. The experience passed - it is a memory.

The trick is not even learning to let go, but accepting that things go away. When he said, "So I think I'll be staying alone tonight", I fashioned out a consolation. To be unwilling to reach out and be refused is for me no cherished armour. I felt him lovely tonight, and I felt, "It's happening again, I want to be him, how he must love adventuring through the world from within that self". This was so fucked and so clichéd that even stoned I didn't believe it, and further I felt that in the throes of my ardour, the most important thing was not to make him love me but for me to love aliveness.

The belief that he, she, you or they can make me . . . is going away. Beyond, preceding and within the realization that we are all one (and we manifest this as love), my struggle has been to find my power from within myself. To integrate my inwardness with my outwardness. Outside myself I have (as my mother observed) support systems up the yin-yang: I live in an extended family, I reside amidst natural beauty, I do work I feel is important, my act draws occasional applause. This is nurturing. It is never enough. My act, I realize, will not serve as a cover-up for my insecurity. I can convince no one that my actions spring out of a deep sense of harmony when in truth they come from a deep sense of danger.

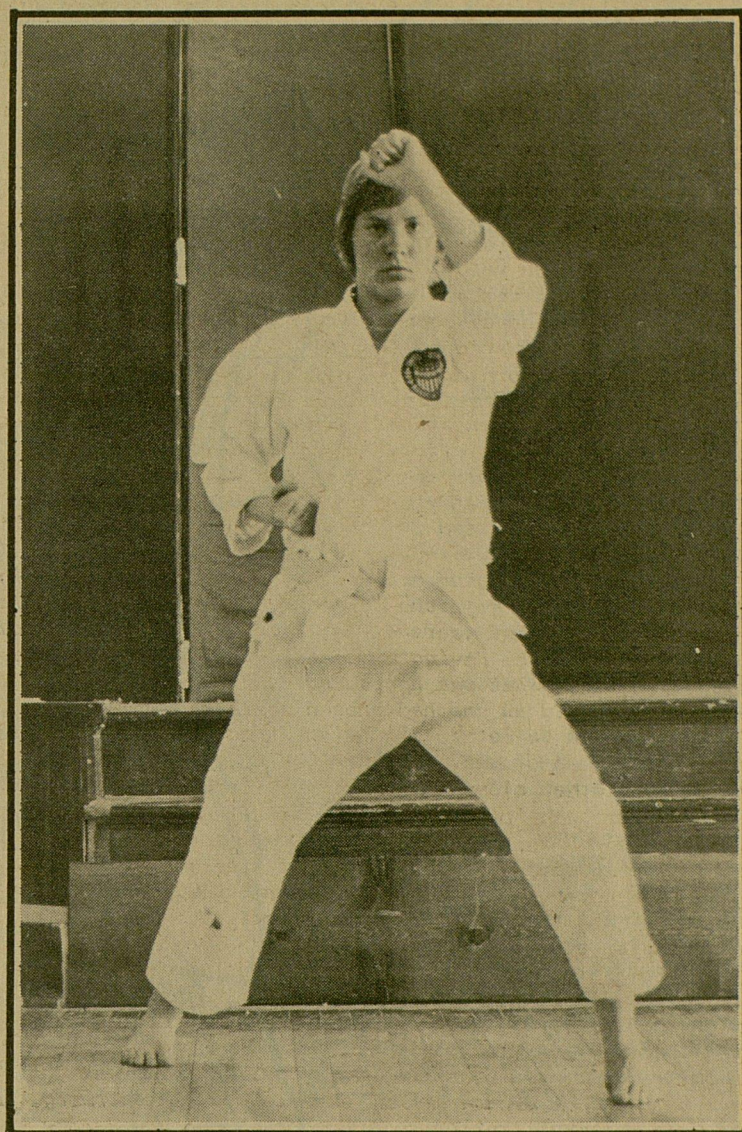
The trick is . . .

Simply to stop trying to convince others that I'm okay, that I'm an initiate into the truth. I can convince some people, those who also feel it is dangerous not to secure your place in the hierarchy. The others don't need convincing.

The trick is . . .

Simply to convince myself.

I can do it. ♀



Karen Voltz-Mil

THE NATURE OF SELF-DEFENSE

By Barbara

The realm of self-defense (at least within my perspective) means a redefining of strength and power. It means getting in touch with your concept of "self". This means getting in touch with your will, your desires and purpose in life. In essence, it is a becoming aware of those essential forces which make you unique. Self-defense means creating and maintaining those vehicles (mind and body) which exercise your will or uniqueness. It means getting in touch with your creative process and exercising its power. It means finding those paths which will allow you to actualize your potential. It means giving up the "luxury" of being weak (mentally, physically, and spiritually).

It means loving yourself so that you will have

more to offer others without slighting or compromising yourself.

It means centering and taking control.

It means radiating a *posture* of confidence, competence, balance, and agility - a *posture* of pure positive energy.

Self-defense is any wholistic healing process.

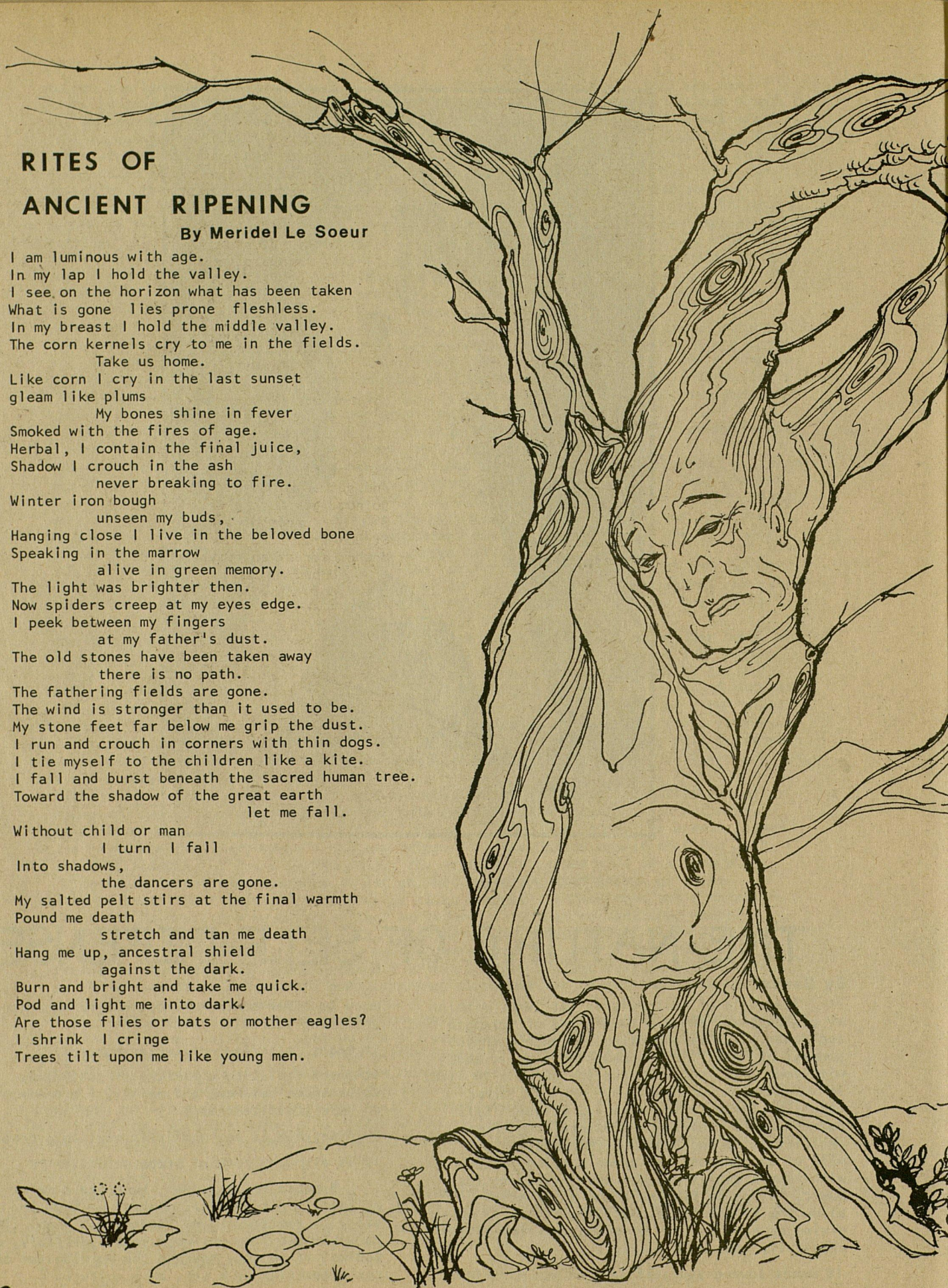
It is also any form of preparation.

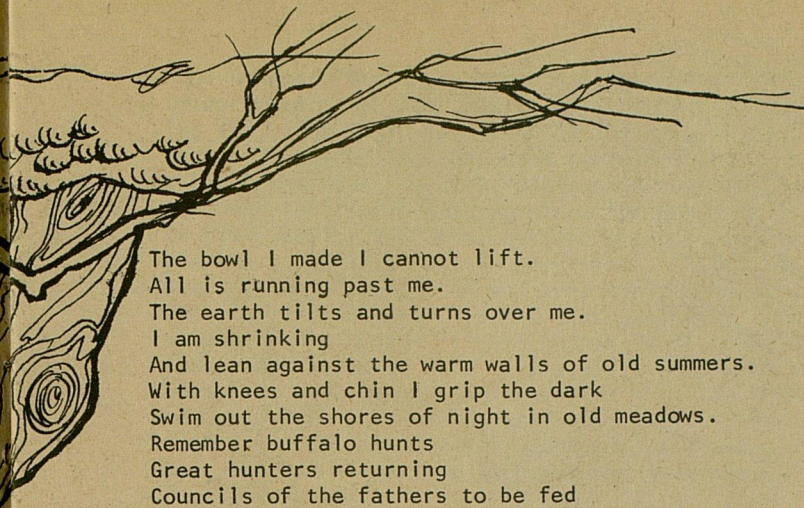
Because we, as women, have had a major eclipse in our physical powers, we have to start to rediscover and reconstruct them. To be liberated from our most basic territory, our bodies, is to have touched the morningstar of our liberation as a sex, as a culture. ♀

rites of ancient ripening

By Meridel Le Soeur

I am luminous with age.
In my lap I hold the valley.
I see on the horizon what has been taken
What is gone lies prone fleshless.
In my breast I hold the middle valley.
The corn kernels cry to me in the fields.
Take us home.
Like corn I cry in the last sunset
gleam like plums
My bones shine in fever
Smoked with the fires of age.
Herbal, I contain the final juice,
Shadow I crouch in the ash
never breaking to fire.
Winter iron bough
unseen my buds,
Hanging close I live in the beloved bone
Speaking in the marrow
alive in green memory.
The light was brighter then.
Now spiders creep at my eyes edge.
I peek between my fingers
at my father's dust.
The old stones have been taken away
there is no path.
The fathering fields are gone.
The wind is stronger than it used to be.
My stone feet far below me grip the dust.
I run and crouch in corners with thin dogs.
I tie myself to the children like a kite.
I fall and burst beneath the sacred human tree.
Toward the shadow of the great earth
let me fall.
Without child or man
I turn I fall
Into shadows,
the dancers are gone.
My salted pelt stirs at the final warmth
Pound me death
stretch and tan me death
Hang me up, ancestral shield
against the dark.
Burn and bright and take me quick.
Pod and light me into dark.
Are those flies or bats or mother eagles?
I shrink I cringe
Trees tilt upon me like young men.



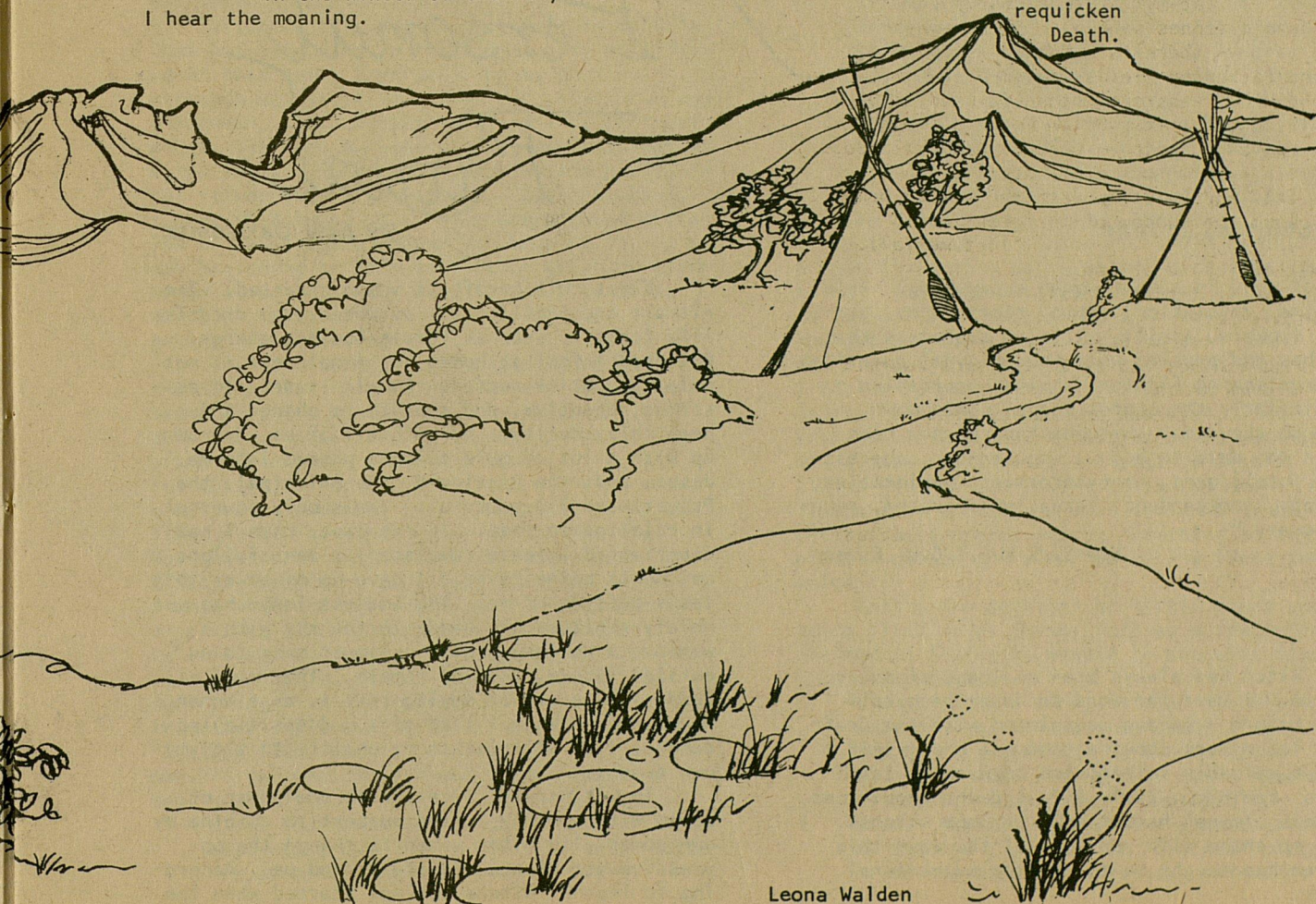


The bowl I made I cannot lift.
 All is running past me.
 The earth tilts and turns over me.
 I am shrinking
 And lean against the warm walls of old summers.
 With knees and chin I grip the dark
 Swim out the shores of night in old meadows.
 Remember buffalo hunts
 Great hunters returning
 Councils of the fathers to be fed
 Round sacred fires
 The faces of profound deer who
 gave themselves for food.
 We faced the east the golden pollened
 sacrifice of brothers.
 The little seeds of my children
 -with faces of mothers and fathers
 Fold in my flesh
 in future summers.
 My body a canoe turning to stone
 Moves among the bursting flowers of memory
 Through the meadows of flowers and food.
 I float and wave to my grandchildren in the
 Tepis of many fires
 In the winter of the many slain
 I hear the moaning.

I ground my corn daily
 In my pestle many children
 Summer grasses in my daughters
 Strength and fathers in my sons
 All was ground in the body's bowl
 corn died to bread
 woman to child
 deer to the hunter.

Sires of our people
 Wombs of mothering night
 Guardian mothers of the corn
 Hill borne torrents of the plains
 Sing all grinding songs
 of healing herbs
 Many tasselled summers
 Flower in my old bones
 Now

Ceremonials of water and fire
 Lodge me in the deep earth
 Grinds my harvested seed
 The rites of ancient ripening
 Make my flesh plume
 And summer winds stir in my smoked bowl,
 Do not look for me till I return
 root of greater summers
 Struck from fire and dark,
 Mother struck to future child.
 Unbud me now
 Unfurl me now
 Flesh and fire
 burn
 requicken
 Death.





Graphics by Jo Tenn

Crafting A Personal Ritual

By Amy Oakwoman

"W.I.T.C.H. is an all woman everything. It's theatre, revolution, magic, terror, joy, garlic, flowers, spells. It's an awareness that witches and gypsies were the original guerillas and resistance fighters against oppression - particularly the oppression of women down through the ages. Witches have always been women who dare to be; ... courageous, aggressive, intelligent, non-conformist, explorative, curious, independent, sexually liberated, revolutionary."

New York W.I.T.C.H. Coven

Witch has always been an image of power for me. I used the word to describe myself long before I became acquainted with the Craft. As I learn more about witchcraft and myself I find a valuable interaction between my intuitions, feminism, daily life and the traditions, rituals, images handed down through witches. I want to share with you some of the ways this system has taught me to develop my personal power.

First, witchcraft is woman oriented. The rituals are facilitated by women; the creative life force is seen as Female/Goddess energy. For once I feel at home. My femaleness is not only OK, but is sacred. Female is defined as strong, creative, and capable to change and heal this reality. As with all of us, I grew up with a lot of male culture pumped into me. Jesus, God, the President, the Principal, the Priest were all powerful. I was only powerful in relation to them. In the past, when I had experienced intense revelatory times of light I called it being saved. I gave up my power to a Jesus outside of me. The Goddess image has not merely replaced big Daddy in the sky with a woman. I no longer give my power over to an outside figure, male or female. The image of Goddess is a way of saying that I, as a woman, have power. When I read of a goddess slaying demons, I am affirmed in my ability to slay my own demons.

In witchcraft, I celebrate the power of women with women. I find support to combine my own power with other women to change the oppressiveness of the society around us. According to legend, witchcraft was started when the

Moon Goddess "Diana" sent her daughter "Aradia" to earth to teach poor people ways of developing and using magic to overthrow their oppressors. This tradition has been carried out through the ages. Covens and circles have often been the secret meeting-place for peasants to plan revolts and other actions against people who tried to keep them powerless. This combination of political and spiritual is an exciting area for me. Rather than passively waiting for a better life to happen to me, the Craft teaches me to act. I'm exploring this by gathering with other women who have the same visions. The power of women's images is intensified and enhanced by all women circles. As we gather in circles we increase our power to change this world.

I find in covens, as with other groups, I use my power best when I feel equal with the other members. Within the coven, social hierarchies are not held. An old account of a witch gathering states that there is no salt at witches' gatherings. This is not to say that witches like bland food! This reference has to do with the practice in England of placing a salt vat on the table to divide the noble people's places from the end of the table where the peasants and tenants could sit. In this sense witches have no salt at their tables. In the circle I experience the power of equality, and this has been instrumental in developing my own sense of personal power.

Witchcraft is one of the tools in my life that has helped me to reclaim my body and the power that comes from enjoying my physical strength and sexuality. Systems, religious and otherwise, that advocate denying this physical plane, learning to ignore pain, and sublimating sexuality all sound too much like the puritanical values that I was taught. Being a woman, I grew up ashamed of my body and blocked off a lot of my potential power by ignoring it. I'm now beginning to join with other women to celebrate being physical; dancing until reaching the high beyond exhaustion, being naked together, feasting with joy.

Interconnected with reclaiming my body is exploring healing. Witches have always been healers. It's another area in which the psychic and physical are integrated. The village witch healed both souls and bodies with her collection of herbs. Magic and medicine were combined. In making that connection in my own life, my dis-ease has taken on new meaning. No longer do I only relate to linear cause and effect - seeing my body separate from spirit. I am a whole being. Using past wisdom and new experience I no longer depend upon experts to tell me about myself. In cooperation with nature I am healed at all levels. I find communicating with the spirits of plants is equally as healing as using their medicinal properties and find immense power in the fact that I can. I can heal myself and teach others to heal themselves.

I see the old witch in the woods, a little crazy they say. Hear that she talks with the plants. Bubbling pots of herbs,

garlic spells, and "common" sense, combined to heal all that enter her cabin. The witch is me.

