

# Country Women



Women As Mothers/Women as Daughters

Second Generation Single Parent

The Glass House of the Mother/Daughter/Self

Non-Violent Mothering

PRACTICAL: Natural Insect Control

Country Jobs

Horse Training



*Hazeltine's  
Studio*

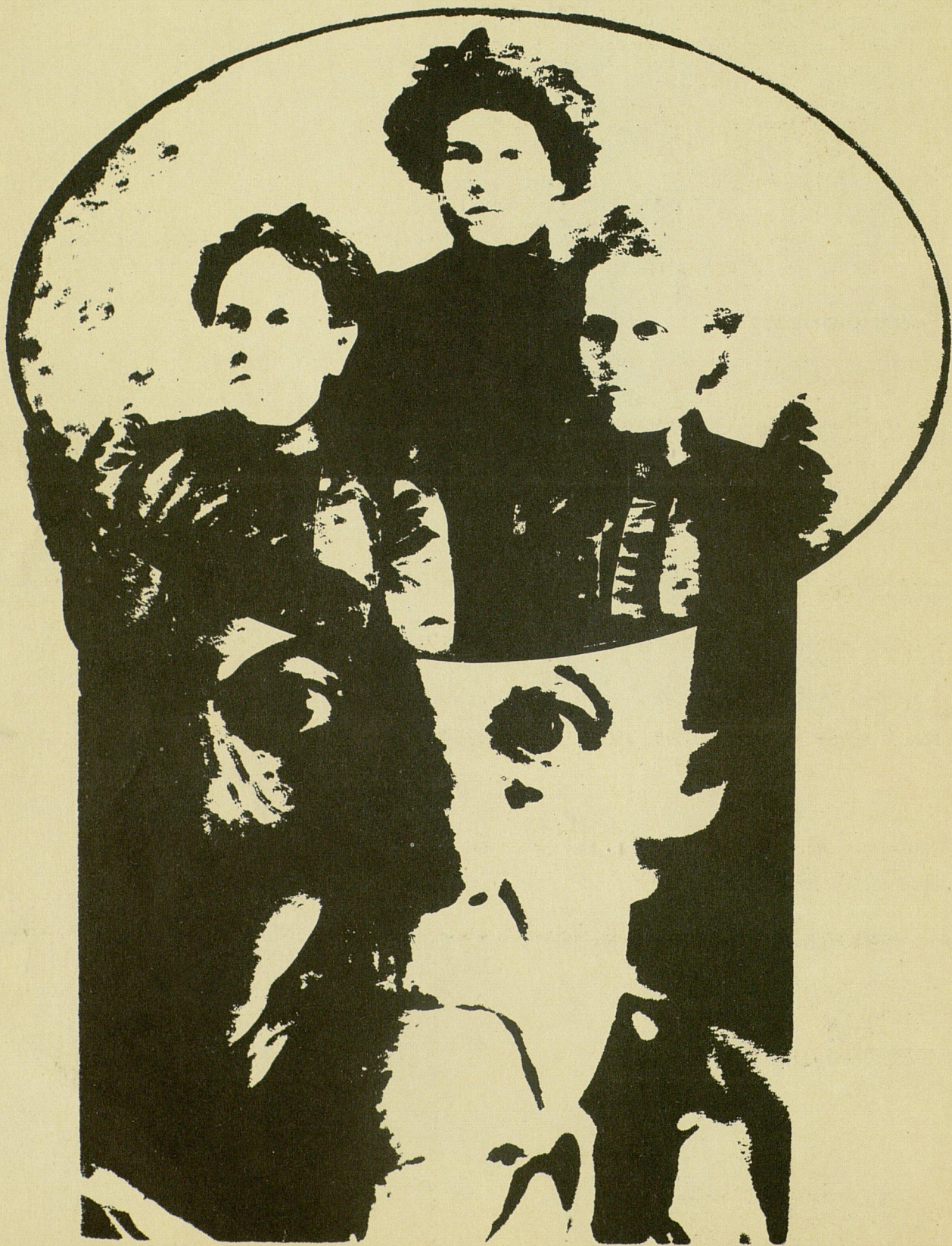
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THEME: WOMEN AS MOTHERS, WOMEN AS DAUGHTERS

- 2 Leka's Birth.....Luna
- 6 Letter to Sharia.....Judy Pierce
- 8 Let the Choice be Ours.....Scarlet Runner
- 11 Notes on the Ties that Bind.....Nancy Litho
- 14 To My Oldest Daughter On Not Coming To Her Wedding.....Baba
- 15 Second Generation Single Parent.....Mischa
- 16 The Glass House of the Mother/Daughter/Self.....Baba
- 21 Leaving.....Marcy Shelner
- 22 Preface.....Loretta Manill
- 24 Street, Mothers and Death.....Loretta Manill
- 25 Moment of Truth.....Barbara Latham and Baba
- 26 Son.....Sharon Doubiago
- 28 Non-Violent Mothering.....Anne H. Martin
- 30 The Myth Turned Inside Out.....Joan Winter
- 32 A Day In The Life.....Angelika d'chaparrel
- 35 A Thin Lady.....Judy Askew; Mothers.....Janice Zerfa; Rendezvous.....Patricia Marrone
- 36 My Mother, My Daughters, Me.....Virginia Butler
- 38 The Wind, The Red Jacket.....Doreen Stock

PRACTICAL ARTICLES

- 40 Natural Insect Control.....Rae Farell
- 43 On the Right Track.....Judy Herman
- 46 Horse Training.....Fran Ransley
- 51 *Beginning with O.*, by Olga Broumas: Reviewed by Marnie Purple
- 54 Model Farmers' Market.....Lucille Sadwith
- 56 Country Jobs.....Penny Hubbard
- 58 *Hygieia: A Women's Herbal*, by Jeannine Parvati: Reviewed by Sunlight
- 60 Fan Belts.....Julianne Kuhl
- 64 Contact & Farm Notes

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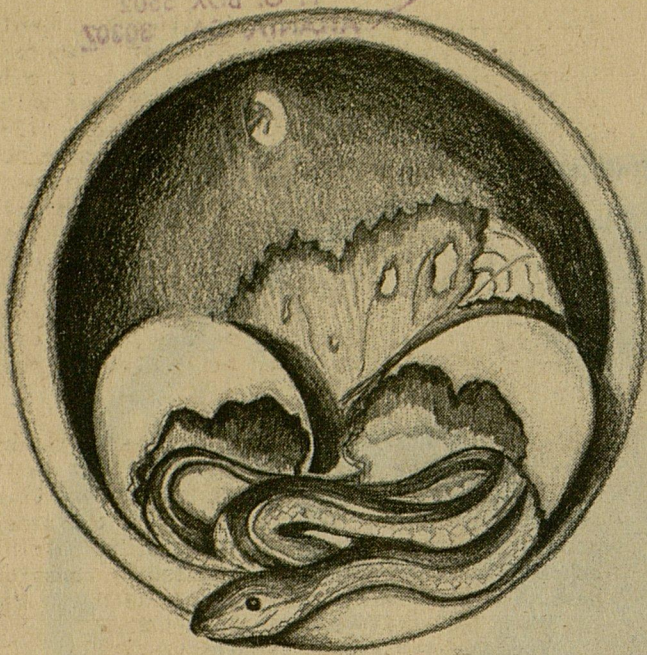
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# LEKA'S BIRTH

LUNA

I awoke early one morning a few days before Halloween with an ache in my back and mild menstrual-like cramps. When I wiped myself after peeing there was a mucousy bloody smear on the toilet paper. I went into Jo's bedroom. "It's time," I said. She looked at me blankly then said, "OH, IT'S TIME!" The contractions were sporadic so I ended up going to my doctor's office for my appointment later that morning. He confirmed the fact that I was in labor and told me to go on to the hospital, where I had reserved a room earlier in the month. I had never returned the letter asking for pre-payment of the hospital because I didn't have the money.

By mid-afternoon I found myself standing outside of the admissions desk to the lying-in hospital, having stronger contractions every ten or fifteen minutes, and the woman behind the desk refused to let me in. "But she's in labor," Jo said, her voice escalating. I leaned against the desk as another tightening of my uterus began to overwhelm me. When it had passed and I was able to speak I told the clerk to call my doctor, hoping he would vouch for me. Luckily she got him on the phone and he assured her that I would eventually pay the bill. I don't know what would have happened if that man hadn't covered me with his privilege. I was standing there having horrible thoughts of having the baby right there on the formica floor. Finally she said, "Sign here, and here and here and get in that wheel chair and someone will come to take you upstairs." Jo picked up my suitcase and rode up in the elevator with me and the nurse. I changed into a hospital gown and crawled into bed. The contractions were still bearable, like severe menstrual cramps, and I was feeling that maybe "labor" wasn't so bad after all. Little did I know what was ahead! Around four o'clock a nurse came in and shaved me unceremoniously with cold soapy water. By this time Jo had left because her kids were coming home from school and I was alone in the hospital

room when a strange man dressed in green opened my legs and he thrust his cold greased and gloved fingers into my vagina. He scribbled something on a chart and started to walk away. "How am I? Where is my doctor?" I pleaded, (oh, just a kind word, a reassuring glance). He muttered something about my doctor coming in later and walked out without looking me in the eyes.