The "Craft of the Wise" is truly a craft with skills. One of the most important skills is developing powers of the mind. I use spells or personal rituals in focusing this power. Candles, colors, special objects all speak to multiple layers of my being. My special altar place is a space in my home and my being where I go to concentrate on being centered, to ground myself with the Earth, to let go of the buzz of activity in my head, to do my work.

As I center on doing this article I gather objects that have special significance for me: an old glass box from my Grandmother's neighbor, a round purple sea urchin, a yellow shell, crystals, ring and necklace made by a friend. A deeper sense emerges from within me. On my round table I arrange crystals, shells, flowers, candles, the colors seem to select themselves, purple and yellow - the colors of the 3rd and 5th energy centers, signifying wisdom/power and mental activity. I am drawing energy to me through me from me to write this article. The incense smoke billows, the candles flicker signaling my deepest selves to gather forces. As I breathe I feel the place in my chest/belly where I don't breathe - where I hold in as I think about writing. My mind clears, the space between my eyes opens - deep, purple curtains opening wide. Energy tingles through my body as I let go of the tensions holding me back. I experience my possibilities expanding. I enter the cone of light in my ritual space. I am flooded with energy and power.

I use the power of fantasies. As I meditate on a specific goal - an image of how I want things to be - I become more connected to my ability to actualize those new images. Yes, I can make changes. I can take a creative part in my reality and the reality of the world around me. I follow no prescribed rules for my spells and meditations. I do incorporate what I learn from traditions and pay attention to moon and sun cycles, but mostly I listen to myself. In ritual work my socialized walls recede. I can listen most closely to what truly is my highest and best energy and by returning to that place I gather the power to follow those inner voices.

Facing the problems of little money and being tired of my former work as a teacher I decided to listen to myself to see what direction I should take.

I need to have money, I need to have enough. Which direction shall I go? The Oak tree outside my window opens to me. I feel the wood of oak - images of days working on my house fill my mind. Working with wood - a builder. As soon as I go to more "logical" parts of me the old voices return, offended.

cont.

"You can't build, you're just a woman. You couldn't even hammer a nail straight five months ago." I tell no one. My secret is kept between me and the Oak. I begin to imagine myself as carpenter. Body strong, creating dwellings from trees. I dare to join a carpentry class. I use it as much to feed my growing fantasies as to develop skills. I gain confidence to write in my journal - "I AM A CARPENTER". I say aloud my new image to the Oak. She listens and affirms. I listen and affirm.

"Magic is no secret. "Power is not supernatural - it is natural".

Nine million women were burned as witches. In one town all women except one female baby were burned. The patriarchy has always feared witches because they were powerful enemies of

oppressive social orders and to squelch that power women were burned and the information and traditions of their craft were systematically repressed. Witches were labelled crazy and so were their powers. I don't fear burning. The witch hunters I fight are trained into my own consciousness. There are blocks in me that say that anything not valued by the patriarchal system is crazy. This power I speak of to change my reality, to change this world is lunacy. From society, from inside, and from other women around me, these voices clamor for attention and seek to paralyze my energy. As I break through those blocks and validate my intuitions and heritage, my personal power grows. Through the Craft I'm integrating my life on the political, spiritual, personal and physical levels so that I sometimes can feel the boundaries of all those labels slipping away. I find tremendous power in realigning all these parts of me into a focused entity. ♀



MY POWER DOES NOT DIMINISH YOURS

By Sherry Thomas

The roadgrader moves slowly along, creating the shape of the highway to come. On the seat are the driver and an excited and laughing young boy. Boys learn at their father's knees.

What did I learn at my mother's knees?
"Can't you be a little more accommodating, dear? Men would like you better if you were a little less forceful."

"I don't care if men ever like me."

"You will, dear, you will."

As women, there are vast areas of experience where we have had little or no access. Growing up in a sexually-polarized culture, we have been excluded from the perceptions, activities and characteristics which were traditionally labelled "masculine". While boys were growing up knowing they would be responsible for creating and choosing their own lives, girls were growing up wondering what boy would be their life. Our world was personalized and particularized; the focus was on how to become what was pleasing to and needed by others. We were not, for the most part, goal or achievement oriented, but instead person and personality oriented. Assertiveness, analysis, differentiation, organizing, initiating, leadership, and risk-taking are not skills and capacities that have been encouraged or developed in most of us. Yet they are critical to healing an arbitrarily enforced division of self, to ending the repression of our full humanness and the limitation of our personal power. (Not that each of us must experience the full range of human potential to experience our personal power, but that to be cut off from half of it is crippling.)

There are, of course, exceptions to these generalizations. I was, like many women, raised at my father's as well as my mother's knee. The oldest child of three girls, I was admitted to many of the realms of men. At nine, I was being taken to strategy meetings for my father's election campaign; I remember literally learning about tactics, strategy and planning leaning sleepily against my father's knees. But even for those of us who were encouraged at home to explore the fullness of ourselves, the sexually-prohibited nature of many of our skills and inclinations soon became apparent. From teachers, from peers, from the whole world around us, we learned that girls could not and should not be as we were.

I have had access to a great deal of personal power for much of my life, probably because of those images from early childhood that I could be an athlete, a politician, a *person*. Not coincidentally, I also have been successful in ways which were socially measurable: a champion swimmer, a National Merit Scholar, published author, etc. Success is *not* power, but for a woman to be outstanding, to be visibly unique, requires of her a far greater sense of self-belief and directedness than it does for a man. In order to make achievement possible, she has to leap beyond all the accepted definitions of what is possible for her. Yet the girl or woman who gains access to herself in that way lives with a constant schizophrenia, knowing she dare not betray her fullness of self to others, while at the same time attempting to live it.

All my life, I have been told subtly and overtly not to show my sense of power, not to expose the limits of actions and the aspiration for something more, not to be too different, too much myself. This message came through clearly in my social isolation and failure in high school; in my mother's increasing anxiety to straighten out my teeth and my behavior long after it was too late to do either. It came through in college when, as a straight "A" student, I couldn't criticize the seeming lack of thinking on the part of teachers or friends still struggling to get an "A". And again from the bright young bullshitting men of the political left whose affronted stares said "How dare she think she's as powerful as we are?" Success is not power; the true meaning lies only in the effort, the focus, the creativity that sometimes underlies the "success". Success (in some areas) is all right for a woman, but access to her powerful, visionary, unique self is not. I have been hiding my power all of my life. There is a tremendous amount of anguish and rage hidden in those few words. I have been hiding my power all of my life. And I am still hiding it in the women's movement, from other women, and, most fatally, sometimes also from myself.

That is what I want to look at: the relationship *between* women about power. We all know that women's experiences have been limited and denied, that to be a woman and be powerful is virtually a contradiction in society's terms. But what is less clearly apparent is that with each other, we are also still afraid

cont.



of power, most particularly the power which derives from characteristics traditionally considered "male". Within feminist women's circles, certain aspects of our personal and collective power have come to be known and celebrated. The power in large gatherings of women, the powerful experience of sisterhood, the power of creating new institutions, and spiritual power - these have flowered within us in recent years. Not coincidentally, they come from realms women have long retained access to: interpersonal relations, nurturance, service to others, and religious experience. But those manifestations of personal power which derive from the so-called "masculine" (leadership, initiative, role and task differentiation, analysis, etc.), we unconsciously retreat from or actively reject. And, quite often, we actively reject the manifestations of them in the women we work with.

There is good reason to reject and fear the uses and abuses men have put these characteristics to. We live in a culture where invested power, reward, and success bear little, and sometimes, no relation to personal power. At the ulti-

mate extreme is Nixon, President of the United States, whose power grows not out of vision but out of delusion and paranoid insecurity. In response to a culture which is organized to give some people power and deny it to most people, we women have seized onto collective structures with great zeal. Our forms proclaim our rejection of arbitrarily-invested power. Our structures seek in themselves to validate the powerfulness of every woman, potentially every human.

We work hard at using structure to change relationships of dominance and submission, but though our collectivity begins with this vision, it contains within itself a deep contradiction: we are afraid of power in ourselves and in each other. The collective process also becomes a means of circumscribing women's power, keeping it carefully within the group's bounds. We develop more and more highly defined ideologies for our collectives, more and more limited patterns of behavior. We come together in groups and masses: consciousness-raising groups, festivals, tribes, collectives, circles, meetings. Put 10 or 100 women together and it's got to be good. One woman alone, she's dangerous: egotistical, not sisterly, not women-identified; a star; *powerful*. Get her in a group; put her in her place. There's safety in numbers. None of us needs dare to be great if we're all busy staying the same.

One of the basic philosophies underlying our collective process is that of "equality". "We are all equal (or we should be)." At a meeting last week a woman said she loves gathering in circles where women are all equal. We have created forms (such as each talking in turn in a circle) which maximize opportunities for and encourage the contribution of each woman. But it is also true that we are *never* all equal, except in the most basic fact of being living people. If equal means the same, we aren't. And this is often how women use "equality" in groups, to create a mask of sameness rather than to enhance the uniqueness, the differences in each of us. We do this in part because we do not want to threaten, or be threatened by, other women. We do it because we are afraid that acknowledging differences of talent, skill, experience, role, function will lead to reinstituting a hierarchy of control over one another. We do it because those skills of identifying and differentiating are part of that complex of "masculine" skills that have been denied us. But in clinging to a mythology of equality, we deny, suppress and invalidate each other's personal power.

One of the most rare experiences of my life has been to work with people who are not afraid of or offended by me. I can't remember the last time I sat in a group of more than three women being unselfconsciously and unrepresedly myself. Working with deep mutual respect for each other's skills, talents, and functions is an experience I have usually had in partnership with one person at a time. In most groups I've been a part of, we're so busy ignoring differences that there's no chance for respect. Yet I've also found my accep-

tance of the feminist version of the "be nice, dear" ethic as unrewarding as my self-assertion. If I am fully present, contributing ideas and vision and offering analysis and possible direction, then I am controlling and dominating. If I am carefully holding myself back to protect others, then I am manipulating with my silence. If I am as emotional and reactive as others, I am oftenseen as worse. It doesn't matter what I do, it won't be "right", because it is not "right" to be myself. And I buy that system as thoroughly as anyone else. As soon as I believe that you need protecting, as soon as you believe that my being threatens yours, then we have all become less human, not "equal" in the only meaningful sense of the word. I can't do anything to you. We may argue, cry, laugh, share, but you are still you and your feelings are yours, just as mine are mine. My being powerful does not give me any power over you, only you can do that. Just as your being powerful doesn't diminish mine.

We have been raised in a world where one person's being powerful means another person's being not-powerful. Where competition and hierarchy convince us that when one person wins, someone else loses. Where being good implies something else is bad. And from these beliefs comes a tremendous fear of others' power. Instead of a recognition which enhances oneself as well, we far too often compare ourselves *as though we and the other were in any way the same*. We deny and invalidate our own uniqueness because we don't believe in it. In women's collectives, we deny the reality we all experience of our different abilities and roles and substitute instead a mythological reality of sameness. The result for a woman who has access to her personal power is a schizophrenia that borders on insanity. She *knows* that her initiating, or analytical, or synthesizing (or whatever) skills are *essential* to the group's functioning as it does; and often she knows that her role is unique. Just as she knows her own skills and roles, she also knows how they interconnect with those of others in the group. Then she is told by the group that either her perception of reality is completely inaccurate and she is contributing nothing unique or individual to the group, or that she is bad and manipulative for being in a position of differentiation. Her strengths quite often become the place where she is most attacked or invalidated, for they represent what is most threatening.

Acknowledging differences opens dangerous territory. We are all vulnerable to appreciating and validating what we are familiar with. And we are extremely vulnerable to society's standards of value and success (curious mixed bundle of them, different for men and for women). For myself, appreciation of leadership, initiative, and carrying-through comes easily; roles of facilitating communication or creating a supportive environment are difficult for me to recognize and validate. For many women, it is the opposite. Leadership, for example, is a nearly taboo subject among many women, unseen and unaccepted. In

looking at differences within our carefully same collectives, we may find that some of us should not be working together, just as we may find that it is the only way to *begin* working together. Investigating our differences involves, perhaps, more stretching than anything else we may yet have done. For it means embracing our full personhood, manifesting our uniqueness. It means beginning to explore whole realms of experience, perception, and behavior that we have known little about. It means not accepting a limited, half-human, fear-suppressed vision of our selfhood, but learning to know and express the richness of our personal power.

For myself, it is coming to mean that I want to work and struggle with women with whom I share vision and mutual respect. Structure is a *tool* and only works if it is the appropriate tool, if it reflects rather than enforces the relationships within it. I want to use and participate within collective structures when they are the appropriate tool for the work, and when they accurately reflect the reality of our differences. I will not protect you from myself or believe that you are helpless. Nor will I work where I have to fight to salvage my experience of reality while I also struggle to do my work. We've been playing a game where none of us wins. ♀



Sally Bailey

OPEN TO LIVING

By Pat Henry

Thinking about my personal power makes me think about my life and the style in which I have lived. My mother always took great pride in telling me what a good baby I was. Being the "good baby" was a difficult expectation to live up to, because I was also very curious. I spent a lot of time during my childhood exploring different ways of looking at the world. I got so involved in these altered vantage points, that when it came time to leave them, I'd find myself stuck and have to be rescued. For example, my head was always getting caught in unusual places, like behind refrigerators, and under the crack between the foundation and the body of a house. Looking back on these experiences now, they seem quite representative of the ways in which I've continued to live my life. First trying to be "good", then yielding to an insatiable curiosity, exploring different ways of living, and often getting stuck in a particular vantage point. As I've grown to know myself better, I have discovered how to rescue myself.

Seven years ago, I read Betty Friedan's *Feminine Mystique*. The book was given to me by my older sister when I first started sleeping with men. I was not enjoying these long awaited relationships and I'd come to ask my sister whether this was all there was to sex and men. I rapidly progressed from that initial stuckness of building my identity around a relationship with a man, to beginning to think further about women's liberation. During the course of this questioning, I met a woman and we soon became close friends. When sexuality entered our relationship, it wasn't scary, but exciting and joyful.

But with this, my new woman's consciousness, I also traded in my old set of shoulds (passivity, manipulation, and being nice) for a new set (assertiveness, being strong, and being properly political). I refused to sew and bake anymore because these were too classically feminine occupations, and replaced these activities with karate and auto mechanics. Yet somehow in the process, I was vaguely aware that I was no more the aggressive bull dyke than I was the passive earth mother.

Leaving for Boston in the fall of 1975, to enter a graduate program in feminist therapy, I abandoned the beautiful Kansas farm where I'd lived, the comfortable lesbian community in which I was a leader, my current lover, and my family. As a kid, I'd been shuffled around the United States and overseas every two years because my father was in the army. When I'd broken loose from my family to go to college, I

promptly settled down in the university town of Lawrence, Kansas to develop the roots that I'd never been able to have. Now I was giving up all those roots to take the big risk and go to graduate school. When I arrived in Boston, the loss of my roots was overwhelming. Suddenly I knew no one and was constantly having to explain myself to other people. I was angry at my own risk-taking and felt like the uprooted child again trying to make friends and establish myself.

After being in Boston for several weeks, I was sitting in a cafe talking to a woman I'd met at school. She told me of her recent divorce and how she'd come out as a lesbian. Describing her situation, she said, "These things just happened. I don't really know why; I feel totally out of control of them. They just happened." I looked into her eyes intently, surprised at my own revelation. "Just happened?", I asked. "Things don't happen to me any more. I make them happen, I choose them, and they're my responsibility". I was no longer the angry little kid being shipped around the country by my parents and having my life decisions made by them. I knew then that as hard as my decision to come to Boston had been, it was indeed my decision and what I wanted. Taking responsibility for my decisions, I felt suddenly very connected and strong, knowing clearly the difficulty and joy in being my own person.

Later that year I went into therapy for the first time, searching to be challenged to grow rather than to receive support for dealing with some life-crisis or loss. In about the sixth week of therapy, I was beginning to feel incredibly vulnerable as I saw more clearly the ways in which I prevented myself from experiencing life fully. Then one night, I had a vivid dream which paralleled the circumstances of my rapeseveral years before. I hadn't thought about that rape except in intellectual and political terms since it had happened. I'd thought that I'd dealt with it by establishing a rape victim support service.

When I went to see my therapist, Emily, the following day, I recounted my dream. She pressed me to recall and re-experience the whole rape so that this time I could experience it differently. I lay down on the floor and began remembering that young man's body above me, his knife at my throat, and my own frozen fear. She urged me to act. I *could* act; I didn't need to be immobilized. I let out a sky-splitting scream, forced his knife from my throat, hoisted his body off me, and fled. I felt incredible relief and began weeping. Emily reminded me

that this time I could receive the comforting I'd never gotten after being raped, because I'd been answering police questions and reassuring my lover that I was going to be all right. I asked Emily to hold me and I wept in her arms. I relaxed, feeling my own vulnerability and the power of being able to ask for nurturance. I no longer had to be the strong controlled person who took care of others. My strength need not be the brittle facade of control, but the yielding plastic of paying attention to my own feelings and expressing them. This was a powerful lesson about my own fears of letting other people take care of me and of expressing my emotions for fear of being "weak".

A few weeks later, I returned to Kansas to begin my own practice as a therapist. Also, I again went into therapy and in my first interview, my new therapist, Sam, asked me how I sabotaged myself. I quickly answered that I kept myself busy so that I did not have time to notice my own feelings. I then agreed that I would spend an hour a day by myself, just looking at myself. At first, it was very hard to fill up that hour. I'd watch the clock and walk around my apartment wondering what I should be doing. Then I'd check the clock again to see how many minutes had passed. Gradually, I relaxed and began looking forward to that time alone. After a while, I realized that all the books, plants and pictures in my apartment were distracting me from working on myself. I remembered as a child going into the back of my closet and shutting the door so that I could be alone. Trying this again, I felt a little foolish at first, but soon enjoyed retreating to my nest in the back of my closet. With all the outside noise and stimulus removed, I could hear

my own body. I felt how I prevented myself from breathing so that I wouldn't cry or get angry; I began letting myself breathe and express my feelings in short sentences such as "I hurt", or "I'm angry". After this hour's work, I would return to the world feeling more whole and grounded. I found that I was able to express my feelings in context more often, rather than saving them up. As I began to experience myself more fully, I found that I was better able to figure out what I needed and to find ways of getting my needs met. I began asking my friends for hugs and to support me when I needed some encouragement. This was a lesson not only in feeling, but also in feeling my own aloneness very acutely.

This work has been just the beginning of establishing a foundation in knowing who I am. First, I began to take responsibility for my own decisions, as difficult as they were. Later I began to see that by not expressing my feelings, I was saving up a lot of pain which I continued to act out of. Then by learning to spend time alone and experience my own defenses I saw more clearly the ways in which I prevent myself from getting the most out of living. As I work on myself and on developing my own personal power, I see that no relationship and no movement can provide the security or answers for living. These are questions that I must continue to struggle with by myself, as I feel my own fears, joys, loves, and rages. By working constantly to maintain my own center, or sense of self, I can be much more effective in groups, and more lovingly healthy in relationships. I know that the more I spend time with myself and appreciate myself, the more joyful my living is. ♀

Linda Edelstein



I HAVE BEEN WRITING SELF-AFFIRMATIONS WHICH ARE STATEMENTS ABOUT MY IDEALIZED SELF. I HAVE COME TO REALIZE THAT IT IS POSITIVE TO CREATE THIS IDEALIZED SELF IMAGE AS AN AID TO MY DEVELOPMENT. THIS SELF IMAGE IS THAT WHICH I AM MOVING TOWARDS. MY IMAGE EXPANDS AS I DO. THE TAROT HAS OFTEN BEEN A SOURCE OF INSPIRATION FOR THIS IMAGE.