(As I write this I have to stop now and then and take some deep breaths, as I allow that experience to surface again, the fear, the sense of abandonment starts to drown me and I choke on the tears still unshed.)

Instead of supper a nurse brought me some pills, "to help me along." "I don't want to be knocked out," I protested. She assured me that the medication would only "speed things up." I dozed between contractions, awaking as my body began to tighten, starting deep inside me, the huge mound of my belly getting hard. Until now I was able to maintain my sense of being "in control," of coping, but I was getting tired and no one would tell me what was happening. Was I having a "normal" labor? Was it too slow? How about the baby? And *where* was my doctor? I began to doze off, feeling fatigued and disoriented, alone in that green room.

The tightenings that started in my abdomen didn't pass so quickly any more, as my whole body tightened, I struggled to breathe. I had absolutely no preparation for this experience, for the incredible force that had taken over my body and consciousness. No one had offered me the revelatory information that I could control my breathing, ride the contractions and conserve my strength. This was to come a few years later, along with other information that was to shatter traditional bondages that had entrapped women's experience for centuries. Sixteen years of schooling, and twenty-two years of being formed,



Around ten o'clock a nurse came in and told me they were going to take me up to the labor room. (LABOR room, you mean there's MORE to come?) I rolled over to a narrow bed and was wheeled out to the corridor. As that powerful FORCE took hold of me I began to whimper, feeling embarrassed as complete strangers peered at me as I was wheeled by in the green gown, lying on the stretcher. The texture of my experience was that of a dream, but in my dreams I knew I could wake up and as my belly began to contort (I thought it surely was squeezing the baby to death). I knew I wouldn't wake up from this one. There was no escape and not one familiar face to look into to reassure me that I wouldn't be squeezed to death too.

When I could get my breath, I called out feebly, "Nurse, nurse." "What is it, Andrea?" "Where is Doctor Feldman? Is he coming?" "He just called. We're going to give you something in your veins to try to speed things up." She had some difficulty finding my vein, but finally had me hooked up to an intravenous tube. I had been lying on my back for about ten hours, and was feeling sore and aching all over. I tried to roll over onto my side, but could find no way to get comfortable. When I think now what a back rub or massaging of my neck or shoulders or any part of my body would have meant to me then, all I can do is weep for all those women still giving birth in ignorance and suffering.

A woman in agony for hours chanted her mantra, in the throes of birthing she imprinted upon her child all the infamy of curses that in themselves are our culture's denigration of her very experience and her being.

Screams, curses, shouts, moans, begging for help, for love, for ANYTHING but what was happening, begging for someone to take away the pain, to deliver them from the betrayal of their lovers, their husbands, their doctors, their gods, and ultimately the betrayal of their mothers, who knew all along what your lot was to bear.

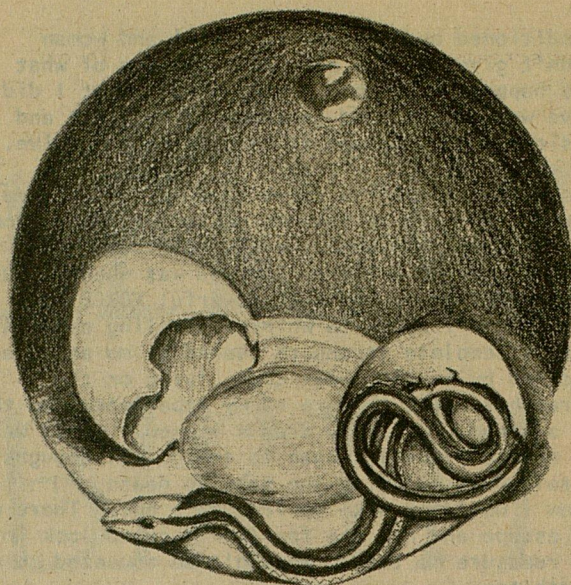
By this time my strength to call out to the nurse was frozen by my horror at what I was hearing



from those unseen women in other rooms. I was helplessly and hopelessly white and middle class, and stubbornly determined to be strong even if I was alone. So I didn't scream. Not outside of my mouth that is. And I didn't call out for help to God, because I had stopped doing that long ago. But I did helplessly and hopelessly wonder at the betrayal of my lover, and my father and my mother, but it was only wonder, because I knew that all the screaming in the world wasn't going to get them here now. So I clamped my lips together and tossed and turned, sometimes trying to lift myself off the bed, to relieve the incredible pressure on my lower back, but the nurses came in and reprimanded me for moving the I.V. ("Now, now Andrea, be a good girl and be still"). By this time it was around one o'clock in the morning and I had been in labor since seven the previous morning, the last ten hours alone in the hospital.

I was adrift in that place that can only be called "the space between contractions", conscious only of the tremendous pressure against my lower back, from the inside and against my cervix. I was tight and taut and the massive baby inside was pressing to get out, pushing against gravity, my body fighting my body, and it was a losing battle.

"Hi, Andrea!" Suddenly, there he was, Dr. Feldman, handsome, suave, assured, in control. "Hi," I weakly responded. "How am I doing?" "I'm going to try to break your waters, you're not progressing as fast as we'd like. Please put your feet up in these stirrups and take a deep breath." I felt a jab and a jab and a prick but no waters, the nurse peering over his shoulder, him muttering, more jabs, and a contraction coming on. (Oh would this all never end, my body being tortured, from within and without, and still no baby, was it dead?) "Doctor is my baby still alive?" Finally a rush of water from between my legs, warm wet. "Yes, but your baby is in a posterior position, head down, not normal. Its heartbeat is strong, but if it doesn't start moving, we may have to put you asleep and take it out." "But I want to be awake when it comes out. You promised me I could be." From the beginning of my pregnancy, even when I thought I was going to give my baby away, despite no one supporting me in such a strange desire, I wanted very desperately to be awake and conscious as my child left me and entered the world. I had some primal knowing of the importance of that moment of bonding, and I wanted to participate in it, as I had participated in that moment of bonding into flesh at the moment of conception. I had talked it over with my doctor, who reluctantly agreed to agree, but only if I would leave the "final decision" up to him. So we perpetuated the illusion that I had a choice. He also reluctantly agreed not to strap my hands down beside me even though it was standard procedure. I assured him that I would be docile and quiet and well behaved, if he would please, oh please, not tie down my hands during the birth.



YVONNE PEPIN

So my *relief* at my DOCTOR (my GOD) finally appearing, changed in a moment to cold fear. "Et, tu, brute!" The final betrayal was happening. Gone was my last illusion of being in control. If "IT" didn't speed up he was going to knock me out and take the baby out, because I wasn't making "IT" happen fast enough, strong enough. WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO? I screamed inside, lips tightly held, flat on my back, my knees raised in stirrups, my baby trying to push out up hill.

Then from the deepest most inner space of my body my being started that wave, that total body movement, from inside out and outside in and I lost sense of ME being able to stop the movement of my body, for The Movement and Me were one, PUSHING, PUSHING, long shuddering pushes against the rigid bone of my pelvis, primal, deep pushes against the tightly held screams in my throat, and the deep loud moans started again, there was no possibility of controlling them either. OOOOOHHHHHHHH OOOOOHHH deep deep sounds that emanated from the same place that the pushing came from. The nurse said, "push like you're having a bowel movement," which totally confused me, even in my blurred space. I thought, "I'm not shitting, it's not happening there," but I started to push too, trying to raise my body up with my hands. I was terribly weak by this time and trembling and had no focus or control on the rest of my muscles.

This is one of those points in time past and time present where I have to stop and breathe and let my self feel what is going on inside me. One voice I hear is me screaming back into time into that dismal green labor room, through twelve years, screaming into the ears of that nurse and doctor standing there outside the metal bars on the side of my bed, screaming, "Hold her, lift her up, give her some help, you fools, you experts, support her back, stop looking at her like some defective machine that can't perform the job it is supposed to do." It's like screaming into the wind, but in retracing the steps of my jour-



ney into motherhood, I realize that there are many screams still held, deep inside, in our hearts, and cervixes and uteruses and bones and psyches, the screams that we must allow to surface, finally, in the search for self as women free of the fear and madness that haunts our past. I know now there are other ways of birthing, of doctoring and caring for the needs of women in labor, but my knowing didn't come until much later. Before the knowing came the pain and the rage.

Well, back there in Philadelphia Hospital, Andrea Dippolito lay at the end of her rope, or rather all the rope she was allowed to have (even that was charity, for goodness sake, she should be thankful for that, give them an inch and they want a mile) and she gave up, she stopped fighting. In exhaustion, in despair, feeling like she had failed to do what she had tried so desperately to do, against insurmountable odds, to birth her baby awake and conscious, to have some (ANY!) control over her own birthing. Three cheers for another valiant effort squelched by the "WAY THINGS ARE." So when they came in to wheel me into the delivery room I was already starting to fuzz out; Doctor Feldman had shot me up in the labor room. I was awake enough to protest as someone started to strap my hands down, and my doctor agreed. Privilege will concede readily on token issues. The last thing I remember was starting to struggle when the ether mask was lowered, a claustrophobic reaction, but listened to the voice that told me to relax and breathe deeply, because I knew there was no point in struggling.

What happened while I was under ether was pretty routine hospital procedure, made a bit more difficult by the posterior position of the baby's head and the body that contained it, that of a very tense woman who had never given birth before. Someone, probably my doctor, performed an episiotomy which is the cutting of the perineum, the skin that starts at the back of the vagina and ends at the anus. I was cut almost to my anus. Then forceps are inserted in the vagina and up into the birth canal, around the baby's head which is turned, and pulled out. The babies of anesthetized mothers are also anesthetized, of course, and come into this world in a drugged stupor.

I'll never know how my daughter looked when she came out of me, or if any of the busy and overworked (there were at least three other women about to give birth that night) men and women who pulled her out of me, and brought her to consciousness and put silver nitrate into her eyes and finger and foot printed her, if any of them held her for a moment and loved her, or looked into her eyes (if they ever had a chance to open) and acknowledged her presence and the journey she had just finished...or begun. When I finally woke up in the recovery room I was too weak to feel my belly, to know if the baby was finally born. A nurse came in and I asked, "Has my baby been born?" "Yes," she said. "Is it all right?" "Yes." "What is it?" "A girl." With a sigh of relief I turned my head, vomited and passed out again. When I awoke next I was in my room again

with a raging fever, weak and very sick. Puerperal fever has caused the death of many women, but I was treated with sulfa, and antibiotics and lived. I was not allowed to see my baby. I pleaded, I cried, but I knew better than to threaten. Finally a sympathetic nurse carried her to the doorway of my room for five minutes on the second day. Her eyes were red and swollen and she had a huge swelling bump on her head. The nurse brushed off my concern. "Just a hematoma; forcep babies often have them." Something inside kept on screaming, "NO, IT'S NOT NATURAL, there must be another way, I'm not crazy." Finally, on the third day I was able to drag my body out of bed and into a shower, and finally down the hall. I went up to the glass window that separated the babies from their mothers and other possible sources of contamination. One of the nurses reached into the plastic baskets and held up my daughter for me to see. An emotion surged up in me that brought tears to my eyes, and as I turned away, I vowed that I would hold my child in my arms that day. When the nurse left me alone with a thermometer in my mouth, (my temperature was still over 100 degrees), I took it out and plunged it into the glass of ice water by my bed until it lowered to a more acceptable 99. That afternoon, a nurse's aide who was a bright light in everyone's day on the Maternity Ward, came down the hall singing "THE BABIES ARE COMING, DA DUM DA DUM" and in walked a nurse with a tiny baby wrapped in a pink blanket and put her into my arms. She looked like a mummy, swaddled and still. I carefully unwrapped her and did the traditional check out, her fingers and toes were all there and intact. Then I carefully wrapped her up, so as not to disturb her. As if I could. I didn't realize until years later that what I held in my arms was not a "peaceful baby" but a severely traumatized baby, considered normal because that's how most babies of anesthetized mothers were born. She wasn't sleepy, she was still in shock! I put the bottle's nipple up to her lips but they remained tightly closed. My breasts were huge and full. I had had some desire to nurse during my pregnancy despite the fact that I didn't know anyone who had and got no encouragement to do so. I also knew I was going to have to get back to work as soon as I could, so I gave up the thought and took the "dry-up pills" the nurses gave me. I didn't connect the ache in my full dripping breasts to the baby held in my arms. What stood between that small mouth and my dripping nipples is too huge to delineate in detail here. So I held her and tears welled up again and I felt triumphant and helpless at the same time. It was an endless moment, the future was a gaping dark unknown. She and I were bonded together for as long as we lived in that moment and I've never regretted it. The nurse finally came in and asked me how come she wasn't sucking. I said she didn't want it. "Here, give her to me." She picked up the baby and rubbed the nipple back and forth from one side of her mouth to the other. To my amazement, she opened her mouth hungrily and started sucking. "Here, you try it." To my amazement, it worked for me too. AH! My first initiation into the endless mysteries of child nurturing. After the nurse took her away, I fell into the first peaceful sleep I had had for a long time. ♀



# dear Sharia,

By Judy Pierce

Today you are six days old. I want to tell you about your birth so that when you are older you can read this letter and know how I felt about your arrival and how happy I am that you are with us.

The day before you were born, your father and I drove to the ocean because it was so hot. I often believe that the ocean's strong force started our labor early. We came home late and I slept alone downstairs because it was cooler. At 12:45 A.M. I awoke to a trickle of water dripping down between my legs. I was half asleep and can remember thinking, "Oh no, not tonight." As I became more conscious, my reaction gradually changed to "August 1, what a wonderful day for a birthday!" I stayed in bed for an hour or so, experiencing the mild, early labor contractions, and then went upstairs to wake Don. We lay in bed together, excited and sleepy, wondering if this was the beginning. Who were you? Would we meet soon?

At dawn we decided it was real labor; all the symptoms were there: leaking water, bloody show, regular, although mild contractions, diarrhea. We came downstairs and began the preparations for your birth. We had cleaned the birth room the previous morning. Don sterilized the towels, made up the bed and arranged flowers while I took a long, hot bath.

Sharia, I firmly believe there is no "luck" or "chance" surrounding a birth. Our spring had run dry in May, but just that week we had hauled three loads of water. None of the people I invited to help at your birth could be reached. We had made elaborate arrangements to notify everyone because it was so important to me to have good and experienced friends there. Except for our midwife, Diane, whom we got through a friend's CB radio, none of our preparations worked. However, Ella was down in the valley doing errands and came by just to visit, not expecting me to be in labor. Diney was on her way to the coast with a friend and called to check on us. She turned around to come to us and her friend drove back up the mountain to get George. Before they all arrived, I can remember Diane asking me if she should continue trying to contact everyone, but by that time I was focusing entirely on the contractions and couldn't make any other decisions. And then they were all there, and I was so glad.

Before going into labor, I had been worried about the weather. We were in the midst of a long heat wave and I had been very uncomfortable. But, on the morning of your birthday, the sky was cloudy and grey. When I looked out the window, it seemed cooler. Everyone was bathing me with iced cloths, and a local merchant had opened his

closed store so that Don could buy a fan. I kept thanking God for the gift of a cool day, but later I learned it had been 113 degrees!

When our midwife arrived in the morning, I was still in early labor. A few hours later the contractions began in earnest. I used slow, deep breathing, and although the rests between contractions were long, I could no longer chat during them. When I felt the urge to pee, I squatted over a pot by the bed, but nothing happened. I laughed through tears while Don splashed his hand in water and people "sssss'd" with encouragement. I walked around a bit and did some contractions on my hands and knees. Most of the time I was lying on my side because I had back labor and this position felt best. It relieved the pressure and people could massage my back. It felt good to change positions, but I couldn't rest comfortably.

A little after noon Diane examined me; only three centimeters dilated. I began to get discouraged. I was tired. The contractions were fairly intense, the rests shorter. I felt tense and bottled up with emotional energy. I wanted to scream, yell, howl, but was afraid I would lose control. Diane encouraged me to allow myself those feelings. After that I was able to doze during the rests. Diane kept her hand on my belly to tell me when the contraction was beginning so that I wouldn't wake up in the middle and lose control. I was in my own world. During a contraction my entire focus was on my body. Then, as the contraction ebbed, I drifted away to a peaceful, almost lazy space. Our labor took on a rhythm of its own.

Each person at your birth offered a special gift. Don gave incredible emotional support. I remember pulling his hair and pounding his arm, looking hard into his eyes, seeing the immense love and concern reflected there. Ella had the gift of touch. I always knew where her hands were even though I couldn't see her. Diney was clear and centered, soothing me with her message, "Breathe in light, breathe out the pain." Diane was the technical knowledge and reassurance that freed me from worrying about you. And George served us so beautifully. Never in my life did I feel so loved and cared for. Sharia, we have a responsibility to these friends to be strong and true in return for the gift of themselves they gave us.