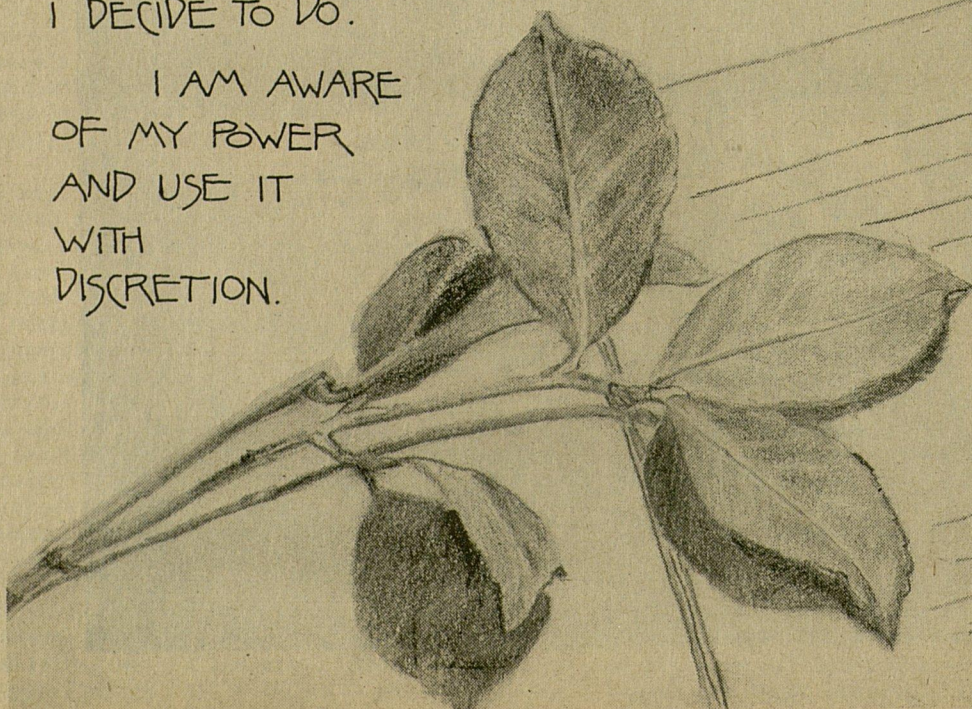
I TAKE TIME EACH DAY TO FEEL GOOD ABOUT MYSELF. I WRITE SELF-AFFIRMATIONS IN THE PRESENT TENSE BECAUSE I BELIEVE THAT IN CONSCIOUSLY WRITING AND SAYING THEM AS TRUE IN THE PRESENT THEY BECOME MORE REAL. THIS DOES NOT INVOLVE MAGIC. WHEN I "TAKE ON" THE FEELING OF THE AFFIRMATION - EVEN IF IT'S JUST FOR A FEW MOMENTS - I AM CREATING THAT IMAGE AS TRUE RIGHT NOW.

SOME OF MY AFFIRMATIONS BEING:

I AM AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT IN THE CREATION OF MY LIFE.

I AM PRODUCTIVE - I DO THAT WHICH I DECIDE TO DO.

I AM AWARE
OF MY POWER
AND USE IT
WITH
DISCRETION.





IX PENTACIES

I am enjoying my own
abilities.
My efforts bring me pleasure
and satisfaction.

VI WANDS

My energies are moving in
the same direction - feeling it.
A resolution of conflict - good.
news.
Wands - relating to personal
growth.

X PENTACIES

I feel appreciative of the
efforts of others.



We have been taught to believe that the world is outside of ourselves and that everything can be explained by reading, writing, and arithmetic; that everything is cause and effect and can be properly understood if "observed" correctly. We have been taught that everything is linear, material, and mechanistic; that everything is rational. We have been taught to be leery of our emotions because they hinder rational understanding. We have been taught that our so-called subconscious is the house of everything outside of our control, of everything mysterious; that when we daydream we are wasting our time. I believe that as long as we continue to believe these things, we will need to get our identity and our understanding of the world exclusively from outside ourselves, and by doing so we maintain the status quo.

I would like to share the process I have gone through which turned my consciousness around. I was brought up in a rational, atheistic, academic home. I believed that I was a product of circumstances. Now I believe that circumstances are a product of myself. The turning point of my beliefs occurred five years ago when I participated in a women's consciousness raising group in which we did exercises that were developed by "Silva Mind Control" (an organization which capitalizes on the power of consciousness). The exercises are

REPOSSESSING OUR

By Margo Adair

guided fantasies. The last exercise, called doing "cases", is one in which someone gives you only the name, age, and address of someone whom they know who is physically disabled in some way. First, I relaxed (as in all the exercises). When I was given the name of a woman I was able to talk about her for forty-five minutes. It wasn't as though a thunderbolt came out of the sky and told me what was going on - it was nothing dramatic. It felt as ordinary as anything that has ever occurred in my mind. Everything I said about the woman, all her personal characteristics (including the print of her dress) was totally accurate. I imagined that the bottom of her backbone was very chalky, and I saw black spots on her stomach. It turned out that she had cancer of the spine and stomach ulcers, as well as a myriad of other ailments that I was able to pick up on. The ordinariness of the experience was what made it so profound. Since I was simply able to close my eyes, relax, and then describe in detail someone I thought I knew nothing about, it felt like the closest I would ever get to any ultimate truth (if there is such a thing).

In mind control, they teach the power of affirmative thinking. "If you just imagine something it will occur". The catch is that you must expect it. With my success at doing cases I was completely turned around; I thought, "Wow! I'd better pay attention to my consciousness". I started imagining things I'd like to have occur. All of a sudden coinci-

dences started happening in my life that had never happened before. For instance, I'd imagine talking to a friend of mine and, lo and behold, I'd run into the friend and she would be wearing the same clothes I had imagined her in. I got in touch with my inner consciousness by simply relaxing and bringing scenes into my mind, learning that I could gain insights with the full knowingness of my intuition. All of a sudden my fantasies were real. I had controls over my life which I had never before known.

In the past when I had had a cold, it did not occur to me to imagine my mucous membranes drying up. I would just wait till it went away. I used to be sick an average of ten days a year; now I get sick maybe for one day once a year. Now I know that when I'm sick it comes from inside, not outside. And I know I can go inside myself, understand my ailment, and heal it. I experience my consciousness as energy - electro-magnetic energy - that moves out into the environment and attracts like circumstances.

INNER LIFE

If I am in a depressed place those circumstances that resonate with that kind of energy happen to me. You can see this for yourself if you take a moment and look into your past. You will discover that all the good stuff happens together - and likewise all the bad. When I am in a good place things that resonate with that kind of energy happen to me. I know this; I now take control of what goes on in my mind. To understand what's happening, I go in and ask myself how I feel; in so doing, I can create what I want. In part, it is a long process of de-programming all the beliefs that I learned which keep me in the hands of the power structure.

About a year after I went through the "Silva" exercises, I was turned on to Jane Roberts' Seth books. They were the first thing that enabled me to "rationally" understand what was going on when I imagined something and then it occurred. Between Seth and the mind control techniques, I've completely transformed my life. We not only exist together in the physical world, we also exist together in the collective unconsciousness where there is extraordinary power. And all we need do is quiet ourselves, go inside, reflect, and act. Our inner consciousness is not a passive place. We don't have a choice of being totally productive or (as in traditional spiritual thought) totally passive. Our inner consciousness is active and from it we draw great wisdom.

I believe we are on the edge of a new age. For science certainly didn't have the answer with its 3 Rs and objective observation; now it has turned around on itself and discovered quantum physics and the other half of the brain. And the spiritual tradition doesn't have the answer in its passivity, for it doesn't deal with the material world. The active and the passive are coming together; the political and the spiritual are coming together - as in feminist and the American Indian movements. This merging is the only thing that will heal our deteriorating planet. If, collectively, everybody takes responsibility for her total consciousness along with political action, we can heal the planet. And at the least, we can begin to heal ourselves.

Teaching applied meditation for four and a half years, I have observed people in my classes pooling their energies and healing themselves. They were using their collective energy and making themselves individually more effective, creating changes in themselves and their environment that they wanted to. I've seen a woman regain hearing in one of her ears after fifteen



years of not hearing. I know of a woman in Canada who had been mute for two years; the day her case was worked in my class (unknown to her) was the same day she first uttered a word. Collectively and individually, we can work with this energy to create essential change. It is good to take time every day to relax (time that is just for ourselves) to quiet ourselves and go inside to heal ourselves by imagining the process of healing. For instance, talk to your body and ask why it is your stomach hurts. Ask the stomach; it will answer. You will feel silly doing this; it will feel like making up a story, but the answer will be "right-on" information. Or, look at a relationship that feels off to you and you don't understand why. Inside, the information is there - all we have to do is go inside and look; see, feel, hear. We all have different modes of consciousness. We needn't necessarily visualize; we can talk to ourselves, hear things, our body can feel things or we may just know things - whatever comes naturally. Take time, for during that time our consciousness will pay more attention to itself and take itself more seriously, making anything that goes on when meditating more effective. With meditation we can heal ourselves, gain insights, and increase the probabilities of getting what we want in the material world. The power of affirmative thinking works with belief;

There is an opposite outcome from wishful thinking than there is from expectation. The way to get around this, if ever you want something to occur, is to imagine it as if it were already a part of your life - not when it's going to occur, how it's going to occur, or why. If you knew those things, you wouldn't bother to meditate about it. When you are meditating for something to occur, imagine it as though it has already occurred. If you want the cabin of your dreams, feel as though you already live there. What would your life feel like there? This way you will be putting out the right vibes for the environment to respond. Don't imagine something that is going to occur tomorrow and then wake up and be confronted with the same old reality. Every time you meditate, focus on the feeling of living in your new cabin; after meditating, forget about it, knowing that it will eventually come to pass.

I would also like to share some of the obstacles that get in the way of our being able to repossess our inner life so that we can repossess our outer life. The first thing that keeps occurring with everyone is that our inner consciousness doesn't want to work; it has been ignored, so it plays around without being disciplined. Whenever one tries to relax and go inside, the inner consciousness tends to bring up irrelevant imagery or fall asleep because it would rather be independent. Simultaneously, our outer consciousness or ego consciousness (that part of ourselves by which we usually define the world) doesn't want to give up control, so it spends all of its time discounting everything that occurs. We are sure we are not in the meditative state, or we're sure we're just making up what goes on there. We have a million reasons to discount everything that occurs there. Between our outer consciousness discounting and our inner consciousness not wanting to work, we have a problem. The problem does not get resolved. In fact, the conflict gets greater the more effective our inner work is. I share this with you so that you know that what you discount is exactly what you want to pay attention to. I've been doing cases now for five years and I still feel as if I'm making it all up. But I have learned that that is just a feeling integral to the process. It's those things that come into our mind first that we discount first, and it is those very things that we have to pay attention to. When we relax and go inside ourselves we integrate all the parts of our being into one. When one starts believing in the power of one's consciousness, one is doubly distraught when one worries. It is bad enough to think negatively, but when you realize your consciousness is perpetuating your reality, it is twice as bad. One can't repress it - it just appears as a sty in your eye instead. On the other hand, one doesn't want to think about it because then it becomes bad not only in one's consciousness but also in the circumstances that occur in one's life. There is a technique called mental housecleaning. To deal with your worries, you go through a fantasy. The inner consciousness works with symbols, so create a picture that you use over and over again, which recycles energy (for example,

a fire, a waterfall, or a compost pit). Then if you are irritated with someone you live with, put a symbolic picture of the person in the waterfall. Don't put it in a box - you don't want to store the problem, you want to transform it. It's simply a fantasy; it feels silly but it works. You will discover after doing mental housecleaning that you feel clear and will be able to communicate with the person effectively. Because it gets whatever negative things you have in your mind out of the way so your mind has room for new information to come in, information that will resolve the difficulty. You are no longer stuck with repetitive thoughts.

Don't worry whether or not you are meditating properly. You are paying attention and using a part of yourself that you are used to ignoring. The meditative state is nothing extraordinary - you are there when you are relaxed. You won't feel it working when meditating; you will see it reflected in your life. When beginning to use your consciousness, start small (programming not to respond to mosquito bites or having a flourishing garden). Get a feel for your power before you move on to bigger issues in your life. Otherwise, you are too likely to throw out the baby with the bath water.

We must work together with our energies by forming circles where all of us can gain insight to understand the difficulties in our lives and where we use our collective energies to energize realities we wish to occur.

As an ending to this article, I would like to fully acknowledge my inner life. I've been meaning to write an article for "Country Women" for over a year now. But I have a block about writing, and the issue on Spirituality, then one on Health, went by. Again I was going to write for this issue, only this time I meditated on how, when I actually sat down to write, the words would flow out. I went to the country and was going to write it but didn't get to it. I came home to a letter from "Country Women" asking me to write. I didn't know how I'd get to it - my life was under a lot of time pressure then. I went to bed that night. I woke in the middle of the night feeling very erotic; I made love to myself, went back to "sleep" and found myself hearing it. So I got up and here it is. I would like to thank my sister, Nancy, and my mother, Casey, for help in editing. ♀

BOOKLIST

- Roberts, Jane, The Nature of Personal Reality - A Seth Book. Prentice-Hall, 1974
(And all of her other books)
- Masters, Robert and Houston, Jean, Mind Games. Viking Press, 1972
- Andersen, Marianne S. and Savary, Louis M., Passages: A Guide for Pilgrims of the Mind. Harper and Row, 1972
- Porter, Jean, Psychic Development. Random House-Bookworks, 1974



Pam Mohrmann

This story is true. The names have not been changed for all were innocent. Her name was Mrs. Fullwood, spider-lady, witch-woman, untiring gardener of eighty some bent years. Her tiny body moved with straight-arrow sureness through her nest home of cats, shells and colored glass bottles. She was past caring about the daily work of housecleaning, and her home was so dirty that only great love could have motivated her good friends, those immaculate grey-haired ladies, to visit. She kept scrapbooks filled with pictures of angels and fairies and, surely, she was a sort of soil spirit herself, for her gardens grew and grew, cascading wildly down the hillside. She was always seen with some dear plant or other held in her open palm searching for a small spot that might nourish it.

I lived next door for six years. First as a young married school girl, then as a rather reckless single mother, with many, many lovers passing through the gate and driveway that separated my house from hers. We didn't become very close; our worlds were different. I didn't know how to love plants yet, but I did know how to love that old woman, for her light and power touched some secret place in me. I knew she was different--she was free. She once told me that she would have been happy living in a teepee with lots of ground to care for. That was twelve years ago and she has probably found her ground by now. I have also found mine. How was I to know that in such a short time I would become like that old woman--one who takes her life from the soil. The myriad turns from there to here are another story: one of weeding, pruning and threshing, but nourished by the memory of one woman's power and two wrinkled hands that turned the earth each spring. ♀

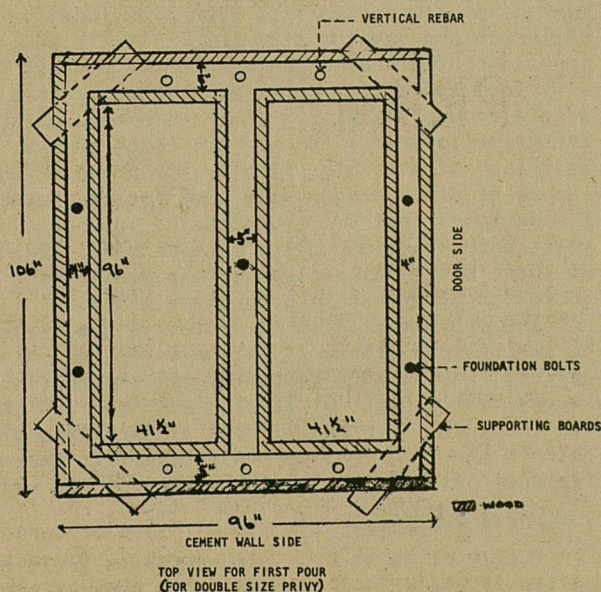
Harriet Bye

to say that it should be used in orchards and flower gardens and not directly on vegetable crops. The danger is that pathogens in the soil will get onto the vegetables and be eaten by you. There may also be parasites (hookworms, etc.) in the compost. Theoretically, if the compost has been turned properly and heated up enough, all pathogens (but not necessarily all parasites) will be killed. The temperature at the center of the aerobic pile can reach 160° F. and regularly reaches 135° F. To maintain these temperatures, the pile must be large enough to insulate its center and must be turned often to supply oxygen and incorporate fresh materials. Unless you're sure that the center of your pile has been consistently hot and that all the compost has at some time been in the center, it is safer not to use the compost on vegetable crops. I am still learning to manage the compost pile so that it breaks down hot and quickly without smelling. I expect to use the finished compost carefully on berry crops and fruit trees, and possibly on crops such as artichokes which are clearly tall enough that the vegetables to be eaten won't ever touch the soil.

The privy is built in four stages. The first pour of concrete lays a solid slab floor, with a raised four-inch lip around the perimeter. (In a double-sized privy like I built, this raised lip also extends through the center where a dividing wall will go.) The second stage is to build outside walls and a dividing wall between bins, out of concrete block or poured concrete. The third stage completes the bins with access doors and the floor to the privy house. The last stage is to build a privy house or shelter on top of the bins.

THE FIRST POUR

I started building by leveling the ground where I was to build and staking out a 96" x 106" rectangle. I learned that it's a bad practice to build on filled ground, which settles over the years and can crack the concrete. So, on solid



ground I built a two-by-four frame 96" x 106", eight inches high (i.e. two 2" x 4"s laid on edge). Inside this frame, we built a concentric frame of reinforcing bar (102" x 91") and wove old baling wire back and forth across the rebar. We drove eighteen-inch rebar into the ground vertically along the outside where the cement walls were to go (three to a side), and one in the center lip where the dividing wall was to go. These vertical bars were used to suspend the rebar and baling wire mesh two inches above the ground.

Inside the original wood frame, I also put two other wood frames 41 1/2" x 96" (made of single two-by-fours laid on edge). These frames were supported by boards laid across the corners of the outside frame, so that the tops of the inside frames were flush with the outside frame. Stakes driven into the ground stabilized all the frames.

Then I collected sand, gravel, and cement (about a yard of the sand and gravel mix and four or five bags of cement). I can't remember the ratio of cement to aggregate we used; I think it was seven to one, but that should be checked. We mixed the concrete in a hand mixer and poured into our forms, tamping it with steel rod to spread it evenly and get all the bubbles and air pockets out. When the forms were mostly filled, we pulled out what stakes we could and filled in those holes too. The stakes that were left, I broke off and drove into the ground later, filling those holes on the second pour.

When the forms were filled, I smoothed the floor and the lips of the access door sides with a trowel. I drove four ten-inch foundation bolts into the wet concrete (threaded ends protruding two and a half inches), two on each side where the access doors were to go. The lips where the walls were to go, I left rough to form a better joint on the second pour.

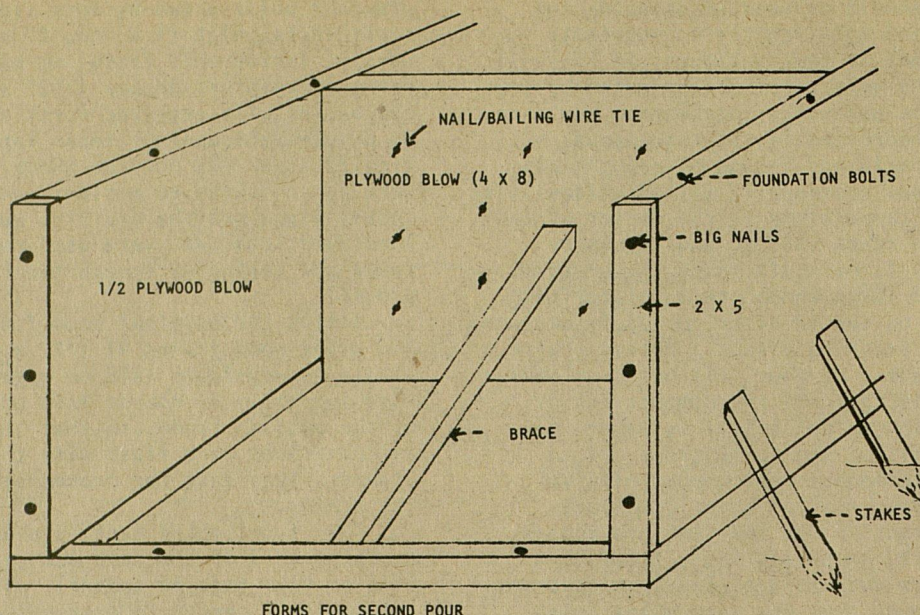
BUILDING THE WALLS

Since I had access to a cement mixer, I decided to make the walls out of concrete too. Van der Ryn's plan shows the walls made of concrete blocks but these are more expensive and are a bit harder to make flyproof. I built the forms for the walls of six plywood blows (the lowest grade plywood sold). I ripped four 2"x6"s into 2"x5"s; these became uprights (50" high) to make the corners of the walls. I left these in place when I stripped away the forms. Bignails, that I hammered through them before the concrete was poured, kept them in place.

A sheet of 4"x8" plywood nailed to the 2"x5" uprights made the outside form for the outside walls. The forms for the inside of each outside wall are made of two half sheets of plywood, notched in the lower outside corners to fit over the lip in the foundation. The forms for the dividing wall are made of two whole sheets of plywood. This center dividing wall is mainly for the support of the outside walls and could have been done in wood, I suppose.

Before I nailed any of these plywood forms into place, I attached three and a half foot pieces of rebar to the vertical pieces of rebar that

cont.



were protruding from the foundation. These were baling wired together. (There should be three of these in each outside wall and one in the dividing wall. I attached horizontal pieces of rebar to these with baling wire at 18" and again at 36". Then, after making sure that the top of the foundation was clean (so that the concrete would stick), I nailed the plywood together and braced the outside with stakes driven into the ground. The inside sheets of plywood I braced against the foundation lip, using 2x4's as props.