The next few hours were hard. Everyone was giving me incredible energy, and yet I felt I could swallow it all up and still take more. Everywhere I looked there was a loving, concerned face, whose eyes I could focus on and who would breathe with me. Many images flashed through my mind, the



strongest one: a train, huffing along its journey, over hills, through tunnels, sometimes slowing down, sometimes speeding, but always getting closer and closer to the station, the end of the journey, or rather, the beginning.

I was getting discouraged and feeling some signs of transition. But no one was saying, "Maybe she's in transition," and I was afraid I wouldn't be able to deal with the increasing intensity. I kept holding back on using the highest levels of breathing for fear that I would need them later. I should have known; I was in transition!

At about 5:00 P.M. Diane examined me and I was eight centimeters dilated. I felt a huge surge of new energy and will. The contractions were the most intense yet, but I sailed through each one, breathing controlled, feeling very high and exhilarated. I relaxed completely, vaguely aware that people were chatting during my rests. It was a comforting sound. When a contraction began I raised my arm and we all breathed together, one strong will and force trying to get you born.

An hour later I was fully dilated, ready to push. I was very excited and totally unprepared for the next stage of labor. I thought it would be easy, short, even fun. But pushing you into this world was the hardest work I've ever done, and I thank God for giving you the strength to ride along that powerful journey. I pushed for three hours and your heartbeat never faltered.

First, I tried pushing on my back, propped up against pillows, but it wasn't very efficient. I was so tired that Diane felt I needed all the force of gravity working with me. I tried "dancing" with Don, on my knees at the edge of the bed with my arms around his neck. I did a few contractions on my hands and knees. I squatted, supported by Diane and Ella, but couldn't handle the intensity of my body's power pushing you out. So, with your father as a "birthing chair" on the

edge of the bed, and me in his lap, we pushed you out together. We leaned back against George, who had arrived shortly before that. Dear George, who missed seeing you born because he was supporting all of us, focusing his energy on you. I didn't see you born either. But I felt you so strongly as you came out, that when I close my eyes now I can "see" it. The whole time I was pushing, you felt like a solid two by four trying to burst out. And yet when you were born, your head was so soft it was molded almost to a point. "Egyptian molding," Ella said.

By the time you were crowning, I couldn't wait any longer. Instead of panting, I pushed. To everyone's astonishment, you shot out entirely with that one push. Diane caught you and placed you on my belly. It took a few seconds before you breathed, an eternity to me. But then you did, and there you were: tiny, wet, covered with blood, soft and alive. What a gift! I lay back on the bed and Ella announced you were a girl. Such joy! You lay peacefully on my belly, eyes open, alert. You never even cried. I had always imagined how I would touch you and look at you, but all I could do was lie there, feeling you, tender and warm. Don cut the cord, and you were independent, a separate person.

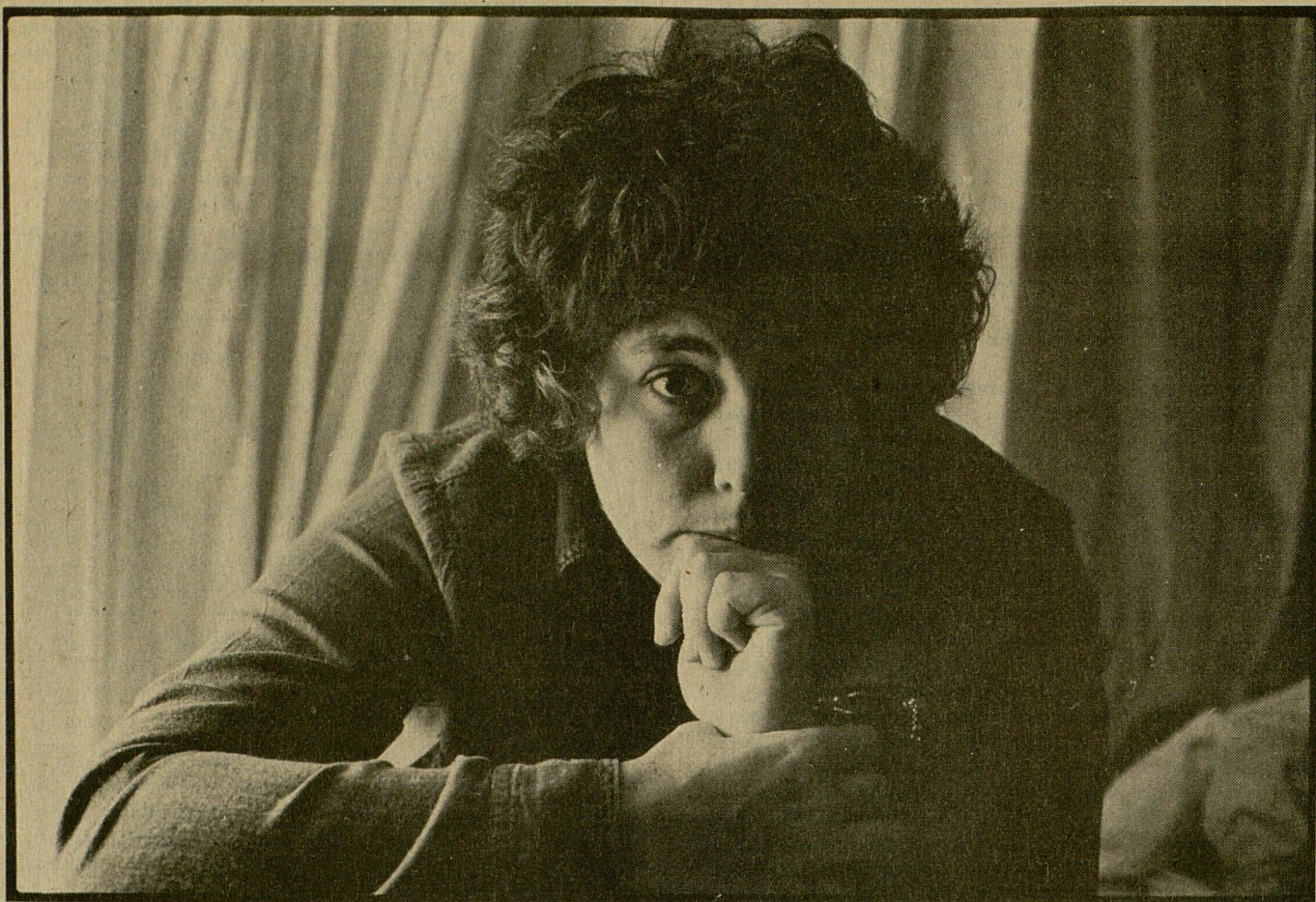
Suddenly, a flash of lightning, the roll of thunder. The sweet smell of rain drifted through the window, blending with the smells of birth. Rain! After all the months of dry weather and no water, we were twice blessed. The heat wave was broken, Sharia Rose was born.

Dearest Sharia, as I lie with you now on our birth bed, I cry with the partial awareness of the total miracle of you. Can we ever realize the marvel of birth? I hope with your help I can absorb some of the wonder. The fierce love I feel for you totally astonishes me. There is no choice about loving you. You are, and I love you. Thank you, Sharia, for entering our lives with power and grace. ♀



JUDY PIERCE





BARBARA KLUTINIS

# Let The Choice Be Ours

By Scarlet Runner.

I listen to Judy's story of Sharia's birth; I am moved. My uterus contracts with memory of my own children's births and my breasts feel swelled with milk and I remember those tiny curled hands of a newborn. I listen; I am moved. I like this picture of love and support. I like the clear image of Don acting as a birthing chair while friends help the miracle that is birth unfold itself again. But I grow uncomfortable; anger and pain move through me too. I want more to be said. I don't want to hear another pretty picture of birth. I want young women, my daughter and the world's daughters, to know more about the realities of motherhood than I did. I want the conspiracy of silence to stop. Birthing is a profound experience, but more important, it is the beginning of a relationship that will direct your life for at least the next twenty years. Romanticized and over emphasized, cameras are on the mother at the moment of birth in much the same fashion as they are on the bride in her glorious white dress. Marriage and raising a

child are the long haul, rarely presented in their true complexity. A sixty year old artist, mother of four, recently told me that she is just beginning to throw off the heavy mantle of what those years have meant.

I feel betrayed. I feel betrayed by a society that gave me no preparation at all for being a mother. I feel betrayed by the very beauty of birth itself, by its intensity, its mystery, its ecstatic connection with what seems to be the essence of life. I feel betrayed by my second child's birth. A good birth, an easy supported loving birth where we sang "You are my sunshine" on the delivery table and wept in what seemed like a graced state. When I awoke some time later there was a poem, part of it read "I am the father of a son. Above is beautiful. I am the keeper of your spirit. Below is Beautiful. I am the provider of flowers and fruit. All around is Beautiful. Above, Below, all around is Beautiful. Most honored treasure."