Most importantly, I drilled holes through the plywood from both sides and stuck a doubled piece of baling wire through the wall. I twisted the wire around a big nail on each side; then with pliers, I twisted the wire more to tighten it snugly. This ties the walls together so that the forms can't bulge while you pour the concrete. It's essential that you do this as it is what keeps the forms together. About a dozen holes in each wall would be enough. I had a little problem with the plywood bulging out so that we couldn't fill the walls on our second pour. The more we put in, the more they bulged and the more concrete they held. We almost lost the walls altogether for lack of enough of these ties.

Before I poured the cement, I poured water onto the dried cement to make a good connection between the pours. Then, with a lot of help from friends, we bucketed the cement into the forms, tamping it down as we went to get all the air pockets out. When the walls were filled to the top, I drove six ten-inch foundation bolts into the outside walls, three on each side.

ACCESS DOORS AND FLOOR

When the walls were dry, I stripped the plywood forms away with wirecutters and a crowbar, leaving the 2" x 5's in place. I laid one 2"x4" 92" long (with holes drilled for the foundation bolts) on each outside wall. I bolted them down with washers and nuts. On top of that, I laid

a 92" 2x4 on edge, flush with each outside wall. Between these are five floor joists 102" long and two others 106" long on each end. I tried to build as tight (i.e. flyproof) and strong as I could.

Before I put the floor and doors on, I painted the whole inside, especially the cracks, with a liquid tar (like lap cement) as an added fly precaution. Then I put down two of the sheets of plywood I had salvaged from the forms for the floor of the privy building (roof of the bins). These were centered, leaving a five-inch gap on two sides which I covered later with the bottom plate of the privy building walls and a piece of molding.

On each side where the doors were to go, I laid a 96" 2x4 floor plate, with holes drilled for the foundation bolts. Then I bolted it down. I built a removable dividing wall two feet high, using 2x4 uprights and scrap boards, making two compartments on each side (one for daily use and one for storage). I built an inner door two feet high to hold the compost away from the access doors and allow air to circulate around the pile. They were made of a 2x4 frame covered with hardware cloth (heavy half-inch wire mesh). Finally, from two of the sheets of plywood that were used for the forms, I made doors that bolt through the outside floor joist and the bottom plate on each side. Each of these doors has a screened air vent at the bottom to allow air in around the piles.

The privy must also be vented with a twelve-by-twelve-inch stack. I put ours on one outside wall halfway between compartments, so that it serves both sides. It is ten feet high and the top should be screened. I cut a slightly smaller hole in the floor and nailed the vent to the frame of the building that's on top of the privy.

FINISHING THE PRIVY

I went on to build a ramp up and a building on top of the privy. Depending on your climate, you may not even want a building, but with our

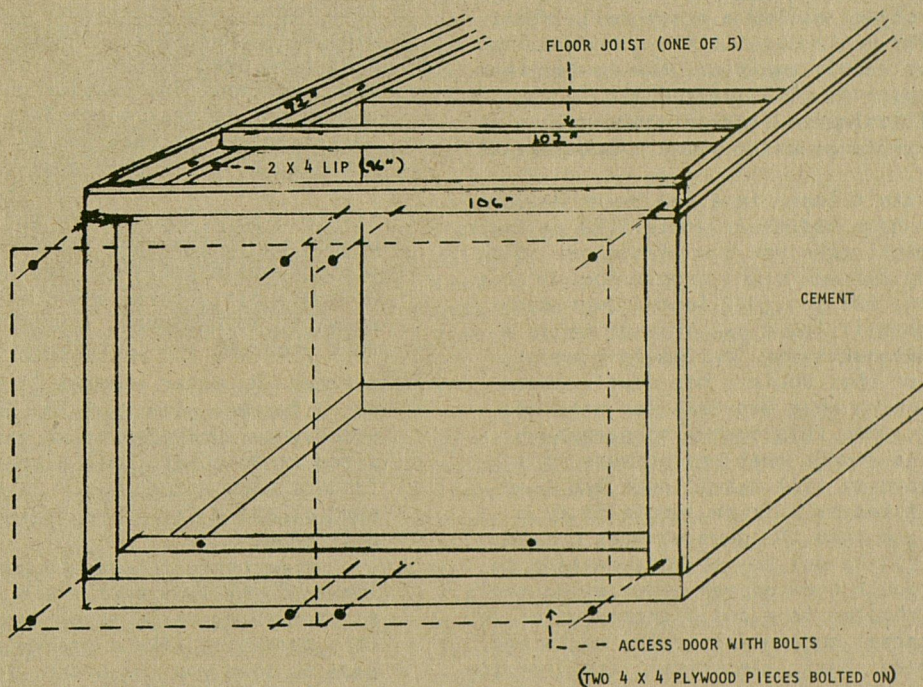
rainy winters we did. I plan to put in a sink and tile the floor too. But we've been using it for three months already with satisfaction.

I decided to use chopped straw as the organic material in the piles. Added organic material should compose at least three-quarters of the compost pile. Sawdust and dried leaves can also be used. In three months, we've used one bale of straw (using a one-pound coffee can full with each shit).

It appears so far that the space we have now will be enough for one year. I've turned the piles several times and think it will take some time to get the knack of building a well-balanced compost pile. But it seems to be working already. The compost is already innocuous enough to handle; the smell is no more than with any barn manure.

This design we developed to meet our particular needs and I'm sure it can be improved upon. My main goals were to make it big enough, flyproof, and easy to build from standard materials. I recommend getting all the information possible from the Farallones Institute, as well as regular composting information. Read, and from your understanding, build a privy that suits your capabilities and materials, is sanitary and durable. ♀

¹Technical Bulletin #1, *The Composting Privy*; \$3.00; Farallones Institute; 15290 Coleman Valley Road, Occidental, Ca. 95465.



THE GREASY THUMB AUTOMECHANICS MANUAL FOR WOMEN

Reviewed by Sherry Thomas

The Greasy Thumb Automechanics Manual for Women
by Barbara Wyatt, Iowa City Women's Press,
116½ E. Benton St., Iowa City, IA 52240

The Greasy Thumb is so good that I read most of it straight through for pleasure the first day it came. It is good in the unique way that effective practical writing by women is good: the personal voice is real and alive, it offers encouragement and support, and it describes jobs in enough detail that you really can learn to do them. Among car repair books, it's virtually unique (even John Muir's *Widiot Book* mystified me with references to an unidentified object called a generator). Wyatt starts at the beginning, with a complete list of basic car repair tools and how to use them. In this chapter as with every other in the book, she illuminates straight information with personal experience and a woman's perspective. For example,

"...you can't learn in a few hours or days what men have had their whole life to learn. So, it might take you a while longer to do something and you might drop a tool or hit your hand, but you *will* learn. Just don't forget that it isn't *you* or your being a woman that makes you 'naturally clumsy', but rather that society has deprived you from learning what men take for granted. I'm sorry that this sounds so preachy - I guess it sounds that way because it's what I have to tell myself over and over when it takes me so much longer to do a certain job than the guys at work or when I can't figure out how to do something because I don't know enough about using tools."

The second chapter is a solid introduction to how the internal combustion engine works and systems (brake, fuel, electrical, etc.) of the engine. Though I've been doing mechanics in a minor way for years, I still found these introductory chapters useful, adding to what I knew and reminding me of what I had already learned.

Section II, making the bulk of the book, is

Maintenance & Repairs. Here Wyatt covers routine maintenance and the most common repairs (tune-ups, lube jobs, brake jobs, repacking wheel bearings, etc.) Each chapter in this section first describes the theory (eg. what makes up the brakes, how they work, how the parts fit together) and then describes *in detail* how to make the necessary repairs. She tells you both the tools and supplies you need and then takes you step by step through the repair procedures. If you had never worked on a car, you could probably learn enough from this book alone to tackle the standard maintenance repairs.

Section III deals with "Troubleshooting" - diagnosing what has gone wrong and why. This complex subject is necessarily sketchy in this size book. (oh, for twenty years experience behind us!), but still contains the best discussion I've seen anywhere on starting and ignition problems. The chapter on lights, horns, wipers got me past a complete defeat by my tail-lights last week and my old Dodge is flashing brightly once again.

My only criticisms of the book are relatively minor. The artwork and the photographs aren't up to the same standard as the text. The photographs especially, having been taken on ordinary dirty cars, are sometimes nearly impossible to decipher. I hope this won't present problems for women totally unfamiliar with engines. My other comment is not a criticism but a fervent wish that *The Greasy Thumb* will someday be succeeded by an expanded edition or a sequel to cover those places where Barb "didn't know enough yet." Just because it's as good as there is, is no reason not to hope it will grow.

A mechanic friend who has been reading *The Greasy Thumb* says that she's never seen a book as good about basic repair procedures. "Unless it's something like a transmission where they *have* to show you the order, most car books just say blithely 'pull the blah blah and remove the blah blah.'" Not so *The Greasy Thumb* which tells you *how* to do it. My mechanic friend has ordered a copy. So have I. I recommend it unreservedly to any woman with an American car. ♀

REVIEWS

ALL OUR LIVES

Reviewed by Ellen Chanterelle

All Our Lives, A Women's Songbook

Edited by Joyce Cheney, Marcia Diehl and
Deborah Silverstein, Diana Press, 12 W.
25th St., Baltimore, Maryland 21218
\$6.50

"This is a songbook about women - many different kinds of women: women of the past, present and future. We have included these songs (with both negative and positive images of women) because they reflect the transition in our own lives and in the lives of women who struggled before us. As women and as feminists who love folk music and who love to sing, we have produced this book as a reflection of our own struggles in a society which still has so little room for a woman with a mind of her own - even less room for a woman with a song of her own".

Thus the editors introduce us to their choice of sixty-nine songs, just a small sample of the musical wealth they unearthed which women have created and shared. About forty of the songs are contemporary and feminist. The rest are traditional, included because they are in the authors' own words, "unusually positive in their image of women or else they are particularly illustrative of a historical put-down of women".

The book was created by three women who met at an International Women's Day Rally in 1974 and shared a need to integrate their feminism and their music. United in their vision, yet separated by geography, working style, knowledge, and available time, they put together this rich collection in two years - a testament in itself to the power of focused feminist energy. It is a lovingly done book, carefully researched and documented, with a thoughtful, conscious text that attempts analysis of such phenomena as "women's culture" and "women's music" and raises important questions about success and self-definition.

The Contemporary Song Section includes categories such as "Women with Women", "His-

torical Role Models", and "Escape From Being 'The Other' ". There are many treasures in this section, some I already knew and some I had never heard. I particularly loved "Song of My Mother" by Helen Tucker, which wonderfully illustrates the power and wisdom a woman acquires as she ages. Also, an unexpected delight was Malvina Reynolds' "We Don't Need the Men", written in 1959, with the following chorus:

"We don't need the men
We don't need the men
We don't need to have them 'round
Except for now and then.
They can come to see us when we
need to move the piano
Otherwise they can stay at home and
read about the White Sox
We don't care about them
We can do without them.
They'll look cute in a bathing suit
On a billboard in Manhattan."

In the traditional section are found songs about *Motherhood*, *Songs of Choice*, *Women and Work* and more. Only one traditional love song and one murder ballad are included, and the traditional songs are heavily weighted with positive female images.

The book raises a few disturbing questions for me, mostly about what got included and excluded. Despite the acknowledgment given by the editors to the struggle of women all over the world, all but two songs are reflective of American culture. This to me felt unnecessarily narrow in its scope. I would also have preferred to see more than two songs in the *historical role model* category, feeling a hunger I know I share with many women to reclaim our foremothers' lives, and knowing of at least half a dozen more such songs. I question the inclusion of a song about Joan Little written by a man especially while the existence of two songs on the same topic by distinguished women songwriters is also mentioned. And I did not understand the placing of Cathy Winter's song "Long Time Friends" in the *Women with Women* category, as the song is not even particularly feminist and definitely not lesbian. But perhaps these criticisms are minor in the overall bounty these three women have gifted us with - yet they troubled me enough to mention them in this review.

The book is well laid out, with good, clearly written transcriptions and some exceptional photographs. I do feel that the omission of tempo markings for any of the songs is an oversight which will make learning the songs a little more difficult than necessary. Also of interest is a list of songs not included which fit into traditional categories, a reference bibliography including publications, songbooks, records, etc., and a commendably accountable explanation of their decision to print with Diana Press, and how the financial pie got sliced and served. This book is a joy, and a must for all of us interested in reclaiming and creating our deep musical heritage. ♀

INSTALLING WATER PIPES

By Sherry Thomas

I like to encourage women to try plumbing as it is an easy skill to master, yet also one that gives a great sense of power and accomplishment. The "I can do anything feeling" that comes from installing a water system in your new home, carries over into all other parts of your life. But there are definitely two kinds of plumbing. The first is the neat and orderly installation of new pipes. This kind is nearly as easy as assembling tinkertoys, a pleasant way to spend an afternoon. The second kind of plumbing is repairing leaks and clogged pipes in old systems; there is very little that is fun about it. It often requires the contortionist skills of a Houdini and the patience of a Ghandi (neither of which I have mastered). Since my kitchen sink has been dripping steadily onto an increasingly rotten floor board for the last month (because the simple repair requires tearing the sink cabinet apart and removing the sink), I've decided *not* to talk about the second kind of plumbing. Instead, I want to initiate those of you setting up new systems into the simplicity and joy of installing new pipes.

Planning and General Information:

There are four different types of pipe commonly used for home plumbing: flexible or rigid plastic, galvanized iron, and copper. Each is easy to install; the only complication being that each is done differently. Whichever type of pipe you choose, there are some basic things to know or think about. You need to decide what kind of pipe you want to use and to plan your system so that you use only one kind of metal. If you must join two metals, be sure you have plastic-lined couplings to prevent electrolysis - the bonding together of the two metals. Outdoor water lines should be buried to prevent their heating up, getting damaged, freezing, or decomposing. How deep they need to be will depend on the winter climate in your area, but they should be below the frost line. It's easiest to dig your trenches before you lay pipe - I've put my mattock through several plastic pipes in the process of burying them. You should plan your whole plumbing system to use the least material and make the fewest number of joints possible. Where you can, try to place outlets (sink, tub, etc.) in a straight line or at right angles to each other. Pipes are usually laid beneath the floor between the studs. If you live where there are no hard freezes, you may want to run most of your pipes underneath the house and come up through the floor directly under the fixture. This is easier than going through studs. However you do it, keep your plan as simple as possible.

For most houses (one bathroom and a kitchen sink), a 3/4" incoming water line is large enough; if you have more than one bathroom or a washing machine, etc., your incoming line should be 1" or 1 1/2". Once you get to the house, you should reduce the lines at each outlet down to 1/2" so that you'll still have water in the shower when someone else flushes the toilet.

You should plan to put several shut-off valves into your water system - at least one in each major line (house, barn, etc.). I prefer now to put several on the house lines, so that if I get a leak in the kitchen, I still have water in the bathroom. I learned this the hard way after living with only one shut-off valve on my entire water system. You also need one valve on the incoming line to the water heater so that you'll be able to drain the tank if anything goes wrong. These shut-off valves can be connected to any type of pipe - they come threaded for plastic and galvanized pipe or designed to solder onto copper.

Once you've got the basic design of your lines figured out, you need to begin counting up the feet of pipe, number of valves, right-angle fittings, etc. that you'll need. If you are not sure how to connect the copper or plastic or whatever pipe to the sink faucet or the toilet or whatever, *go to the store and look and ask*. This is the most important thing I can say about plumbing. Plumbing is the most obvious and mechanical of country skills: every-

thing fits onto or into something else, and those somethings are sitting out in bins in the hardware store. So, take a diagram of what you need to connect to and a six-inch piece of the size pipe you'll be using to the store and start looking. You can ask for help if you want, especially to check if you found the simplest way to do something (though the answer will probably be patronizing). But I recommend at least an hour of fumbling on your own, picking up parts, threading them together, getting familiar with the sizes. You'll learn more in that hour than you will from a whole plumbing book. Plumbing is absolutely simple and all the parts will be sitting there in front of you.

A few other general hints: There is a gray goopy compound known in the trade as "pipe-dope." It is used to seal the threads on pipes so they won't leak. You should use it any time you thread something together - no matter whether it is plastic or iron. Just fill the depressions between the threads; it doesn't take a lot.

Threaded pipes and fittings are classified as "male" (threaded on the outside) and "female" (threaded on the inside). This is because our sexist culture perceives "male" plumbing fixtures as fitting into "female" ones - but anyway, the designation will probably help you when you try to describe to a clerk what you need.

Threaded fittings (except gas ones) always tighten clockwise and loosen counterclockwise. This is easy to forget and someday you will probably find yourself feeling very foolish after thoroughly tightening a joint you thought you were loosening.

I always try to keep an extra stash of basic plumbing parts on hand - most especially the ones for plastic piping. You never know when a line's going to freeze and crack, when a horse will stomp on it, or when a helpful friend will put a mattock through it. Having the basic fittings and clamps on hand to mend a leak means not having to do without water until you can get the part from town - it somehow makes the disaster seem much more minor.

Once you get your whole system put together and water flowing through the lines, go back under the house and carefully check for drips. Drips will waste water and rot floors or foundations. Frustrating though they are when you thought you were done, you should fix them right then. It's a rare plumbing job that doesn't have at least one drip. It's often just a matter of another turn on the clamp or a little more pipe dope on the threads, but before you do anything be sure to turn the water pressure off! Under an old house I once worked on, we went to give the last fitting one final turn to stop a tiny drip, broke the fitting loose and were flooded with thirty gallons of hot water. Coal miner fantasies turned to a vision of a coal minedisaster as we inched along the crawl hole on our bellies. And though it seems funny now, it was awful then - so remember to turn the pressure off, even for the simplest adjustment.

Types of Pipe:

Flexible black plastic pipe is the cheapest to buy and the easiest to install or repair of all four types. It comes in any diameter you might want (up to two or three inches). It is designed for cold water, and that's all I've ever used it for. I have watched a friend run hot water from her heater to her sink for four years through flexible pipe, with no problems at all, but I don't recommend it since really hot water will melt or weaken the pipe walls. Plastic pipe between the well and the house needs to be buried since repeated heating and cooling will cause the pipe to crack after several years. The only exception to this is if you want a free source of hot water - the pipe gets quite hot in the sun. We use this principle to run an outdoor shower - hot water by 2:00 P.M. on any sunny day. The only trick is timing your bath just right, as there is no cold to mix in.

In this area, plastic pipe is legal to within six feet of the house; after that you must use metal. I have ignored the laws and used plastic for all my cold water pipes, but what you do will depend on how vulnerable you are to the building inspectors.

Flexible pipe is really easy to install. You join any two pieces of it together using a plastic connector (which fits inside each piece of pipe) and pipe clamps (which tighten the pipe in place). This connector may be a simple line one (to connect two sections of pipe or mend a break), a right-angle one, or a T-connector (to join three pieces of pipe). It is easiest to put the pipe clamps on each line before you join them. Then start the connector into one section of pipe. Sometimes it will go quite easily, with a spiraling motion. Once started, I usually tap the connector into the pipe by placing a board at its end and hitting the board with a hammer. When you go to attach the second piece of pipe onto the connector, it helps to have a partner so you can push against each other; again, a twisting motion helps. If you absolutely can't get the pipe onto the connector, you can heat up the pipe first to make it expand. Hot water works best for this, though you can also use a quick pass with a propane torch. The pipe clamps should be tightened over the connected pipes, about a quarter-inch back from the end of each piece of pipe. I use an extra-large screw driver for extra leverage when tightening clamps.

There are also connectors that are fitted for plastic on one end and threaded on the other. These are for joining plastic pipe to metal pipe or faucet fixtures. You tighten the threaded end first with a wrench (carefully) and then fit the flexible pipe onto it. To go from a larger to a smaller pipe, you use a connector that is fitted (for example) for 1/2" on one side and for 3/4" on the other. These are called reducers.

There is a new type of plastic pipe now on the market that is for both hot and cold water. It is a rigid pipe that is joined together with a plastic cement. It is not yet ap-

cont.

proved in this area by the building department, so it's not available in building supply stores, but it can be ordered from Sears. We used this to replace the hot water pipes in the old house mentioned before, and I am a great believer in it. The rigid plastic pipe is cheaper than either type of metal and easier to install.

The pipes are sold in 8' lengths, 1/2" to 1" in diameter. They can be cut to any length with a hack saw. The rigid pipe is joined together by a coupling that fits over the end of each piece of pipe. With this type of pipe, too, there are special couplings threaded on one end to join to metal pipe. Again, tighten onto the metal first before fitting the plastic in place.

I've found that it's safest when using this type pipe to fit together all the sections with the appropriate couplings before I glue any of them. Once the glue has set, the pipes can be moved only with a hack saw. Both the pipe and the coupling should be completely clean and dry before the glue is applied. Once they are coated with glue and fitted together, give them a one-quarter turn to form a tight bond. The glue needs to set at least three hours and preferably overnight before water is sent through the lines. Make sure you use enough glue, for your first chance is your only chance with this type of pipe; after that, you cannot get it apart, drip though it may.