I feel betrayed by the poem and for years I couldn't read it without laughing or crying - usually both. For underneath that beauty was another truth. A truth I didn't know how to search out at the time. I didn't want that baby although I had tried to get pregnant. I didn't want to mother another child. I didn't have the patience, nor the interest, nor the inclination, nor the aptitude to raise a child. What did I want? I wanted to create a "family" - at least that picture of one. I wanted to bond that man to me. I wanted to be loved; I was afraid of living my own life and even more afraid of the emptiness that the fear produced. All goddamned lousy reasons for having a baby. I was lost in the mythos of motherhood. I believed mothering would be fulfilling or at least satisfying. This myth is so strong that not even the reality of already having a five year old and finding that difficult and draining could shatter it. This time it would be different. I was an intelligent woman, a nonconformist I thought, but I was no match for the force of convention formed by centuries of biology being the determining factor in women's life roles. And yes, it is possible to grow up with your children, but I think it's a lot easier on you and them if you do it first. What I mean is being responsible enough to figure out why you want a child to begin with and if your motivations aren't absolutely clear be brave enough to not have one.

Tremendous pressure is put upon young women to reproduce - the media, the economics of the baby industry, families and friends all contribute to the message that your life will not be meaningful, that as a woman you will not be complete until you are a mother. Barren, sterile, childless, non-mother - even our language does not contain a word to describe the state of a woman who chooses not to have children. We need a label which is not dependent on negating motherhood to affirm a woman who does not reproduce.

The more I read, talk to other women, and look at my own experiences it seems overwhelmingly true that the task of parenting is not well suited to many women's psyches. That their whole sense of self worth, peace of mind, creating and focusing energies get lost in the realities of parenthood. Not that they don't love their children; it is this love that makes it so difficult. "5:30 hysteria" - wanting the best for a child that, in the moment, you are screaming uncontrollably at because she/he won't leave you alone to fix dinner is the soup most families sup upon.

The task of choosing not to be a mother is more difficult than would be believed. For many years birth rates declined, leading sociologists to theorize that fewer women were choosing to have children. The last three years has shown a sharp increase in the birth rate due to the fact that many women in the thirty to thirty-eight year old age bracket are now having the children they postponed. Zero Population Growth proudly points to the fact that 5% of adults are choosing not to be parents. This seems like an absurdly small percent to me, considering the difficulty of the

task, the numbers of children already needing additional adult energy, special temperament required for effective parenting, and the richness possible in a life without children.

I am a single mother. I have been a mother for most of my adult life. For thirteen years I have been the sole emotional support for my daughter. No one ever told me, nor did I ever read, anything about what it would really be like. I feel as if mine and my daughter's lives, our psyches, our emotions are terrifyingly entwined, so bound together, so tied that separation seems impossible. This is very unmodern and unfashionable. Friends, child psychologist, the p.c. (politically correct) line, and 20th century male novelists will shake their heads and wag their fingers saying in unison, "No, it doesn't have to be so." But goddess tell me how? How? How does it not have to be so? I say yes, it *is* so and what makes it so is the *cumulative* effect of being responsible for the food, light, shelter, physical, mental, spiritual and emotional well being of another person.

Much is now written about the struggles of adjusting to a newborn. The exhaustion, the consistent necessity to be tuned in to a small baby's needs. For me this was in many ways an easier time. If you diaper a child wrong you don't have to worry about warping its soul. As a young mother things seemed clearer. I washed, fed and held my child.

I put her on my back and we would go walking - the *two* of us. I felt myself as separate. I had my own history and this small package was a sweet addition. Thirteen years later I feel eaten, consumed, invaded. I am a totally different person than the woman I might have been and my life feels sharply contrasted to those women around me who are not mothers. How is it so different? First, although my daughter is thirteen years old, I still cannot go out without concern over where she will be. True, in the last two years I don't have to find a sitter, or make sure there is money to pay one, or figure out the last time I asked so and so and would she mind again, and how can I ever repay her. But if she has to stay alone there will be a 50% chance of recriminations in the form of anger or tears. Since her infancy I have probably walked out of the house with my daughter crying 500 times. It still isn't easy. And yes, I do tell her she is not being abandoned and she knows I love her. Words are cheap.

Mothering is an incredibly important, difficult, undervalued job. It is repetitious, tension-producing, boring drudgery every mother knows. It can also be exciting, profound and joyful, but mingled with that joy is the constant fear of "Am I doing this wrong?", the guilt that perhaps there is a better way, and the innumerable choices, trivial and important, that must be made daily.

My daughter is wonderful and it is not my love for her that I am questioning. She is bright, emotionally expressive (sometimes to excess), sensitive and responsible. She argues like a cross between a post graduate from The Growth Movement and a hotshot lawyer. This is a poem

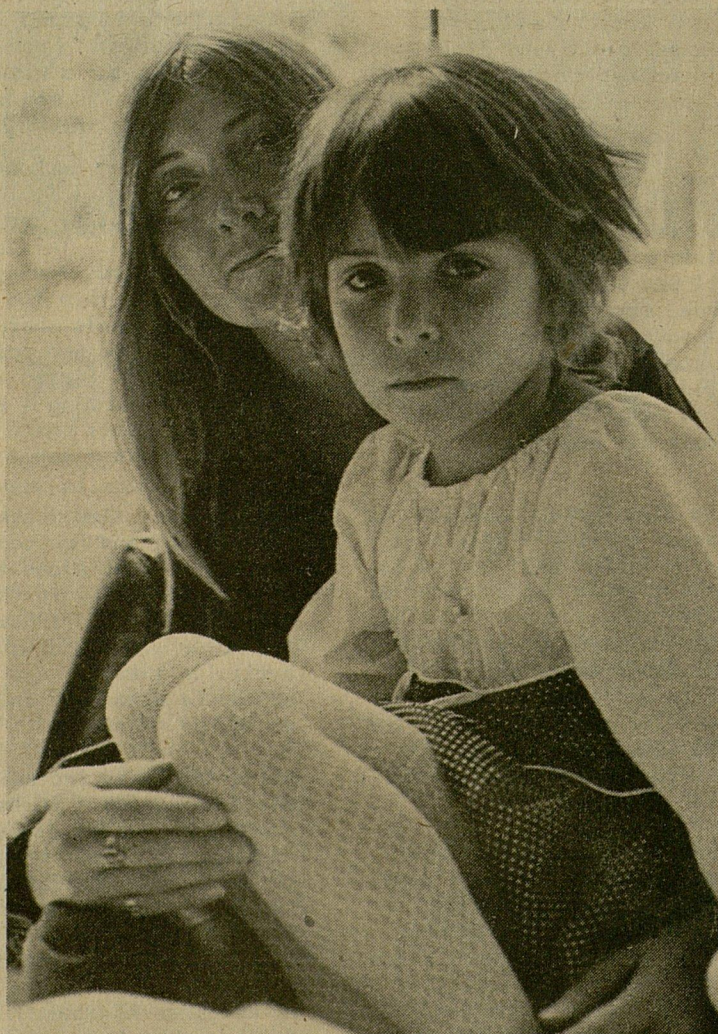


her friend wrote describing my daughter, "a chipmunk, a mouse, raindrop, wool, pinball machines, train, popcorn, a baseball, race car, thunder, hurricane, cricket, t.v. static, an apple, a trumpet and sometimes Elvis Presley." She is in many ways exactly how I would have her be. She is an entertaining companion and I have great respect for what I see as her most essential self. But the price I have paid has been dear. Sacrifice is an old fashioned word. Mothers are not supposed to sacrifice for their children (at least they're not supposed to talk about it). They're supposed to *like* mothering. Compromise is a less emotional word for it. Basically it involves the necessity of constantly tempering your needs for your child's. I do not blame my daughter for this sacrifice although she gets its blast in the form of resentment and anger. I try not to blame myself either. I do blame this culture that lies to, isolates and ultimately blames the mother.

So, my life is different from non-mothers' be-

cause I am hardly ever free from thinking about the welfare of my daughter. Is she learning what she needs to know? Is there food in the ice box? Is she being obnoxious? Is she happy? Will she be angry with me for spending too much time at meetings or with my friends and what is too much and for whom? What if I take a lover? How will she function in this insane world that offers only the most superficial reality to a young teenage girl? How can I combat that superficiality? What books, records, stories can I give her to help her become a strong sane self-identified woman? And how do I take the space I need and know is my right?