Galvanized iron pipe was commonly used in the days before plastic and is what is found in most older homes. It's not used as much any more since it is more expensive to install than either plastic or copper. Galvanized pipe is threaded on each end and is joined together by female threaded fittings (fittings that have the threads on the inside). Two pieces of galvanized pipe are joined together by a coupling that is threaded all the way through. Wherever you may want to disconnect the two pipes again easily, you would use a "union", which can be loosened from either side. Once the whole system is in place, it is nearly impossible to disconnect it without a union. So use them liberally.

Galvanized fittings come in all sizes and descriptions: bells to reduce from a larger pipe to a smaller, fittings to increase from a smaller to a larger, angle fittings, T fittings, spigots, and caps to end a line. For anything you want to do, you can find a fitting to do it. The real problem with galvanized pipe is that you must have it threaded everywhere you want to make a connection. So your measurements and instructions at the store (where they will cut and thread the pipe for you, unless you have access to a threader) must be very precise or you'll find yourself running to town twice a day to cut this or that. This means you should plan and measure your whole system before you start buying pieces.

To tighten galvanized fittings, you will need pipe wrenches. Occasionally you can get away with a large crescent or open wrench, but usually they won't grip well enough or have

enough leverage. Pipe wrenches are expensive and should be bought secondhand. They are very handy, if not indispensable, tools for any farm that has a water pump or any galvanized pipes. I have three pipe wrenches, all bought at a flea market. One is very small and lightweight (about eight inches long), useful for small fittings or getting into tight places but without enough leverage to tighten a fitting or break loose a rusted one. The largest (about 18" long) is very heavy and cumbersome to use, and I have often cursed it. But when I need a good tight seal, or a fitting is really stuck, I'm always glad to have it there. The most generally useful pipe wrench I have is about twelve inches long and of an easy-to-handle weight; it will do any average plumbing job. You need two wrenches to tighten most fittings. One is set to grip the fitting or pipe you're screwing onto; the other goes over the new fitting and tightens it in place. The two wrenches should be set opposite each other - so that you can keep the pipe (or whatever) from turning while you turn the new fitting. The wrench in one hand pulls toward you while the wrench in the other is being pushed away. I've found it helps to put the larger wrench (if you have one) on the piece that is to remain stationary since you'll need the extra leverage to resist your own push. To make sure the fitting is really tight, I switch wrenches at the end and give a final turn with the long one. Most work can be done alone (good training for ambidexterity), though it is a little tricky getting both wrenches in place when you're working flat on your back in a one-foot crawl space. For old pipes that are badly stuck, you may need one person on each wrench and you may want to extend the end of the wrench with a piece of pipe for greater leverage. And don't forget: Always put pipe dope on galvanized fittings before tightening them in place!

Working with copper pipe is my favorite, though it is definitely not the easiest or the cheapest. (Copper pipe costs more than hot and cold plastic and slightly more than galvanized, but the fittings are cheaper than those for galvanized.) Most code plumbing is done in 1/2" copper these days. Copper comes in two types - flexible tubing and rigid. Rigid is thicker walled, more durable, and is normally used for plumbing. Occasionally the flexible type is a real advantage. I have a friend whose water heater consists of coils of flexible copper inside the fire box of a 55-gallon-drum wood stove. My homemade shower attachment is a gracefully curving piece of copper with a shower head on the end. Flexible pipe should be warmed before you try to bend it. Plan on long, flowing curves as it won't make sharp, angular bends without crimping shut. Both flexible and regular copper pipe can be cut to any desired length with a hack saw.

Copper is joined together by "sweat" fittings - couplings that fit over the pipe and are soldered into place. Soldering is not at all difficult, though it takes care and some

practice to get a good seal. I use an acetylene and air torch for my plumbing jobs, and I recommend it to anyone who is doing plumbing professionally (it has a hotter flame). For ordinary home plumbing, a small inexpensive propane torch is fine. There are two types of solder, either of which is fine for copper pipe. Acid core solder takes more heat to melt but forms a harder seal; with a propane torch, I would buy the softer rosin core instead. A roll of solder will last a very long time as it takes only a little bit at each joint. When you buy your solder, get a tin of flux to go with it. Flux, a paste that attracts solder, is put on the inside of joints to draw the solder in.

The first thing to do when you go to solder is to clean thoroughly each piece of copper - the outside of the pipe and the inside and edges of the coupling. Steel wool works best for this - the copper should be shiny and pink all over. Use a clean rag to wipe off any lingering bits of steel wool. Be careful to keep your own hands (or at least one finger) clean too. Apply a thin coat of flux to the outside of the pipe or the inside of the coupling with your clean finger. It doesn't take much; you just want to grease it all over. Then fit the coupling onto the pipe. Make sure it slides on all the way. As with rigid plastic, I usually fit the whole system together once for test before I begin to clean and flux the parts. When I'm ready to solder, I usually prepare a whole series of joints at one time so I can just go down the line with the torch.

Once each joint has been cleaned, fluxed, and put together, you're ready to solder. Light the torch and turn the flame up part way until you have a cone of blue flame in the center. The tip of this cone is the hottest part and you should touch it to the copper. What you want to do is to heat the copper so thoroughly that the solder will melt and fill the joint as soon as it touches it. The actual soldering takes only a few seconds; it's the heating of the pipe that is critical. If the pipe is not hot enough, the solder won't flow freely and the joint will leak. Heat the pipe right at the joint until you're fairly sure it's hot enough. You can test it by pulling the torch away and touching the joint with the tip of the solder. If it begins to flow, hold it there until it flows all around; if it sits in a puddle on top, remove the solder and continue heating the torch. The pipe, not the torch, should melt the solder, so don't hold the solder beneath the torch flame. I always unwind two or three inches of solder from the roll, so that I can touch the tip to the joint while holding the roll and not burn myself. This much will last several joints. Be conscious *always* of where you are pointing the torch while your attention is focused on applying the solder to the joint or on unwinding the solder. Solder follows the same laws of gravity we are all subject to, so try to touch the solder to the highest point on a joint

and let it run down. The hardest joints to solder are the bottom ones on a vertical pipe - where all the solder must run up. On those your best hope is to use a lot of flux and heat the pipe a long time, then touch the solder all the way around the pipe; or you can remove that piece, solder that joint horizontally and then fit it all together again. Once you've put solder into the first joint, move right along to the one nearest to it. This will take less heating than the first one since it will already be warm. When you're first learning to solder, you will probably use a lot more than you need to, dripping it onto the floor and leaving blobs on the pipe. In a perfect solder joint, none shows at all, but I myself have preferred to be safe - even excessively so.

If you're using copper for a whole house, you're bound to have a leak or two. When I put in the bathroom in my house, I was so proud of my handy use of the torch - until I turned the water on. Water sprayed in all directions across the room out of eight pinhole leaks. The first thing to do is to shut off the water pressure and drain as much water as you can out of the lines. Two things make repairing leaks hard - the solder is slower to heat than the pipe (harder to solder onto), and the water in the pipe cools it down. Sometimes you can just boil the water out of the pipe, using the torch longer than usual. You can also stuff a bit of bread into the pipe to absorb the water (it will dissolve later). If you're lucky, just heating the pipe may be enough to make the solder run and fill in the hole (which is usually tiny). Just to be sure, you should also apply more solder. As I said, the solder doesn't get as hot as the pipe, so this can be hard, especially on vertical joints. If you just can't get the new solder to adhere, you may have to heat the joint until the solder melts. Then pull the pipe out, clean and reflux it, and start again. If worse comes to worst, you may have to cut the joint out with your saw and replace it with a new piece of pipe - but this is a real hassle, involving several more joints, so try to avoid it. As you get more proficient, you'll find you have few, if any, leaks.

I haven't discussed here how to connect each of these different kinds of pipe to faucets, toilets, water heaters, etc., because each of these vary somewhat. With each attachment, start at the fitting and work backwards until you get to the pipe. For example, look at the bottom of the faucet you just bought and see what size pipe it is. Then figure how to connect that sized threaded fitting to whatever kind of pipe you have. Notice how the faucet mounts and consider whether or not your pipe needs to make a right angle turn. As with every other step in plumbing, all the necessary parts will be sitting in front of you at the hardware store; and there is sure to be a salesperson lurking nearby with helpful advice. Any woman who can sew or carpenter can also plumb - in fact, plumbing is easier than either one. ♀

THE QUEENLY ART

By Kathleen DeBold

I had intended to begin this series of articles by outlining all the reasons why women should keep bees. When I had finished listing all the economic benefits of producing your own honey and beeswax and renting your hives for pollination services, all the medical advantages of eating healthy home-grown honey instead of processed white sugar, all the wonderful curative properties of honey and bee venom and had finally come to the political and spiritual significance of keeping your own miniature matriarchy alive and thriving, I had written enough to fill an entire issue of *Country Women*. In other words, the reasons for keeping bees are unlimited. So I will begin by listing and (hopefully) overcoming the reasons why you may not want to keep bees. These are three:

1) *You Don't Like Being Stung*. Me neither. Being stung is not the most wonderful experience for the beekeeper, but it is also not the most common. Every time I've been stung it was because I did something dumb like picking up a piece of equipment before I made sure there were no bees on it, or not tucking in my pant legs and getting a bee stuck up my leg. Bees are really not aggressive and only sting if you really rile them up. One of the best ways to anger a bee is to crush her - this accounts for the fact that almost everyone has been stung in the foot after tromping on some poor little worker bee in the clover. Stings are like any occupational hazards - sometimes they are inevitable, but usually they can be prevented. If you are gentle with your bees, they will be gentle to you. The best way to avoid getting stung is to dress properly when you are working with your bees. Honey bees are annoyed by floral patterns, dark-colored clothing, suede and leather. You should wear a light-colored (preferably white) outfit with tight-fitting cuffs whenever you open your colonies. Don't wear wool or any other fuzzy materials - the bees get stuck in the threads, panic, and may sting. Tuck your pant legs into your boots or socks (no wool socks either!) so the bees won't fly up your legs and be trapped. If a bee does get trapped inside your clothes, there is virtually no way to get her out without being stung. You have two choices: smash her inside your clothing before she can bend her abdomen down to sting you, or try to jiggle her out. Ninety-nine times out of 100 she will sting you anyway. Either way, the bee will die (her insides are pulled out in the stinging process) so you may as well opt for self-preservation. If you wear a veil to cover your head and neck, and canvas gloves to protect your hands and arms, you will be practically stingproof. If the fear of an accident doesn't discourage you from driving, don't let the fear of a little sting discourage you from beekeeping.

2) *You Don't Know If It's Worth the Investment*. Starting an apiary (any place with one or more hives) can be pretty expensive. It takes about \$100 to start a hive from commercial equipment

and package bees. If you check with the state Department of Agriculture and/or local farmers, you may be able to buy an established colony for \$50-\$80. If you build your own hive and capture a swarm of bees, you can cut your costs down to \$30 per hive. Although this seems like a lot of money at first, once you begin producing honey and wax, building your own equipment, capturing swarms and dividing your colonies, your returns should more than make up for your initial investment.

3) *You Don't Know A Thing About Keeping Bees*. Hopefully, this series will help remedy that! Also, talk to any beekeepers you know and read all the bee books you can (all the books listed in the bibliography are very readable and full of all kinds of good stuff about bees). The best way to learn Apiculture, however, is to get yourself a hive and start learning. The bees will be glad to teach you all you need to know.

Well, now that you are convinced (I hope) that a beehive is exactly what you need for your farm, backyard or balcony, how do you start? There are three ways to begin with bees: buy an established colony; buy package bees; or capture a swarm.

Buying an Established Colony is the easiest way to start. One of the main advantages of buying established hives is that they almost always yield a honey surplus the first year. The hive is already assembled and the bees are set up and ready to work for you. Never buy a colony without checking it carefully, however. Make sure the equipment isn't falling apart. Have your local apiary inspector check the hive for disease before you buy it. Make sure that the colony has enough food, a good laying queen, and an ample supply of worker bees (the inspector will help you judge these things if you don't feel confident the first time around.)

After you have made the purchase, fasten the hive parts together with hive staples and close the entrance with wood or screening so the bees are locked inside. Close the hive and move it to your apiary in the early morning or late evening when all the bees are inside so that no one will be left behind. When you get the hive to its new home, open the entrance and put a few handfuls of grass over it. This way, the bees will know something different is going on and will re-orient themselves to the new location. Otherwise, many of them would automatically fly back to the old place and be lost.

Capturing a Swarm is the cheapest way to get bees but is too much trouble for the beginner to worry about. Swarming is a hive's way of reproducing itself. When a hive becomes too crowded, about half the worker bees and the queen leave to start a new colony. Before they find this home, they come to rest as a group on a convenient branch, tree trunk, fence post, etc., and wait while scout bees search around for a new home. They usually remain in this swarm for one to three days before heading off

OF BEEKEEPING

to their new abode. If you are lucky enough to find the swarm before hordes of suburban Sir Galahads attack it with gasoline, Raid, B-B guns, and whatever they are currently using to kill baby seals, you can shake the swarm into a container, take it home, and put it in your hive. This is all I'll say about swarms this time because it is an uncertain way of starting out since you never know when you'll find a swarm.

Buying Package Bees is the way most beginners start out. Yes, there are packages of bees. They are produced in the southern states and shipped to beekeepers in early spring. They come in 1-5 lb. sizes and range in price from \$15-\$35 each (there are about 3500 honey bees in a pound). The 3 lb. package is the size of a healthy swarm and this is the most popular and most recommended package size. If you send to Dadant and Sons and/or the A.I. Root Company (see last page for addresses) they will send you complimentary copies of their respective

magazines, *The American Bee Journal* and *Gleanings in Bee Culture*. These are trade magazines and contain ads for package bees and equipment as well as interesting articles about bees.

As you read the package bee ads, you will notice that package bees come in 4 main types - *Italians*, *Caucasians*, *Starlines*, and *Midnites*. These names refer to the genetic background of the queen enclosed in the package. Beekeepers are constantly arguing over which, if any, of these bees is the best. If you have enough hives, you may want to try a box of each race and then continue requeening with the kind you find most suited to your needs. Here are the generally accepted pro's and con's of each type of bee:

Italians - Advantages: good housekeepers, resistant to disease, good producers of brood (eggs and young bees). The queen is bright yellow and easy to locate. Disadvantages: They are slightly aggressive and more apt to sting than the other bees; they sometimes overproduce brood and end up eating a lot of honey that could have been surplus for you; they have a tendency to rob honey from other hives which may spread brood diseases.

Caucasians - Advantages: these bees are very gentle; they build up quickly in the spring when you need a large population and slow down brood rearing in the summer when food isn't as plentiful; they can forage at lower temperatures than the Italians. Disadvantages: they tend to stick all the moveable parts of the hive together with propolis (or "bee glue") which makes opening and inspecting their homes much more difficult (which is probably why they do it!). Their peaceful dispositions make them more apt to be robbed by more aggressive bees.

Starlines and Midnites - Advantages: these are hybrid bees and are supposed to give you a blend of the best qualities of Italians and Caucasians while limiting the bad traits. Dis-

advantages: Since the breeding is controlled by the supplier, you must be prepared to purchase a new queen every 1-2 years to maintain the hybrids in your hive. If you do not, there is a good chance that the natural queens produced in your hive will lose the good traits of their ancestry and produce mean offspring.

When you decide what kind of bee you want, order your package early (before February). Find out from local beekeepers, the state apiarist, or Dept. of Ag. when the main honey flow in your area starts. Try to have your package arrive 10 weeks before this date so your bees can build up in numbers to gather the most nectar. April is the average date for starting a package colony. Make sure the supplier insures the package before it is shipped. When your bees arrive, make sure they are alive before you sign the receipt. Once in awhile a package will die during shipping, but this is rare. If, however, the bees are damaged have the postperson fill out a "bad order statement" or an "insurance claim". That way you can get a new box of bees at the shipper's expense.

Between the time that you order your package bees and the time they arrive, you should get your hive ready for the bees. This way, you won't have to spend time building your hive boxes or running around looking for a place to put them while a package of bees is buzzing angrily on the back porch. If you are not very good at carpentry, it is best to start out with commercial equipment. This way you can dedicate all your energy to your bees without worrying about how your equipment will hold up. This will also acquaint you with "standard" equipment and you will have a model to improve, copy, or correct when you design your own hives.

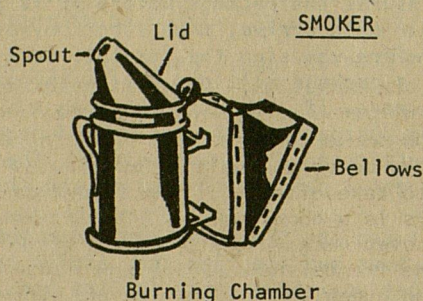
For each colony you start you will need a "complete hive" (one deep hive body with 10 frames and foundation, a bottom board, an inner cover, and an outer cover) and one extra deep super, also with 10 frames and foundation. Make sure that you receive a set of instructions for assembling all the pieces. Besides this, you will need a bee veil, a hive tool, and a smoker. You may also want to buy some bee gloves for extra protection. The hive tool is a flat piece of metal used as miniature crowbar for prying apart the parts of the hive. It is also handy for removing nails and hive staples, as well as scraping off extra pieces of wax and sticky bee

cont.

HIVE TOOL

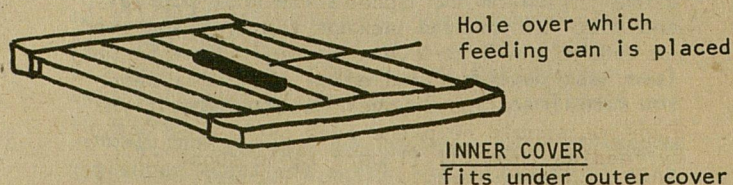


glue. The smoker is a hollow metal canister with a bellows attached. It is filled with bur-lap, dry leaves, grass, or some other slow burning materials. When the fuel is lit and the bellows are squeezed, puffs of smoke are forced out of the spout. The smoke is then directed into the entrance of the hive and over the frames within the hive. The smoke has a calming effect on the bees because it interferes with their defense behavior and causes them to fill their stomachs with honey (perhaps they think their home is on fire and are gobbling up as much food as they can in preparation for escape). Bees that are full of honey have trouble bending their abdomens into the downward position necessary for stinging. It is best to buy a big (4"x7") smoker. It is harder to keep a fire going in the smaller smokers, and they need to be refueled too often.



bees I had the thrill of coming back the next morning to find that every bee had left my beautiful white hive and returned to the stupid shipping crate!! I had to go through the hiving process all over again - but this time I got rid of the package and they decided to stay in the hive.

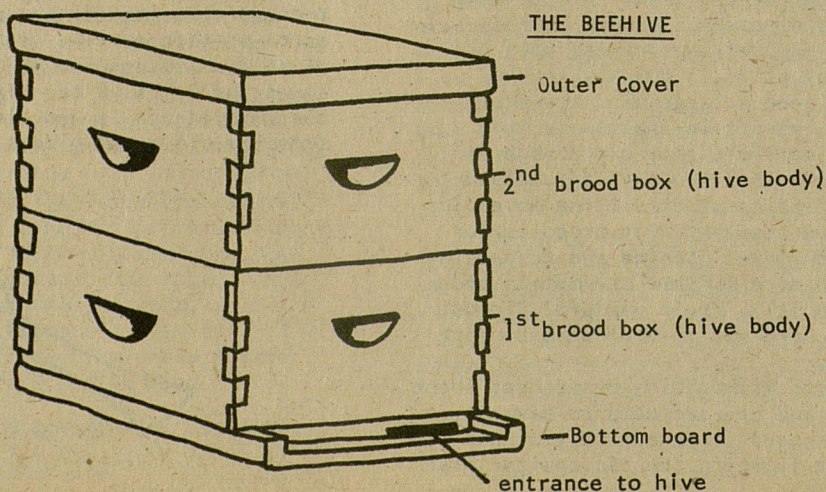
To start your package, you will need all the hive equipment except for the 10 frames with foundation that go in your extra hive body. Remove 5 frames from your bottom hive body (1st brood box). Wet the package of bees thoroughly by pouring warm 1:1 sugar syrup through the screen. Sticky bees can't fly well and usually pay more attention to cleaning each other off than to doing obnoxious things like stinging the beekeeper. Use your hive tool to open the top of the package. Remove the metal feeder can which is right under



Hiving Your Package Bees. Most books call this process "installing" package bees, which is an OK term if you are into thinking of your bees as a light fixture rather than a dynamic community of living creatures. I will use the terms "hiving" and "homing".