I have no desire to deny any woman, any newborn the right to a joyful, humane birth. What I want to stress is that it is in many ways a forever proposition. Any act of creation, whether it be a poem, a garden, a protest, or a vision that will help those children live a better life can be as significant and satisfying as parenting. ♀



LYNDA KOOLISH



# Notes on the tie that binds and chafes and irritates and drives wild...

By Nancy Litho

November 8th, 1978

That's the tie between me and my mother, but to describe it in these words somehow implies that it's a natural phenomenon, this binding and chafing, whereas what I feel most vividly about our relationship is its unnatural distance and coldness. Cold, icy, full of silences and strangled cries, polite conversations, still more polite silences, and occasional, very occasional, furies. We avoid each other eagerly, and I avoid thinking about her chronically until I help suggest the topic Women As Mothers/Women As Daughters for an upcoming issue of Country Women. When it's accepted and the issue collective chosen, I almost refuse to participate in fright, but my urge to explore this blocked and choked relationship sees me through my initial desires to cop out. I end up in a group of seven other women eager and willing to share consciousness raising around the topic which silently tortures my life.

From our first meeting, the quote which sears itself into my memory is the question, "Do you think that if you've been poorly mothered, you can't mother well yourself?" These words trigger an incredible shock of recognition and surprised sorrow in me. I am a woman always trying to forget how poorly mothered she feels; a woman who herself gave up for adoption, some thirteen years ago, her daughter - what used to be called an "illegitimate child," before questions of legitimacy were addressed by the women's movement.

The tie that binds, and chafes and irritates and constricts...leaves me breathless and impotent, raging and numb, until I must shut out this fury of feeling. Today I go back and reread the Country Women issue on Women As Artists, because I've been singing snatches of Trish's song, "Angry Woman" to myself for several days now:

*"I am the daughter of an angry woman,  
I am the sister of an angry child,  
I am kinswoman of an angry housewife,  
And I write on a day that's wild.*

*My anger's hidden far too often,  
I turn my head, try not to see,  
But now your looks my voice won't soften,  
At least in song, it's really me."*

I figure there must be a relationship between her words and my feelings. Last Thanksgiving, when we played her new album at our dinner party, it moved me to tears. But what causes these tears? What caused them then, and what causes them now, writing the lyrics out in my journal, hoping for an article to be born from these scribbled notes?

I think my tears are my response to my mother's anger. Trapped alone at home with three very young children after only four years of marriage, she who wasn't certain she wanted any children... Finally, after the third method of birth control she tried ended in her third pregnancy and the birth of my younger sister, she had a hysterectomy in despair at her own fertility. My response to her anger, often acted out on us children, was to vow that I would remain independent, single and childless, in order to keep from repeating and reliving her mistakes. But such decisions, such intellectual constructs, hardly ever hold much water unless backed by emotions of strong force.

It was experiencing her coldness towards me, my brother and sister, and living daily with her severe sense of distance and strictness towards us that seems to have made me extrapolate a feeling that no one but me can meet my needs for nurturing. And so I strive to become more completely independent of others all the time, eschewing closeness to other men and women with fearful regularity; afraid to even call on my friends for the kinds of help and comfort they could give me if only I had it together enough to ask.

It is the night of our first issue collective meeting. Afterwards, drinking Brandy Alexanders at the Sea Gull and talking with Barbara and Harriet, Harriet tells me point blank that the pattern she sees me living out is one of fleeing closeness with others because of my estrangement from a mother unable to meet my needs. Again, that cold shock of recognition! How unpleasantly, how disconcertingly accurate she is, looking at me and naming what she sees! And how to break out of this bloody hermit/recluse syndrome which characterizes my life?

November 25th, 1978

My friend Camille asked, at our last meeting, "Where is the area of greatest damage in your relationship with your mother?" I think hers is the question which guides all my efforts towards thinking and writing about this topic of mothers and daughters. I want to name that area, and repeat its name, and undo its power over my life. Towards that end, I have been doing, what used to be called in grad school, some "reading in the field." Halfway through Nancy Friday's book, *My Mother, My Self*, I stumbled visually and mentally through this passage:

*"There is a great deal of evidence to suggest that an unresolved relationship with her mother sets a woman's mind in certain non-*





LYNN WEINERMAN

*autonomous patterns, encloses her in fear of certain experiences, often stops her from going after what she wants in life, or else, when she finds what she wants, keeps her from taking from it the gratification she needs."* <sup>2</sup>

All right, I'll grudgingly admit that my mother and I do have an unresolved relationship, but for me, that is a liberal admission. I always-- well, at least since early adolescence-- described us as *not having a relationship at all*.

One of us was talking about feeling "wildly unmothered," an expression coined by Adrienne Rich. Hearing those words triggers in me a strong feeling of duality, of my being

mothered in a dual way. Emotionally it was a desert, but materially? A tropical rain forest, and a very steamy one at that. She was full of attention for my physical being, solicitous and always nagging about forms and appearances. But in terms of emotional support/rapport, shared interests or physical closeness, hugs and smiles, nothing! Nothing remembered anyway. Nothing good and close and satisfying. Not from her.

November 27th, 1978

One of the most uncomfortable parts of writing out these feelings so far, apart from the scary exploration of emotions long buried and ignored,



has been feeling like somebody's case history. For instance, speed reading through another chapter of Friday's *My Mother, My Self*, I trip on these words:

*"It's a truism of psychoanalysis that when a child steals money from her mother's purse, she is stealing love." 3*

Ooof! She's got me again, goddamn it. They've all got my number and it's a very common, ordinary denominator at that. But you know, I never realized what I was doing until I read that sentence two days ago. Here all along I thought I just needed a little extra money to spend on Hershey Bars at the base PX after school. I could tell you in great detail the sight and feel and smell of her little red leather coin purse, out of which I dipped dimes and nickles and sometimes whole quarters year after year after year.

November 29th, 1978

Two nights ago I read these beginning paragraphs of my article to the issue collective, and cried so hard trying to say the words to Trish's song that I could hardly go on. I return to her words because they telescope so much of my experience:

*"I am the daughter of an angry woman,  
I am the sister of an angry child..."*

Yes, I guess I am both, both daughter and sister of angry women, and it's funny because I never thought about this dual reality until my recent vacation in southern California, visiting my folks and my sister.

An incident vividly recalled: I had gone grocery shopping for my mother and happened to run into an old friend, Art, who hadn't seen me or my sister in the dozen years since he'd managed the Officers' Club pool and she and I had spent hours there swimming and flirting with the boys. He asked how we both were and inquired didn't we have families of our own now? No, I said, we both liked being bachelor girls just fine, and gave him a broad, playful wink. He laughed and we parted company - me pleased at having run into him after all these years, and keen to tell my sister about our encounter.

Now, thinking back, I can remember being vaguely startled and somewhat amused at his assumption that both Molly and I would have families, though many women of thirty and thirty-three do, of course, have children if not husbands. It's never really occurred to me, until this week, to question why she's never had a longterm love relationship. Can it be that my sister's relationship with Mother has damaged her vocation for intimacy the way it's damaged mine?

December 11th, 1978

At last night's meeting, Camille said something about not wanting to make a home for her son because she wanted to make a home for herself more. And I flashed, that's how I felt about my daughter. That was why I could give her up for adoption without too much pain. I want to mother my-

self the way I feel I never was mothered, and I don't trust that others, much less children, could do it for me as well as I can. So I remain single, and childless too.

At the same meeting Baba said something that made me despair of ever changing. She was discussing her three daughters and said, *"The reality is that the way the daughter grows up is by learning to nurture her own mother."*

"Alas," I wrote in my meeting notes, "If she's right, I will never grow up! I absolutely cannot imagine nurturing my mother. You cannot nurture somebody you don't know."

December 28th, 1978

Today is my daughter's twelfth birthday. But what I want to think about is, where do I go with all this newly-gained self-knowledge? I think it was simply guilt over having confided all these feelings to paper that made me act more kindly and thoughtfully with Mother and Grandmother over the holidays. But before I left to join our family celebration at Christmas, I wrote out another passage from *My Mother, My Self*:

*"The solution is not to call up your mother and give her hell for what happened twenty years ago. It's not today's mother we are in a rage with. (Anyway) she probably wouldn't understand what we're talking about. Just knowing that your anger is inappropriate to the present situation, that it is childish, helps put things in perspective. It frees you from having to relive the past situation in the present." 4*

Ah, would that it were true! But I have a great deal of trouble with this solution to my mother problems. For one thing, I can't buy Friday's facile equation of 'childishness' and 'inappropriateness.' Having left unarticulated my rage and pain for so many years, I am suspicious of labeling them inappropriate. Such a label seems to imply that I should be ashamed of these feelings and repress them all over again. And this I refuse to do. Yet there is a kernel of truth in her prescription. Seeing that it is, in fact, not today's Mother who enrages me, can I try not to relive our past struggles in the present? If so, how? What are the techniques useful in such efforts? I suspect such work will take a very conscious, guided effort, and not be as automatic as Friday seems to imply. All I have are questions. ♀

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<sup>1</sup> Trish Nugent, "Angry Women," on Foxglove Women, 1976.

<sup>2</sup> Nancy Friday, *My Mother, My Self*, (Delacorte Press, New York: 1977), pp. 35.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 332.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 367-370.



# To My Oldest Daughter

## On Not Coming To her Wedding

Baba

it helped to look at you  
through the time-warped keyhole of a film called  
*Dead Birds* about living Stone Age people  
locked in rituals of strangely familiar pain.  
while the women worked the men made war  
avenging each male death by another one by one.  
each male was moured by ritual mutilation  
of the females of his tribe three fingers chopped  
from the right hand of three tiny daughters.  
almost all the women were hand capped but not disabled.  
the whimpering daughters wounded hands stumped  
bound in green leaves cling to the mothers  
who with stone knives had maimed them.  
This has always been the way.

i remember my own wedding oak fire burning  
ashamed for the kneeling not listening to the preacher.  
no voice there said: beware 'Marriage is lonelier than solitude.'  
later i lamented my daughter vision so slow to question  
the mother wisdom of ritual coupling.  
This has always been the way.

i remember kneeling by your bright presence  
your bird-intense eyes calculating my pleasure as you named  
the letters floating uppermost on the blocks  
glistening in your bath. binding your tiny hands  
with green-wreathed alphabets i lied to you  
reducing your daughter vision to nothing but  
nothing but the wind and go to sleep now please.  
This has always been the way.

i have bound the wounds of countless daughters  
with the green leaves of listening  
the ashes of their loving hopes drying my mouth.  
there is a membrane missing between your heart and mine  
which should filter out your pain making it yours  
not mine. mothers once were daughters  
daughters have not watched the repeated dreams  
like dead birds rising to bear their wings  
against the window panes. i can no longer rebirth  
from the bone ashes of the way  
that it has always been.

ritually or not mothers cry at weddings of the daughters  
and so i see myself with green leafed wand  
limping over mauve hills on the path  
toward the celebration of the long-necked princess  
bearing an umbilical gift of freedom from  
the way that it has always been.

*The quote is from "Paula Becker to Clara Westhoff," a poem by  
Adrienne Rich from The Dream of a Common Language.*



# FROM A SECOND GENERATION SINGLE PARENT

By Mischa

My father died in the Second World War...maybe it would be more accurate to say that the idea of my needing a father died then. In any case, I never had a father. Until I married for the first time at the age of nineteen, no man's authority served to certify me to the world.

Early memories: drowsy listening through a half-open door to my mother and her student friends planning how to survive a McCarthy purge...being out late with my mother on the tame sidewalks of the college town when she suddenly swiped a bicycle lying dormant on a front porch and took me flying for a breathless joyride in the dark...the Jekyll-and-Hyde daycare where my teachers' fangs receded into harmless simpers just in time for my mother to come and save me at the end of the day...sinful bowls of Hershey's chocolate syrup to top off an easy dinner of salad and steak. Summers when she wasn't in school or teaching, we'd take car trips cross-country to visit distant friends. Bombing along in the car, we'd sing doggerel operettas and our cocker spaniel would send us into gales of laughter by giving tiny, disdainful snorts at the smoke from my mother's cigarette.

We both read all the books on popular American psychology, so, when we reached menopause and adolescence simultaneously, we began to fight like hell. We thought it was only natural. My mother and I parted company during the mid-sixties, while I tried to escape from a formal education by getting married and divorced. We found ourselves stranded on opposite sides of a generation gap which, to us, meant differing values about personal disclosure: "Tell me about your fears and dreams," I pleaded, "Tell me all about your sex life and let me tell you about mine! If you won't tell, it must mean you don't trust me." "Don't ask me. Don't tell me about yourself," her silences screamed, "If you keep up this asking and telling, it must mean you don't respect me." For years we stopped really speaking at all.

Then one Christmas season I was lonely and freezing in the filthy snows of Washington, D.C., thinking about dry river beds and endless Texas plains. A United Parcel van drove up and unloaded

a battered cardboard crate all wrapped up with baling twine. Inside was an old dead cow skull, sun bleached and wind polished, with garish wads of red and green tissue paper stuffed into its eye-sockets. The card read: Thought you might be lonesome for home. Merry Christmas.

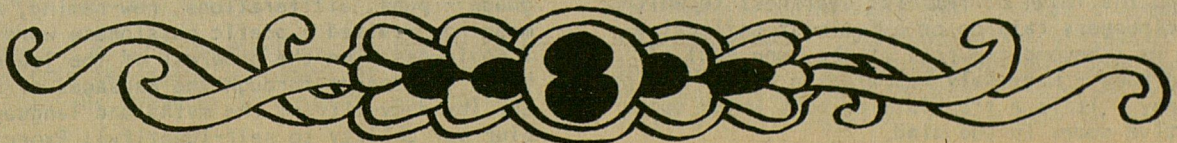
My heart cracked and I loved her again. I put my ear to the skull and I could almost hear sifting sandstorms and the low moaning of desert doves... I could hear verses of Spanish love songs she used to sing me at night, the neon tip of her cigarette beating time in the warm dark beside my bed.

Now, remarried and about to be redivorced, I am to become the single parent of a six year old child. She's the very age that I was, back when my mother and I used to be a two-person tribe.

This daughter's hair isn't at all like mine used to be...mine was short and easy to brush. Hers is as long as Rapunzel's and takes forty-five minutes to braid. She's taller, stronger, more verbal, darker skinned and less polite to adults than I was at her age. She looks exactly like Wonder Woman must have looked as a girl and it scares the shit out of me because I always used to think I was ugly. She already knows she's not. She believes in Jesus Christ and the Lady Goddess and makes up songs about them both. She often reminds me (pointedly) that she can still remember when we used to nurse. I never had a father, but she has always had one. Someone asked him, "Are you baby sitting today?" "No," he answered, "she's *my* child!" She has the kind of father I always wanted.

Now my mother's coming to visit us soon. I can't imagine how she could possibly top her last performance, when she encouraged my daughter to steal all the rings from the boardwalk carousel and pack them home in her purse to macrame into pot slings for the house plants.

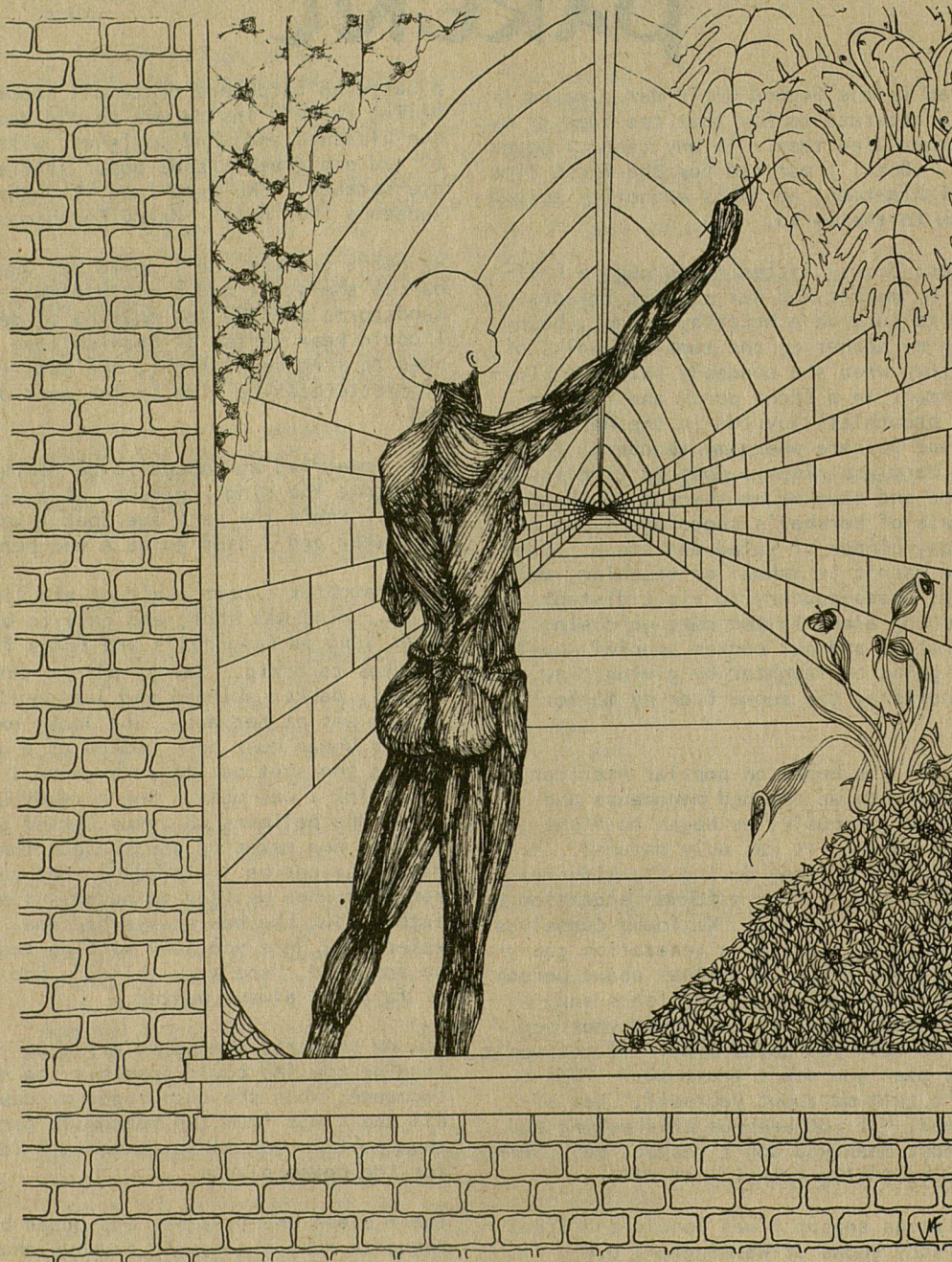
Their eyes: crafty amber and ocean blue. Their thoughts run in a common raucous channel - six and sixty years lie jauntily upon them. This line of single and singular women breeds true. ♀