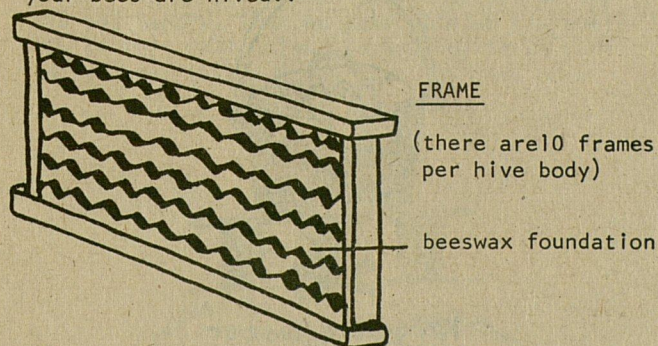
Once your box of bees arrives, you should hive them as soon as possible. Most books say you can wait a few days before homing your bees, but the sooner you put them in their new home, the happier they will be. I sure wouldn't want to sit in a box for 3 days surrounded by 12,000 buzzing bodies! Getting the bees into your new, clean hive right away will help keep the bees from accepting the package as their new home. The first time I hived a package of

the lid. Close the box again. The feeder can was filled with sugar syrup to feed the bees on their trip to you. You can save this can and whatever is left in it, and use it to feed your bees after they are hived. Feeding the bees helps tide them over until they can make themselves at home and begin collecting enough nectar on their own. Remove the tiny queen cage from the top of the package. The queen is the biggest bee in the cage. There will probably be a few worker bees in there with her to feed and groom her. If there are bees clinging to the outside of the queen cage, shake them off so you won't squish one of them and get stung. One end of the cage should have a candy plug in it. Remove the cork or cardboard covering



the end of this plug and make a small hole through the candy with a needle or a thin nail. (Be careful not to puncture the queen!) Suspend the queen cage between two frames in the hive by pressing the frames against the side of the cage. It is better to leave the candy end up. In a few days the queen will eat her way out of the cage and be accepted by the workers. If she were released directly into the hive with the rest of the bees, the worker bees might trample her in their confusion or you might crush her while moving frames or closing the equipment.

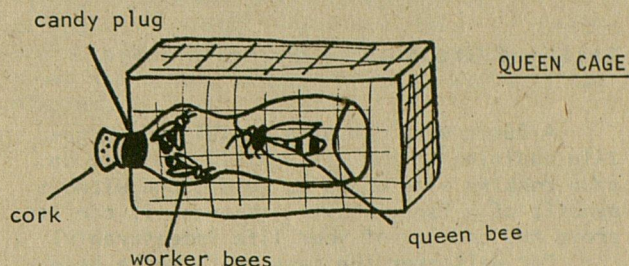
Now that the queen bee is safely in the hive, you are ready to hive the rest of the family. Bang the bottom of the package on the ground. This will jar the clinging bees off the top and sides of the box. Open the package again and invert it over the hive, shaking the bees into the gap where you removed the 5 frames. Shake a few bees over the queen cage so they can help her escape. Don't try to shake every bee out of the package; leave the package outside of the hive overnight and the stragglers will come out and enter the hive later. Place the inner cover over the top of the hive. Then you should help the bees get a good start by feeding them 1:1 (1 part table sugar to 1 part warm water) sugar syrup. The best way to feed your bees is with a feeder can. Fill the feeder can that came in the package (or a bigger metal can if you have one) with syrup and poke a few small holes in the bottom of it. Invert the can with the holes downward over the hole in the middle of the inner cover. Place your empty brood box (2nd hive body) over the inner cover to protect the feeder can and prevent it from attracting robber bees, ants, or other unwanted visitors. Then put the outer cover over the brood box. Cover the hive entrance with grass so the bees will reorient themselves when they emerge (remember?) and your bees are hived!!



Inspecting Your New Hive. In two to three weeks your little buddies should be settled enough for you to inspect them and make sure everything is going OK. When you open your hive, it is very easy to become hypnotized by the movements of the bees and the beauty of their little world. But don't forget that the main purpose of your visit is to check for food (liquid nectar and solid yellow-orange pollen), check for brood (tiny white eggs and bigger white larvae curled up like C's in the bottoms of comb cells) and to check for diseases. Don't worry about lack of food during your first inspection. Just keep feeding sugar

syrup until the bees refuse to take any more. This means that they have found a better natural source of nectar. Checking for brood indicates the presence and productivity of the queen. You shouldn't have to worry about brood diseases this early in the season so I will cover the symptoms, prevention, and cures in a later article.

To examine your colony, prepare and light your smoker as mentioned earlier in the article. Blow a few puffs of smoke into the entrance and



remove the outer cover, the empty brood box and the feeder can. Gently pry open the inner cover and blow smoke over the frames. Then replace the inner cover and wait a few minutes for the smoke to take effect. If the feeder can is empty, this is a good time to fill it. Remove the inner cover once more and puff a bit more smoke over the frames. Remove the queen cage and make sure the queen has been released. Lift out a frame (one of the end frames is best so you do not risk crushing any bees) and see how nicely your fuzzy friends have drawn out white wax comb from the foundation on the frames. Look in the tiny cells for eggs (look closely - they are like itty-bitsy grains of rice and are easy to overlook) and larvae (shiny white grubs). If you are lucky, you might see the queen. She is larger than the other bees and will probably have a circle of worker bees surrounding her to feed her, groom her and remove her wastes. When you are finished marveling at the handiwork of these amazing insects (don't spend more than 20 minutes in the hive), replace the 5 frames you took out for hiving, replace the inner cover, feeder can (now refilled), and outer cover. Your first inspection is now complete and you can re-open your hive every 10-14 days if you want to.

In future articles I'll cover seasonal management of honeybees, their enemies and diseases, extracting and refining honey and beeswax, building your own equipment, and other things that will help you get the most out of your beehives. Happy Beekeeping! ♀

Where to write for information on supplies and package bees:

Dadant and Sons, Inc., Hamilton, Illinois
A.I. Root and Co., Medina, Ohio 44256
Walter T. Kelley Co., Leitchfield, Kentucky

Reference Books:

The ABC and XYZ's of Bee Culture - A.I. Root Co.
The Hive and the Honeybee - Dadant and Sons
Bees and Beekeeping - R. Morse. Cornell University.

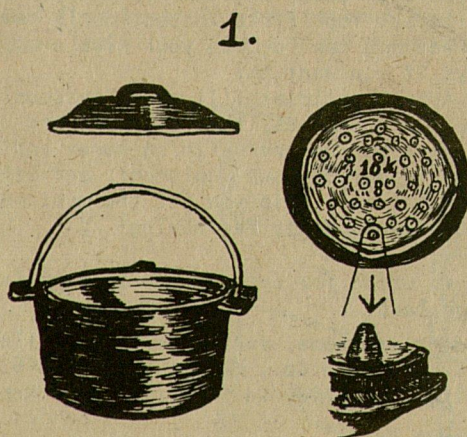
DUTCH OVENS

Text and Graphics by Meredith Foyle

A Dutch Oven can be a useful and versatile addition to any kitchen. If you must do your cooking with wood, as we do, and without benefit of a fancy stove-with-oven, it can improve the quality of your life immeasurably!

For well over the past year, we've been doing all our cooking on a grill over a fire pit built into the kitchen. Although we built ourselves an oven of sorts out of a 5-gallon lard tin, it took extreme care to avoid burning our baked goods; as time passed and the fire ate away more and more of the bottom of the tin, our breads and cakes became more and more charred. Enter my mother (by long distance letter) with a bright idea: "Want me to bring you a Dutch Oven?" "Well if you really want to..." I had no idea what a Dutch Oven was.

What a Dutch Oven is, is a round pot with a well-fitting lid and heavy handle. Some varieties also have very squat lids. The underside of the lid has a series of conical bumps growing out of it, like tiny metallic stalactites, and a 1/2" lip around its edge. Our oven is cast iron, but they also come in cast aluminum. Get iron if you can: better distribution and retention of heat, more durable, and a nicer look and feel to it. Dutch ovens are sized just like frying pans (ours is a #10 1/8, and holds maybe three quarts). As it turns out, the lid to ours is also a perfect fit for our cast iron skillet.

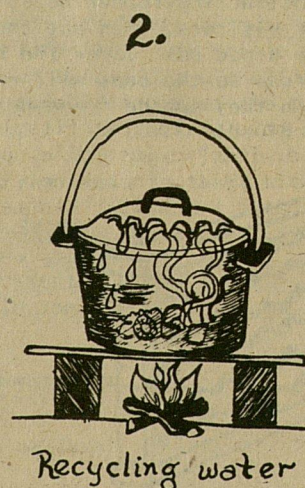


A Dutch Oven

My mother bought our oven new at a restaurant supply store in Los Angeles, but I bet good used ones could be found by combing second hand and thrift shops, flea markets, swap meets and/or farm sales at a substantially lower price. It is a good investment, in any case.

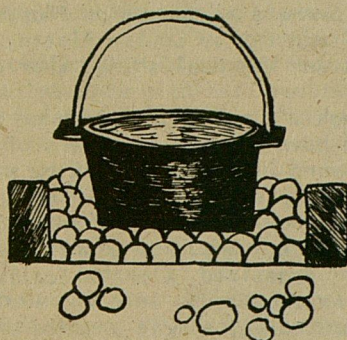
Like many good cooking vessels, a Dutch Oven requires initial curing before use and some subsequent care to maintain the cure. Some ovens come "pre-cured" but it's a good idea to go through the process at least once anyway before putting it to work. Coat the inside of the pot and top and bottom of the lid with vegetable oil (old-timers undoubtedly use lard) and set it over the fire for fifteen minutes or so. You may repeat this process one more time before using if you so desire, and as often after that as you want, to strengthen the cure.

Cooking (top of the stove) with a Dutch Oven is pretty much like cooking with any other pot or frying pan. It's especially nice for sauces, soups and dumplings. If we plan to have beans with our dinner, we cook those first in a pressure cooker, then transfer them to the Dutch Oven to finish cooking with whatever else we're having that night. This is only a matter of expediency: you can cook beans in a Dutch Oven, they just take a long time and where we live it is never wintry enough to want to stretch out a cooking fire! One difference between regular pots and Dutch Ovens is that the steam that rises from the simmering food and condenses on the lid is captured by the conical bumps and redirected in drips back to the bottom of the pot.



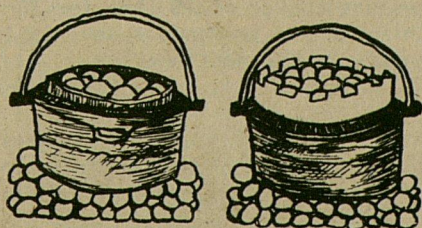
Baking, however, is where a Dutch Oven really shows its stuff: biscuits, quick breads and cakes... You need lots of good coals for this, though. We usually do it on an evening fire, after cooking as much other stuff as we can to insure plenty of coals. We need at least an hour to build up a sufficient quantity. You may have enough on hand all the time in winter from keeping your house warm.

3.



Both the oven and its lid must be pre-heated on coals or near the fire. Then the vessel is oiled (floured, too, if it's for cakes and quick breads; we've found it unnecessary for bread). The coals are raked and arranged so the oven sits on a layer of them (an inch or so thick) with plenty left over at the sides to be placed atop the lid. Then the dough/batter is put in and levelled, the lid set in place, and coals arranged over the top with metal tongs. There are a couple of ways to manage this latter, one being to put the top on upside down, so that the lip of the pot-lid keeps the coals from sliding off. The way we do it is to form a protective "wall" all around the rim of the right-side-up lid with a wok ring we have which just fits inside the lid and handle. Then we just pile up the coals inside this wall. Also, in baking, it is good to remember that a Dutch Oven can take more

4.



Top upside
down

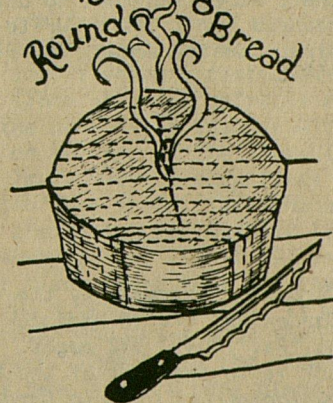
Walled by
wok ring

coals on top than underneath without burning what you're baking because the top doesn't directly touch your batter.

For biscuits, be sure to put an extra dose of coals on top so they will brown properly. For quick breads, we usually double or treble a recipe to fill the pot. This requires longer baking time, about an hour or 45 minutes. For yeast breads, the oven capacity is about equivalent to two small (1 lb.) loaves. The final rising is accomplished in the oven as it sits to one side of the fire while dinner is finishing up. The finished loaf is beautiful and round and brown, and we cut it as shown in the diagram.

5.

Slicing
Round Bread



Food cannot be stored overnight in a Dutch Oven, nor should you use soap to clean it. But clean it you must, after every use (except yeast bread and maybe biscuits). Dry it well, too, removing every trace of moisture. This isn't as tough as it sounds - many things only require a light wiping with a damp cloth, others only require a brushing with plain water, and even the most stubborn sticky stuff should come off with wood ashes and elbow grease, applied with a sturdy brush (not wire, please!) or vegetable sponge (loofa, estropajo). Wipe dry with a cloth and apply a light coating of vegetable oil if you think it needs it, especially after the first cleanings. Then store in a dry place, remembering that iron rusts!

And that's all there is to it. For Christmas this year we roasted a cockerel with cornbread stuffing and steamed vegies on the side, all in our Dutch Oven. A most excellent invention! ♀

Farm Notes. Farm Notes.

Country Women gets many requests from women looking for apprenticeships on farms--work in exchange for room and board for a specific period of time. I've taken on apprentices twice in the last couple of years in order to get help with major building projects; the benefits have been many, in both directions. I want to strongly encourage others to consider taking one or two month summer apprentices. Especially for women living alone, in couples or in small groups, it's a way to get help with big work projects (or many small ones), while sharing much-mystified skills with other women.

Please send us your name, address, and some information about your situation if you are interested in taking on an apprentice or in being one. We will put you in contact with each other, stressing that no one is to arrive unannounced for a visit. Write: Apprenticeships, Country Women, Box 51, Albion, California 95410.

Books:

Build It Better Yourself by the editors of *Organic Gardening*, \$16.95 hardback; Rodale Press, Emmaus, Pa. 18049, 942 pages.

This book is to the rest of the homestead what *The Encyclopedia of Organic Gardening* was to the garden--an incredibly detailed, wide-ranging exploration of nearly everything you might ever want to build on the homestead. Despite the price, I recommend nearly every country homestead having a copy (or at least sharing it among several neighboring ones). This book already promises to be an indispensable tool on this farm.

Detailed plans and basic instructions are given for every project. The range covered is nearly astounding. There are chapters on fences, gates, greenhouses, barns and sheds, repairing old buildings, livestock housing and equipment, garden tools, compost bins, as well as more esoteric subjects such as fancy planter boxes and trellises. There is a plan for nearly everything you might ever want to build, and usually several different designs are offered. For instance, there are six kinds of composting bins and five kinds of greenhouses! In every area I'm familiar with, the designs seem well-conceived and extremely functional.

Though the plans themselves are detailed, clearly drawn and thorough, this is not a book for a novice carpenter. Most of the projects require a certain level of skill. It is, however, a book to keep with you as you learn--a gold mine of information.

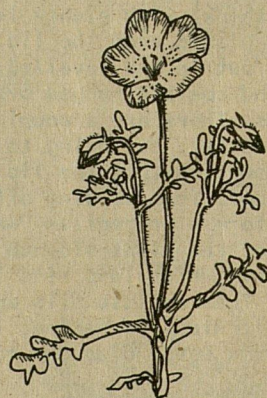
- Sherry Thomas

The Secrets of Companion Planting for Successful Gardening by Louise Riotte; \$4.95, 226 pages; Garden Way Publishing, Charlotte, Vt. 05445.

Though I'm not a great reader of garden books and have managed six years of gardens with one little paperback by my side, I took great pleasure in this book. It is not a basic how to book, but an encyclopedia of garden lore, companion plants and herbal remedies. Organized alphabetically by plant, the book is one to dip into and explore rather than one to get simple answers and ready information from. But it is full of information nevertheless: when to pick thistles so they will "bleed" to death, that sheep sorrel takes up phosphorus and should be added to the compost heap, that gophers can be repelled by planting schilla bulbs. I pick this book up often to browse in and am always rewarded by some new pearl of knowledge; it is a fine companion for devoted gardeners.

-S. Thomas

Kathryn Brown



At a recent "sheep skills seminar" presented by the Mendocino County Farm Advisor's office I learned the following helpful hint:

Plastic syringes can be sterilized. Place in a pressure cooker at 15 lbs. for 30-45 minutes. This means a tremendous savings in that you buy only replacement needles.

Tami Tyler

Re: horse tack -

May I recommend that the horsewoman always carry a sharp knife, especially when trailering, tying up her horse, or going on trail rides. It is much easier to sacrifice a lead-line or martingale than to watch your horse drown, strangle or break a leg.

Donna Tappan

Farm Notes • Farm Notes •

The Cream to Write Home About

I knew about Cornish cream because Mother brought the know-how with her when our family settled in the "New England" of these United States. Our hopes were realized, and soon Mother was able to join other American housewives in enjoying the blessings of a high standard of living, complete with automatic refrigerator, electric range, and convenient packaged foods.

But, perversely or not, Mother missed the old "inconveniences." Milk fresh from the cow from which she could get "real" cream, the cookstove where she could set things like bread and other yeast foods to rise. She complained that the flour didn't have the right consistency for Cornish cooking, that the bread didn't taste the same. The whipping cream that she tried to coax into turning itself into a reasonable facsimile of the special cornish cream she loved just didn't obey. Her rueful little smile when she invited my father to spread the poor substitute on a slice of fresh red raspberry tart told me that they both thought what a wan and pale shadow of the real cream it was.

Then the Depression brought at least one welcome change in this situation. One of my mother's favorite Cornish-American friends moved to the country, bought a cow, inherited an old-fashioned coal cookstove, and began to make succulent clotted cream for the delectation of compatriots who also suffered "cream famine." Her sons delivered it along with the butter and eggs that were something "to write home about."

As much as I, then a teen-ager, liked the cream, I failed to learn how to make it. Those were the days before people were going back to Mother Earth, and traditions weren't treasured as they are nowadays, when Americana and foreign specialties are appreciated by a more discerning generation. Nevertheless, years later, even I, as I was enjoying the privileges of my own industrialized kitchen, got a yen for that old delicacy.

But how should I go about learning the rudiments of something that never appeared in any cookbook? I regretted not learning more about it when my mother could have instructed me - such is the arrogance of youth! The next best thing, I thought, would be to write a letter to my mother's old friend, Mrs. Rowe. She still lived in the North, but I had by this time moved to Florida. I didn't know that was a disadvantage as far as making clotted cream was concerned, but it turned out to be!

Mrs. Rowe was more than happy to oblige me. She wrote painstakingly of how I should go about reviving the old Cornish custom. But that was the trouble...it was so painstaking. First, she said, "If you don't have a coal stove you won't be able to make clotted cream." That discouraged me enough. I didn't know anyone in Florida who had a coal stove! But be-

sides that, she told me, "You have to have cold weather." Florida didn't quite fill the bill. In spite of this, however, she admitted that it could be done if only I had a very cool basement (with no furnace) and would get a separator. If you want to keep a regular supply of this cream on hand (and who wouldn't once she'd tasted it?), you should set up one corner of this cool basement for its preparation.

Here are Mrs. Rowe's specific instructions. Maybe her recipe doesn't sound like one that comes from your County Extension office, but it does have the flavor of reality:

"The milk has to be separated from the cream right after being strained and scalded slowly (never bring to a boil). This has to be fresh milk, not pasteurized. It must not be put on a gas burner or electric ring and never directly over the fire on a coal stove.

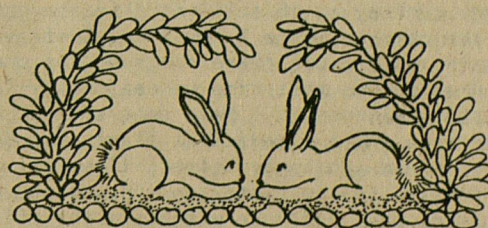
"The old-fashioned way was to strain the milk into a large pan and put the pan in the dairy and let it stand undisturbed until the next day. (Into the cool dairy, I remind you.) Then put the pan into a steamer with hot water and place on the top of the stove (not on the fire) and leave until a ring forms around the pan on top of the cream. Take the pan of milk back into the cool dairy and let it stand until the following day. It should always be covered to keep it clean. Then skim off the cream.

"If you have a separator, it will take less time. Separate the cream from the milk right after milking. Then scald the cream slowly (as above) and take it to a cool place where it can stand undisturbed until the following day. After you have finished you should refrigerate the clotted cream just as you do whipped cream."

If you're not lucky enough to have a coal stove (more and more people are getting them as they "get away", however), perhaps an electric warming tray would do the trick. The secrets of getting good clotted cream are: start with fresh, unpasteurized milk, never let the cream get too hot, and let it stand in a very cool place.

If you've got "what it takes" and you're willing to spend some time experimenting, try your luck with something really different like Cornish cream. Along with "asties" and saffron cake, it's a delicacy that has made Cornish cooking unique.

Rubena Uren



Heidi Freestone

COMFREY

By Luna

Comfrey has a long tradition of use over a good part of the globe as an important medicinal plant believed to have potent healing power. Current scientific study is showing comfrey to be a source of vegetal protein with a higher yield than soybeans, causing many to hail it as a possible food for an increasing population in a world short on animal protein.

The reverence, often bordering on adulation, of comfrey devotees is sometimes hard to swallow by people who have had little or no experience with the plant. When I came to the west coast five years ago, I came to meet an herbalist who had been for years treating and teaching people out of her tiny house near Berkeley. She used comfrey so extensively and almost exclusively, that a friend and I would joke about Comfrey, the Great Cosmic Herb! Yet I grudgingly began to respect it when I witnessed the healing of a friend's persistently suppurating abscess, that had failed to respond to months of every treatment imaginable, including antibiotics. Simple external comfrey poultices and internal infusions resulted in immediate improvement; I became determined to learn more about it. Later I came north and found a large comfrey patch cultivated in the garden of the commune where I now live. Comfrey tea was in regular use there to treat the congestion and colds that crop up seasonally in the Coastal rainforest. I have come to know and love this ancient medicinal plant as a dependable friend and hardy helper; I've left a pot of comfrey tea to simmer on the woodstove on blustery days and have witnessed the efficacy of comfrey as a food and medicine for people and animals.

Graphics by Carmen Goodyear

Identification:

Comfrey, called Yallue by the Saxons, was classified by Linnaeus as Symphytum officinale in the larger family of Boraginaceae (named for Borage, another common herb). "Sympho" is Greek for "unite" and the plant was well known to Greek and Latin physicians.

"Comfrey" is a corruption of the Latin "Confirma", "to unite", "to join together". Both names allude to the power of this plant to unite and heal broken flesh. Some names still in common use are Knitbone, Bruisewort and Boneset. Ancient healers classified it as a vulneray, valuing it in treating wounds inflicted in battle.

When growing wild, comfrey is found in moist and watery places (ditch sides and near water taps). Levy reports it growing upon sun-baked banks in Algiers and modern cultivators have found it to thrive in sun rather than shade in Africa, Europe, Russia, New Zealand, England, and the United States.

The plant has large, pointed, rough, hairy, even prickly leaves growing from a central stalk with string fibers when broken. The bell-like flowers grow clustered on a stalk which grows upward as they begin to open. The color of the flowers varies from cream to blue to purple and crimson. The root is black outside and white inside when broken, and very slimy.

I had attributed the great variation in leaf size, hairiness, and flower color in the comfrey plants grown in this area to variations in soil, sunlight, feeding, etc, but have since learned that there are many hybrid strains (L. Hills has classified at least 30 - cf. Comfrey, Fodder Food & Remedy) and as Hills points out:

"...plants that are split or grown from root cuttings from mixed hybrids are going to have yields that vary according to whether their dozen or even hundred was increased from a productive or non-productive seedling."

(Hills, Comfrey - p. 45)

The nomenclature of the various comfrees is somewhat confusing but I will attempt to delineate some of the distinctions between them. Symphytum officinale, the common comfrey, has been known to herbalists for at least two thousand years. It has thick, sometimes hollow, stems, cream or white flowers (paler green foliage and higher fibre content than the imported species). It ranges in height from one to four feet. A variety S. officinale var. patens has purple flowers. S. asperrium, or Prickly Comfrey, is native to the Caucasus and was introduced to England between 1790 and 1801 by Joseph Busch who was head gardener for Empress Catherine of Russia. It grows to five feet and is the largest of the genus. Its flower stems are opposite and its large oval leaves and stems are not only hairy but prickly (asperrium means "the roughest"). It has blue flowers and gives a greater yield than S. officinale, though the latter increases with cultivation. Henry Doubleday, in search of a mucilaginous plant as a source of gum for stamps, obtained in 1871 from Busch's successor at St. Petersburg, some comfrey seedlings that had resulted from a cross-pollination of S. asperrium and S. officinale, a F_1 hybrid. He called it "Russian comfrey" (Symphytum peregrinum) to distinguish it from Busch's earlier "Prickly Comfrey". It grew up to six feet in flower, with blue changing to magenta blossoms. The test of a hybrid is that it produces mixed seedlings, (for instance S. peregrinum and S. uplandicum from one plant) instead of breeding true, like S. officinale or S. asperrium. There is also evidence of a variety of comfrey resulting in a bi-generic cross between the 16-chromosome Borago officinalis (Borage) and the 36-chromosome Symphytum asperrium.

Medicinal uses:

All the comfrees contain a substance called allantoin, a cell-proliferate responsible for comfrey's remarkable ability to heal bone and regenerate new tissue. Allantoin's powerful action in aiding epithelial formation has traditionally recommended it for use in treating ulcers, external and internal. Ancient and modern herbalists testify to its use in treating broken bones after they've been set, and severe hematomas (bruises), internal and external. It reduces swelling and is lauded by Gerard, Culpepper, Kloss, Grieve (see references at end) and countless others for its curative effects. All parts of the plant are mucilaginous (but particularly the root) and the demulcent nature makes it an excellent remedy for many ailments. Diarrhea and dysentery ("scour" in goats and cattle) respond to internal comfrey decoctions and Juliette de Bairacli Levy recommends it for uterine hemorrhages in cows, sheep and goats. Comfrey has been traditionally used as extensively for animals as people.

It is important to remember when using plants for healing that we are conditioned by our American culture and Western chemotherapy to seek and expect "quick" cures to be "done" to us. Natural healing presumes that one is ready to accept the responsibility and consciousness of participating in a Process. There are various ways to enhance this healing process and herbal medicine is just one system among many available healing systems. Whenever they are used, externally or internally, access to the healing properties of plants is enhanced by tuning into one's self on levels other than the physical, and accepting the sometimes slow movement of the Process rather than seeking or expecting instant transformation.

Hemorrhoids: A strong tea brewed from leaves and stems makes a soothing, mildly astringent remedy for bleeding hemorrhoids, both as a sitz bath and to inject rectally.

Bronchitis: A favorite tea for bronchial congestion is equal parts comfrey leaves, mullein leaves, coltsfoot leaves, rosehips, a handful of comfrey root. Boil root a few minutes or longer, add leaves and rosehips, let steep. Children like it and it has proven itself many times over as an effective pulmonary healer.

There are two techniques that I use often in applying comfrey externally: poultices and baths.

Poultices: used to draw out boils, dissolve hardness, ease swellings and bruises, to soothe pain in any tender, inflamed part. I also have had success using comfrey poultices in treating severe bruises, swollen glands, mastitis, and infected cuts and sores. To make a poultice, chop fresh or dried herb or root finely and steep in boiling water. You may choose to mix with bran or barley meal, though comfrey is so mucilaginous that it easily holds together without additions. Fold the mass in a piece of cloth, or apply it directly to area to be treated if skin is unbroken. Cover with more

cloth or a towel to keep warm. Have another ready; don't reuse a poultice. It is appropriate to quote Culpepper here:

"I beseech you to take this caution along with you: Use no poultices if you can help it, that are of an healing nature, before you have first cleansed the body, because they are subject to draw the humours to them from every part of the body."

So, brew up a pot of comfrey tea to sip, an internal treatment to complement the external.

Baths: For a bath or a "soak", brew up a very strong tea of roots and leaves. If the skin is broken or draining, be sure to boil it long enough to sterilize (20 min.) and also disinfect the container you will use to soak in. For a whole body soak, strain the tea into the tub. Wrap the roots and leaves in a piece of cheesecloth and drop them in also as you fill tub with hot water. Soak until water cools - wonderful for sprains and fatigue. (Move slowly or lie down after rising from tub.) For sitz baths after childbirth to aid in healing any lacerations or muscular strain, add some antiseptic herbs like myrrh, eucalyptus or bay laurel. Also good for hemorrhoids. I've also used this combination for treating a severe burn on my forearm, with frequent soaks to remove dead tissue (it went quite deep) and pus. Utmost cleanliness is very important in treating wounds of this sort, as is using herbs which have antiseptic properties to complement comfrey's healing properties.

Soaks (using a strong decoction of comfrey plus antiseptic herbs) are often necessary for a multitude of minor infections - splinters, infected cuts, funky sores, etc. First wash with soap and water or plain water, then immerse area to be treated in a pot or basin, keeping wound covered until the water cools. It is important in cases of deep cuts (where dead tissue may be caught) or sores that have a tendency to heal over on the surface while putrefying underneath, to clean out the decaying matter. (For this reason I do not recommend the common practice of sprinkling goldenseal powder over a cut or sore as general first-aid or the use of aloe vera until one is sure that new clean tissue has formed from the inside out.) Repeat soak three or four times a day until healed. Keep the area loosely covered with gauze or cloth if necessary to keep clean.

A tonic & blood purifier: combine equal parts of comfrey root, Oregon grape root and yellow dock root. Simmer until it is quite strong - drink a cupful three times a day before meals.

Salves & Lotions: Comfrey is the basic herb in a variety of salves and lotions I've experimented with in the past few years. My current recipe combines handfuls of (fresh if possible) comfrey leaves and roots, plantain leaves (has a strong smell some find objectionable), calendula flowers, and goldenseal root. Chop fine, cover with olive oil or other vegetable oil or lanolin. Set in warm place (warming oven of wood stove is perfect) for a

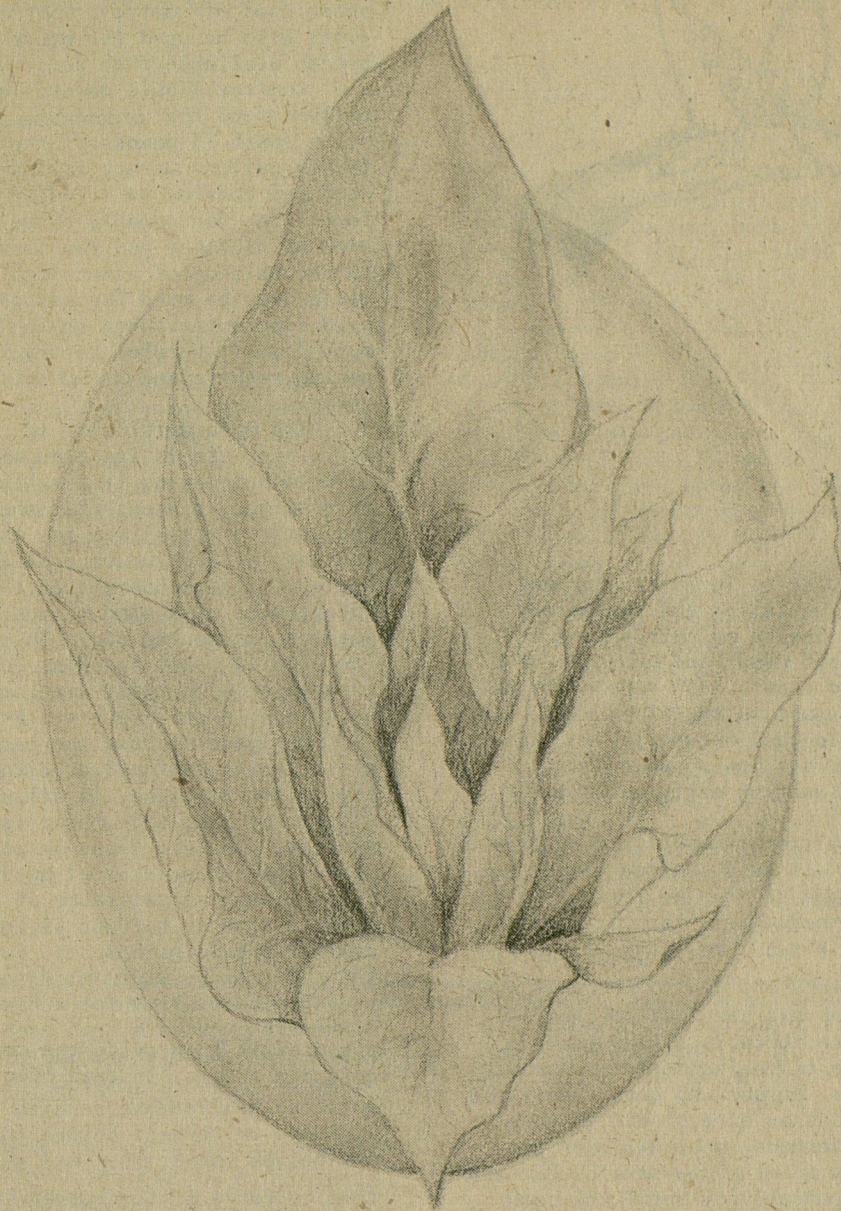
few days to a week, turning often. Strain and squeeze through cheesecloth. Add some beeswax for salve. Decant into bottles, cork tightly and refrigerate or store in a cool place - remember it is organic so it won't keep forever like chemical potions. This particular combination is excellent for rashes, mild burns, sprains, insect bites, massage.

Food Value:

The old saying "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" is true, and eating a few comfrey leaves daily is excellent preventive medicine. Comfrey's long, deep tap roots bring up many minerals that plants (other than trees or sea plants) don't often have access to. It is the only land plant known as a source of Vitamin B₁₂ (which depends on cobalt for its manufacture). Omnivorous animals (including humans) depend on the flesh of other animals or insects as a source of this vitamin. B₁₂ deficiency becomes a problem in people on strict vegetarian diets and in caged animals. Ruminants, however (cows, sheep, goats) have the digestive apparatus necessary to synthesize it themselves. Comfrey is a cheaper source of B₁₂ than liver, fresh milk or eggs for most people, and also can be utilized as a source of vegetable protein. Unfortunately, it is rather unpalatable to most humans, though experiments are underway to produce a comfrey flour. I have come to like the fresh young shoots and flower buds, raw in salads and steamed with other greens. The leaves, fresh or dried make a hearty stock for a soup base. I've even come across a coffee recipe using equal parts of comfrey, dandelion and chicory root-roasted and ground.

Comfrey is a more immediate source of animal fodder than people food. Pig raisers have long used it to provide the copper which prevents pig anemia, instead of giving chemical supplements (most of which are passed out in the feces and contaminate the soil). It also provides the vitamins and minerals that pigs would get in the wild by wide-range foraging and by consuming some flesh. The same holds true for chickens, for which comfrey also furnishes a source of vitamin A (which produces yellow yolks). Comfrey itself thrives on poultry manure, which gives it potash. (For more specific information, research and methods see the chapters in Hill's book, "Comfrey for Pigs and Poultry" and "Comfrey for Grazing Animals". The book also contains much on its use with cattle, horses, goats, sheep.)

In general it is an excellent animal feed, best combined with other fodder because of its low fiber content. The gypsies have long used a few handfuls of comfrey roots daily to quickly brighten the coats of the horses they wanted to sell. (cf. - Levy, Hills). Many animal raisers recommend planting comfrey plots near barns, paddocks, chicken coops etc. to facilitate a daily feeding routine when using freshly cut leaves.



Propagation:

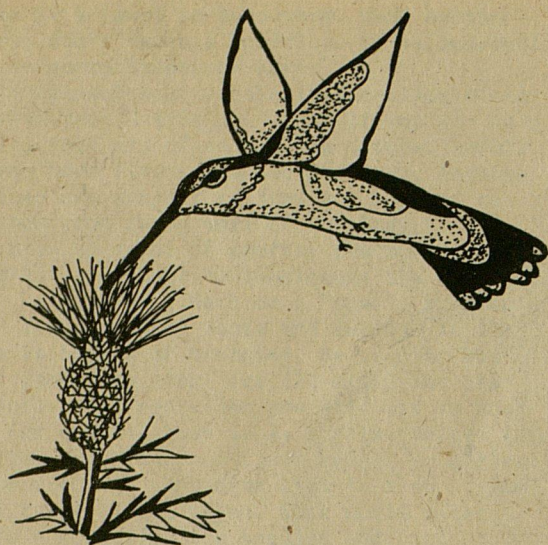
Comfrey rarely sets seed and so is difficult to propagate from seed. The usual method of propagation is from root pieces, either the crown or portions of the tap root. The former (called a *crown-set*) is taken from the root near the surface with a piece of stem intact. Even a small piece sets out green shoots very quickly. *Root-sets* are sections of tap root placed in the soil (small end down) or placed in a damp sack, kept warm and moist, until shoots appear. Large pieces of root propagate more easily in either method. When planting, make sure they are $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 inch below the surface so they won't dry out.

Cultivation:

Comfrey requires a deep soil, at least four feet, to allow its roots to penetrate, and needs nitrogen, which must be supplied through manure. Comfrey grows faster than any fodder crop. Compost is not a sufficient nitrogen source because the nitrogen becomes available too slowly.

In choosing a site for a comfrey plot, pick an open, sunny spot away from trees. Remember that the crop must be carted off so it is helpful to situate the plot convenient to animal feeding places, if that is to be its use. If you plan a large field to be machine-cultivated, the standard spacing is three feet

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plus three or four inches (a meter each way) to allow room for the tiller and the spread of growing leaves. Hoeing or cultivating is necessary to kill off weeds and grass to give the seedlings a good start. Hill recommends not cutting the crop at all in the first year, letting the foliage die back naturally. In subsequent years, he advises mowing when flower stems appear, as flowering early lessens the crop.

Manure, deep litter compost from poultry and sewage sludge, all help comfrey thrive because of its nitrogen needs. The three main secrets of comfrey growing are "Keep it clean, keep it cut, keep it fed". The high yields reported by many growers are due to frequent cuttings after the crop has been established. A farm in Kenya, where there is a long growing season, reported up to one hundred tons an acre for seventeen years. Anyone who gets less yield than twenty-five tons an acre should improve their cultivation methods, says Hill, or get rid of the crop and plant a new strain. But one should not judge productivity until the comfrey crop has been grown, kept cleared, cut and fed for at least four years. Growing comfrey on a garden scale or simply to supply home medicine needs is different from producing fodder for animals. But even if you don't raise animals, comfrey is a valuable source of organic potash in fertilizing other plants in your garden. But it is considered wasteful to compost comfrey in a normal compost heap as too much potash leaches out into the soil below your garden.

Hill recommends saving the first cutting for early potato planting, setting wilted comfrey leaves in trenches at a rate of one to one and a half pounds of comfrey for every foot of row. Seed potatoes are set straight on the comfrey (a foot apart for early potatoes, fifteen inches for maincrop). The potatoes are essentially growing in long narrow compost heaps which release their plant foods as required. We are experimenting with this method in half

of our potato patch this year. I am interested in feedback from readers regarding this and other uses of comfrey. Comfrey in trenches might also be used for other crops needing the potash available from comfrey compost.

Comfrey liquid manure is said to be an excellent food for greenhouse tomatoes. Steep for a month 15 pounds of fresh cut leaves in twenty gallons water, replacing water as it is used and comfrey as it decays. This comfrey fertilizer has roughly three times as much potash as nitrogen and far less phosphorus, which is the balance of plant-food tomatoes need. It could also be used for pot plants and general garden purposes. When trying this or any new method it is helpful to try it on some plants, noting results and comparing with the control group.

The main difficulty in conserving comfrey for winter use is its high moisture content, which makes drying it for hay impractical. From my reading, it seems that the difficulty in using comfrey for silage is its low carbohydrate content in relation to protein. It is the fermentation of carbohydrates that is the key to the process of making silage. There are various methods, using the addition of molasses or mixing it with other cereals, but I have no direct experience with this; yet comfrey is being used as silage in this country, Britain and Africa.

For general use, the best nutritional value is in the leaf, and cultivated comfrey (*S. perigrinum*) is richer in allantoin than *S. officinale*. Studies show there is less water, more protein, and less fiber in plants at the leafy stage than when it is allowed to run to flower; it is also more palatable at this stage. The optimum time to harvest is before flowering; comfrey yield increases by constant cutting, the roots being stimulated to greater growth.

Drying comfrey for medicinal use in large quantities presents some problems. Too much heat breaks down the allantoin and the medicinal value is lost. Yet too little heat or too moist an environment results in moldy plants. It helps to harvest before the stems thicken and become solid. I've had good results drying them on racks in the summer sun, moving them over the stove as the fall dampness sets in, and storing the dried leaves in large bags in a cool, dry place all winter.

Blessed be the Great Mother and her gifts of green growing plants. ♀

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Culpepper's Complete Herbal - Foulsham & Co. Ltd, London.

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A Modern Herbal, Vol. 1 - Mrs. M. Grieve, Dover publications, NY. (quotes Gerard)

BOOK REVIEW: COUNTRY LESBIANS

Reviewed by Tami Tyler

Country Lesbians
The Womanshare Collective
Woman Share Books
PO Box 1735
Grants Pass, Ore. 97526
\$5.50

Country Lesbians is the story of the Womanshare Collective, a group of five lesbians (Sue, Nelly, Dian, Carol and Billie) living together in the country. The book was written "to record and analyze the experiences and exploration of our life together. We hope to convey an accurate impression of what it is like to live separated from most of male culture."

The book is an anthology of a myriad of experiences, ranging from discussions on class, to coming-out letters to their parents. The six chapters are mainly written in personal narratives by each of the women, but also include poetry and pieces taken from actual journal entries. Through these choices of style, I found myself much more personally connected to the book.

Class and relationships are presented as primary struggles. Through the clear and purposeful writing one is easily able to feel the many emotions evoked in the dealing with the issues of money, land control, couples and non-monogamy. Particularly moving is Billie's account of her life as a working class woman, and how her class background has affected it.

(part of which was included in the last issue of *Country Women*).

Also included is their relationship to practicalities such as chain saws, car repair, building, and animals. One chapter deals specifically with how practical skills have made their lives "easier, more enjoyable, and thus more stable." They also share, in cartoon-like form, some of their skills and ideas, or "life-simplifiers" as they refer to them.

Womanshare is not just an isolated and closed group of five lesbians. It is also a feminist country retreat. This not only brings a way to make money, but also a complexity of problems that need to be discussed, struggled around and solved. From this come discussions on collectivity, money and land agreements.

Very interesting to me was a dialogue on "The Power of Sexual Power". Sexuality has great power in our lives although sometimes it is negated. They point out that "by becoming more conscious about our sexuality we will demystify it and thereby give it less power over us." An aspect of personal power not to be missed!

Interwoven throughout the text of the book is poetry, wonderful illustrations by Billie, and numerous photographs by several women photographers. They all work together to present a most pleasing and aesthetic book.

Deeply personal, this is an in-depth study into the lives of five women, and a sharing of their collective process. I'm glad they decided to share them with us. ♀

Country Women Is Each Of Us

Helen:

Today is the deadline for work on this issue, and although I have planned to write this article for almost two months, here I sit, an hour before the meeting, writing frantically. I feel that I have been paralyzing myself, making myself powerless, by my fear of writing this article. Fear of opening up a sore spot that in some ways seems to be healing, fear of losing friends if I do write it, and fear of losing trust and self-respect if I don't. My level of fear and powerlessness was in itself frightening, as I believe that these feelings are self-created, and that I could choose to move out of them by simply sitting down and writing the article.

As we have worked on the Personal Power issue (which I thought I would have so much to say about), I have seen myself as less powerful than I have in years. It has forced me to re-examine my views on power. I think that, as a magazine collective, each member of which is exploring her access to personal power, we have to become more conscious of our use and abuse of this power.

What brought me most in touch with the question of the nature of personal power was a recent incident on the *Country Women* editorial collective. Within the structure of the magazine, the editorial collective (a group of eight women who have given the magazine ongoing energy for periods from 1-1/2 to 4 years) chooses the collective who will do each issue. This has usually not presented a problem, as there were rarely a large number of women eager to work on a given topic. But when it came time to choose the collective for the Personal Power issue, there were fourteen women who expressed interest in working on it. Past experience has shown that the size of the group needs to be somewhat limited for efficiency and for consciousness raising to happen; most people seem to find it easier to be open in a group of not more than eight or ten people. So the editorial collective began the painful process of making a decision about who could work on the issue. We began by trying to decide what was the largest number we felt comfortable with, and compromised on

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nine. We then were faced with picking nine from fourteen women--of taking the power and responsibility to trust our discrimination and intuition, to look at peoples' lives and their commitment to the magazine, and to then pass on to five women our decision that they would not be working on this collective. Until this issue, we have always included two people who had never before worked on any issue of the magazine. After much discussion, we decided that for this issue we would not limit ourselves to this rule, but rather would choose from the list of names those that we felt most positive about working with. Three women from the editorial collective definitely wanted to work on the issue, and one, who is seriously re-examining her relationship to the magazine, was undecided. We took the remaining names and began to choose.

Conflicts arose in trying to choose the collective. Two members of the editorial collective expressed a strong opposition to working with one of the women on the list. One reason expressed was that her politics were alienating and rhetorical, and that she was not open to criticism or change in her views. Having recently worked with her on another issue, some of us disagreed. I felt that since the magazine is committed to expressing a wide range of views, it was very dangerous to choose not to work with someone because her politics were different from yours, because the magazine would start to become more narrow and limited in its approach. I believed that there were other underlying reasons for people not wanting to work with her: that she is a powerful woman who expresses her opinions strongly, and that this felt threatening. I perceived that there was fear of her power and energy. I also felt, after having recently worked on the Class issue, that there was some fear of a class struggle or a class conflict involved. The two women who opposed her working on the Personal Power issue come from upper middle class backgrounds, while she herself is middle class. I felt that the two women were afraid of being criticized about their lives, and that this fear made them feel threatened. I realize that I am seeing this incident through my own subjective filters. Although I make some attempts at objectivity, I know that I can never truly be objective, and that this same situation was looked at in as many different ways as there were women experiencing it.

I felt very conflicted about my position of power in the decision making process of choosing the collective for this issue. As a woman, I have been conditioned to not be powerful and to not "leave people out." As someone with a strong amount of libra in her chart, I have tendencies to avoid conflict at all costs and to try to make things "all right."

I had never before (so clearly) seen the editorial collective as a power structure. Until that point, I had felt that we worked mostly as the over-all business and coordinating collective, that we did the work essential to keeping the magazine functioning, and

that we each had common goals and visions about the magazine. I began to see that our visions weren't so shared. I have always felt that the magazine served a dual function: one was the production of a quality magazine, and the other was a consciousness-raising situation to work with each other in. I feel a sense of commitment to the larger community of women in this area who have at different times and in different ways helped make *Country Women* a reality. This, to me, includes the women who come and proofread, type, do distribution and subscription work, as well as those who have written, illustrated and worked on issues. Their commitment has made me realize the responsibility I feel to include them in the process of the magazine. Other women on the editorial collective feel that the primary function of the collective is to produce a quality magazine, and that, in fact, the quality of the magazine has been deteriorating, in part because of a lack of cohesiveness within the working collectives. (We are also exploring what the word "quality" means, as we seem to have differing views.) There is a feeling that the magazine should not try to be the only place for feminist women in the area to put their energy, that if women want to work with and for women, it would be more beneficial to the community if energy were being put into organizing and maintaining other projects: a women's coffeehouse or rape crisis center perhaps. The magazine did not have to serve the function of a social work organization for women seeking friends. I had never thought about this point before, and it made some sense to me. One woman felt strongly that it would be best for the magazine and for her own needs to work very closely with three or four other women to produce issues. Even though this view could not become a reality, it felt very threatening to my attempts and desires to incorporate new and existing energy. We struggled a lot with these conflicting ideas in the process of making our decisions.

We had two long painful meetings, choosing this collective: trying to look at all the questions, to really look at our process, and begin to more strongly see the differences in our individual approaches. This is a frightening time in a collective. I felt a lack of trust in my two friends on the editorial collective. I feared losing their friendship and respect. A few other women and I disagreed strongly enough to keep expressing our feelings. I was angrier than I usually let myself get. I cried and got paranoid about the schisms. At the same time, I felt pushed by talking to other women not on the editorial collective to keep trying to deal with the issues. Women were asking me when work would start on the issue, and who was going to work on it. I felt pulled to tell them, yet also had been requested by different members on the editorial collective not to talk about it all while it was still in process and while we were still so open to change. I began to realize that the editorial collective has no procedure for making its processes and decisions public, and that we had not really made an effort to do so (partially on the assumption that people were not really interested). I began to understand why some of my friends last year had called the structure of the magazine elitist,

and I felt caught in the trap of being one of the elite.

The issue brought up many questions for me. Did I feel we should be open to working with any and all women? I feel confused about this. Somewhere in me there is an idealistic, utopian voice saying: Yes. But looking realistically at my own needs and at what I feel is best for the magazine, I realize that only a limited number of women can do each given issue effectively. Working with one committed group of people over a long period of time does make the flow of work smoother, as we become conscious of all the many details that go into making the magazine a reality. In some ways, I can see that this would be an easier choice than to explain each step of the process, issue after issue, to new women. But I do not feel comfortable with the idea of closing our circle and not sharing our skills with other women. I am aware that the only reason that I am now an "experienced" person is that I have been doing it for four years, not that I am innately more attuned to doing magazine work. I feel that it is important that more women learn these skills in supportive environments and I feel that the magazine has the potential for being such an environment. What do I feel are the criteria to use in making the decisions on who to work with? Personality (who we get along well with)? Politics? Who we work well with? What processes felt clearest for me coming from this position of power? I still don't have definite answers (or any answers for that matter) to these questions. I am just realizing that the power is there, and that I need to learn to use it in a way that feels right to me.

It is now one and a half months later. We are working on the personal power issue and the woman who was in question is not working on the issue and feels very alienated from the magazine. Although she has written articles for the magazine in the past, at this point she feels that she doesn't want to put any energy into the magazine unless and until some of these questions are looked at and dealt with in an open way. Although it was not their intention that she should never put energy into the magazine again (one of the women said: "I just didn't want to want to work with her on this issue, I would be open to working with her in other situations."), I feel that the process was so unclear that she may never again be willing to share her energy with the magazine. Of the two women who opposed her, one has talked with her about her feelings. This woman felt good and clear about the interaction, but though the woman who was not chosen left the talk feeling o.k., she later felt that many feelings hadn't been expressed or worked out. The other woman who did not want to work with her did not feel it was necessary to talk to her about the incident. In both situations, I felt the woman was dealt with unfairly and unequally. I felt we were not being righteous in how we dealt with this powerful position. It is not so much the power itself that I am questioning, but how we use it. What do we do with it in relation to others? What is our accountability to other women?

I am also realizing the power that the magazine itself has. The fact is that what we decide

to print is reaching and influencing 40,000 people. We have a responsibility to really conscious in our use of this power. We recently received a letter of criticism from a woman. She said, "Being involved with any kind of media is a position of power, because you get to choose whose voices get heard. I hope you recognize your power and privilege and learn how to share it." This perspective is making me increasingly aware of the power of our position in putting out a magazine, since what we write and print does have a strong effect on people's minds. I want the magazine collective to become increasingly aware that with power comes responsibility, not only to ourselves, but to other people. I believe that we are accountable for our actions.

commentary

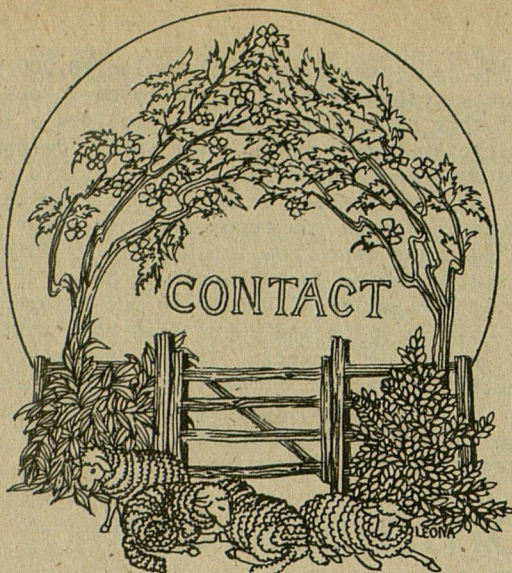
Carmen:

When Helen read the above article to the editorial collective and asked if it could be printed in this issue, there were seven different responses, as there usually are to controversial material. The range of response was from enthusiasm to severe disagreement. My response lay somewhere in the middle. While I valued her grappling with the questions of power within the editorial collective, I also felt upset that a diverse group of eight was being misrepresented as a homogeneous voice; the "we" of her article does not, in fact, exist. So my condition to the printing of Helen's article was that at least one other voice be included. As so often happens, whoever feels most strongly that something needs to be done, does it.

I feel that the very fact that we print this kind of article is proof of our continuing openness to criticism and self-examination. During the years that I have been on the editorial collective, I have always felt that we sought out criticism, were particularly sensitive to the words "elitism" and "closed circle". Many times we seemed to bend over backward to be sensitive to and meet the needs of women in the community, sometimes at the expense of process and tighter content. Every major letter of criticism is read by all of us and the particular problems are examined carefully.

All of this is to say that I feel we are very sensitive to our power and have for the most part used it responsibly. The longevity of the editorial collective, and hence the magazine, is surely due to our regular acceptance of new people. The knowledge that what we print goes out into the world and affects others has guided our work and pushed us towards grappling with such issues as censorship, effective communication, being relevant to many women's lives rather than being an in-house journal of the women's movement, class and city/country divisions.

I feel that personal relationships have influenced Helen's view of the events described in the article. The need to deal with the conflicts immediately has made us publish our viewpoints, perhaps prematurely. I look forward to our sharing with our readers the results of this work in a later issue. Hopefully, in time we will come to an integration of political and personal awareness in relation to power and group process. ♀



Two years ago I inherited this farm in Tn. just out of Memphis. Two acre organic garden, farm animals, much open space. The farm is set up and I need help from people who know about hard work and the rewards. Can offer home in exchange, no rent, share animal feed costs. Contact: Judy Stewart, 10561 Hwy. 64, Arlington, Tn. 38002.

Forty acres in Ak. full of rocks, trees, and open to women. Large garden, 3 houses and room for more, rent-free. In the process of joining a land trust to become part of a larger women's community. Contact: Mary Mars, Rt. 1, Box 10, Jasper, Ak. 72641.

Another Demention: a fast growing feminist community of craftswomen on 68 acres of Ok wilderness. Space available for camping and residential purposes as well as common market for barter of wares. A total survival experience, so come prepared for self-sufficiency. Contact: Sisters of Diana, Rt. 1, Box 42A, Tishimingo, Ok. 73460.

I am looking for one to three women to share a year of caretaking responsibilities with me on a remote 130 acre farm in northern Ak. Anyone interested in hiking, swimming, gardening, cutting wood, feeding chickens, and sharing household expenses and work? I am a 26 yr. old teacher interested in the outdoors, animals, natural food and healing. Contact: Andrea Charles, Gen. Del., Tannersville, Pa. 18372.

We have 80 acres of land in the Ozarks, about 30 miles from Fayetteville, Ak. It is the beginning of a women's land trust and we are open to sisters who want to live/work collectively to create women's spaces in the country and grow women's food. Contact: Women on Land, Box 521, Fayetteville, Ak. 72701.

Two men, one woman, and a child want people to join them on Leavitt Hill farm, 70 acres of beautiful land. 20 acres cultivatable southern exposure. Planting 300 apple trees, 100 blueberry plants, 1 1/2 acre garden. Land trust, building cooperative, equality of people, child rearing, growing food, accepting our differences, we all

agree upon. Contact: Eric Skalwold, Leavitt Hill Farm, New Vineyard, Me. 04956.

Feminist in northern Ontario seeks contacts with other women in rural areas of Ontario. Want to share ideas, discuss problems and give and receive support. We are looking for other landed immigrants or Canadians to share our 160 acres. Contact: Kathy Martin, RR 2, Englehart, Ont.

Older women are in the process of developing a rural community and wish to be in contact with other women seeking a change in lifestyle. We now have a newsletter for the purpose of sharing ideas with women who aspire to live in the country or who are already doing so. Our next Older Women's Retreat will be held in Wolf Creek, Ore. on May 27-30th with an extended, structureless week for those who wish to stay longer. For information and costs write: Elana and Elizabeth, 3502 Coyote Creek Rd., Wolf Creek, Ore. 97407.

The Midwest Wimmen's Festival will be held the end of May 1977 at Quivir River State Park, Troy, Mo. For registration write: M.W.F., c/o Women's Self Help Center, 8129 Delmar, Rm. 204, University City, Mo. 63130.

Dyke Magazine is collecting material for an issue on Animals - lesbians relationships with animals, observations on animal behavior and personality, etc. Deadline June 30. Tomato Publications, 70 Barrow St., NYC 10014.

Redbird is a feminist collective, living and working together to build new feminist ways of being. Our dream: a country women's community. Stage one is gathering this summer to build a school and collective center. A summer of sisters sharing and working together. Stay a day or the summer. Contact: Redbird, 280 Manhattan Dr., Burlington, Vt. 05401.

Two lesbian women and a 5 yr. old girl with some money and many survival resources want to contact other women to create or join a living collective. We want to be part of a separatist, survival-oriented group. If you have ideas, money, or land please contact us: Silver & Sundance, OWL Farm, Rt. 2, Box 5B, Days Creek, Ore. 97429.

In February 1976, a group of women in California organized a statewide tour of women's music. In conjunction with the concerts and workshops, a campaign was conducted to collect donated instruments, records, songbooks and money to start a music project with women imprisoned in the California Institution for Women. "Inside/Outside", a pamphlet describing and analyzing the process and outcome of these events, is now available. Copies can be ordered (donation \$1.50 each) from: Karlene Faith, P.O. Box 26059, Los Angeles, CA 90026. FREE TO PRISONERS.

future issues:

FICTION: Short Stories (Deadline: May 30)

ANGER AND VIOLENCE: Women's relationship to anger. How and where are we angry? What are our special blocks or accesses to our anger? What do we do with our anger? Do we feel safe being angry? How do we respond to societal and cultural hostility directed toward women (rape, battered wives, pornography, in medical practice)? How have we internalized this hostility? What is the power of anger? How do we use it? Personally? Socially? Constructive uses of anger. Self destructive uses. How do we focus our anger to take action? The role of anger and violence in the Feminist movement and other movements for social change. Role of anger and violence in our relationship to the planet (land use, resource management, etc.) How are anger and violence connected? Women's relationship to violence? Culturally? Is violence the active form of anger? Sources of violence. Fears of violence. Participation in violent acts? What do we do with violent feelings? Between men and women? Women and women? Children and parents? (Deadline: August 1)

Whenever possible, manuscripts should be xerox copies. Please type, double spaced, if you can; and if not, write on one side of the page with good sized margins. Please put your name and address on the article itself. And send a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Thank you!

past issues:

Back issues available from Country Women, Box 51, Albion, Ca. 95410. All back issues are \$1.00.

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- #12 Children's Liberation
- #13 Cycles
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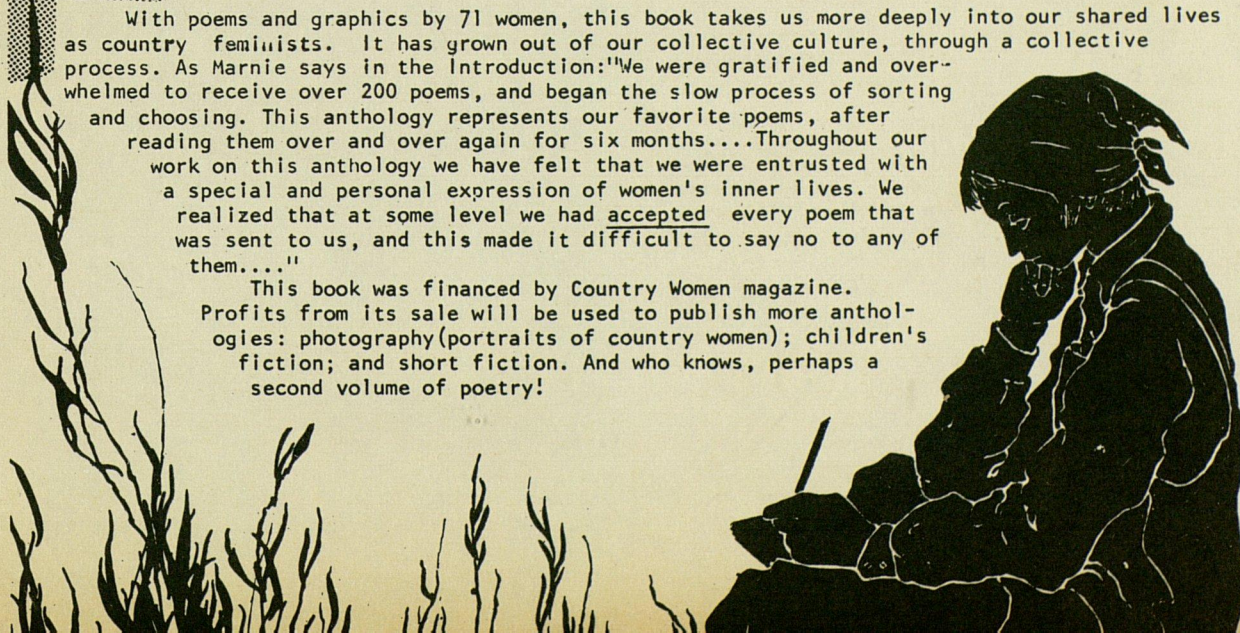
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The first Country Women anthology is now available. Edited by Christina, Marnie, and Jennifer from Harris, it marks a breakthrough in many ways: our first book, our first close working relationship with women from outside our community. We came to 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!



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