# The Glass house of the Mother/ Daughter/ Self

A View of GYN/ECOLOGY: *The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* by Mary Daly  
Beacon Press, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Ma. 02108



V. M. FORNEY

## By Baba

For those who have felt a real need to go beyond - beyond the level of feminist awareness to which consciousness raising or a feminist collective took us - beyond the ruts of the long haul of sisterhood - Mary Daly has written a book for our journey. It is a transforming book which opens creative doors in the mind.

I could tell you about her liberating use of language - puns, alliterations, new-naming, archaic meanings revived - poetic passionate word-magic. I could describe the progress of the journey she takes the reader through the Passages of Discovery (by demystifying the myths and language that blur our ability to self-identify); Exorcism (by



de-normalizing the sado-rituals of religion, custom and technology which have, in the past and still, destroy the bodies and spirits of women under the patriarchy - called by Daly, Goddess murder); to Ecstasy (by envisioning a gynocentric world of Spooking, Sparking and Spinning). However, writing about the book distances the impact which it had upon me. Rather, I would like to spin off, exploring the subject of the mother/daughter relationship, especially as it effects bonding between women, with a perspective made possible by Daly. This will be a view of what the book did to my thinking, not a re-view of the book. (All material in italics are quotes excerpted from *Gyn/Ecology*).

Daly speaks of the need for us to revive our anger at the "primordial mutilation which is the ontological separation of mother from daughter, of daughter from mother, of sister from sister." I would like to hypothesize into the spaces opened by the language of "primordial mutilation". As both the mother of three grown daughters and the daughter of a living mother, I have found my relationship with these loved women of my flesh contradictory, and, at times, irrational at a level which shook my identity. I believe that the essential short-circuit of woman energy which funnels fuel to the system against us lies somewhere in the intense love/pain/separation of the mother/daughter/Self.

"AS WE ISOLATE EACH FEAR AND EXAMINE IT, WE CAN SEE THAT OUR OVERCOMING IT DEPENDS UPON SEEING IT IN CONTEXT: SEEING THROUGH THE WHOLE THING."

Let us assume, for the sake of argument, that there was a time when ancient patriarchs struggled against the power of the mothers, who were resisting the expansion of the economic-religious domination of the father/son. Since the fathers had no desire to usurp the work of child rearing, they needed ways to protect themselves from the influence the mother might have upon the allegiance of the daughters. Out of that need grew the myths of Goddess killing which have structured the foreground of fear in which mother-daughter (and therefore woman to woman) relationships take place.

"The sacrificing of women requires the silencing of women, which takes place in a myriad ways, in a maze of ways. A basic pattern of these ways is Self-splitting, which is initiated by the patriarchally powerful and which the victims internalize and continue to practice within the caste of women. Women are silenced/split by the embedding of fears."

The betrayal of the daughter by the mother takes place within the caste of women, as the mother socializes the daughter to make her way in the world.

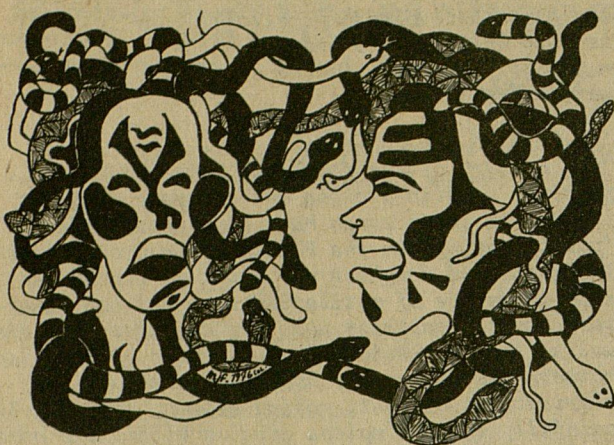
"The primary bond of love and trust, without which female identification is difficult to establish - the bond between daughter and mother - was broken on the torture rack, burned in the purifying paternal fires."

"The history of the footbound women of China... provides us with a vivid and accurate image of the way in which women have been coerced into 'participating' in the Phallocratic processions. The footbound daughter was bound to repeat the same procedure of mutilation upon her own daughter, and the daughter upon her daughter. To visualize the procession of generations of crippled mothers and daughters, hobbling on three-inch charicatures of feet, moving slowly, grotesquely, painfully in meaningless circles within the homes (prisons) of fathers and husbands - their owners - is to see the real state of women in patriarchy." (Footbinding has been the subject of much Western male scholarship as a "curious erotic custom". Erotic for whom?) "To understand that this horror is still going on, assuming insidious forms of *mindbinding* and *spiritbinding* in every nation of this colonized planet, is to begin to comprehend the condition of women caught in the Wheel of Processions, clutched by the clockwork hands that circle the surface of the Time Keepers' clocks." As my mother has said to me over and over; "It is only natural to want to be pretty, to be attractive, to be liked." What she did not teach me was to ask: By whom? For what purpose? Who profits from it? Why is it natural?

Besides teaching the daughter how to be the socializer of the next generation, the mother in the patriarchy must transmit the roles/stereotypes/sets of characteristics demanded by men as the price of being chosen by them. These distortions of Self, which are the primary betrayals of the helpless mother against the daughter, often involve inflicting physical pain. "Since torture and mutilation of a small girl was carried out by her mother and other close female relatives, the lesson of 'never trust a woman' was branded upon her soul..." Since deformed feet were the only path to an upwardly mobile (good) marriage, "this horror and dissipation/misfocusing of energy became accepted as normal and normative, and it remained so for almost a thousand years."

The mother's acceptance of male-defined normalcy functions to keep women from each other, deformed physically or emotionally, fixated on and servicing the real tormentor they are not permitted to name. In modern Africa, parts of South America, and the Arab States, the torture and maiming of thousands of daughters by their mothers takes place through genital mutilation - excision of the clitoris and fibulation. "Only a mutilated woman is considered 100 percent feminine...by removal of her specifically female-identified organ, which is not necessary for the males' pleasure or for reproductive servitude, she 'becomes a woman' (marriageable)." Anthropologists and World Health Organizations (WHO and UNICEF) have consistently refused to intervene in this "custom which promotes tribal coherence" - thus denying recogni-





MERIDITH FOYLE

tion of a monstrous scandal of female mutilation and death (from infections). Tribal cohesion for whom?

These circumstances of torture and degradation existed or now exist as the normal, correct, or fashionable world into which millions of mothers socialize their daughters, for hundreds of generations, teaching them how to be mothers to their daughters. Mothers "police" their daughters, monitoring for those actions or attitudes which run counter to the interests of the fathers, as projected through patriarchal normalcy. The power ascribed to them to do this is acknowledged by resentment of the daughter against the mother, although the mother is not the true source of the restriction. Out of this grows the feeling shared by many women that they cannot be enhanced or protected by the power of another woman.

We need to understand that the sado-rituals of Goddess killing - the maiming of our minds and bodies - are just as much a part of our own particular corner of patriarchy as they are of all others. Mother/daughter relations in technological patriarchy are, not surprisingly, technologically managed. The medical and psychological technicians have, since the early nineteenth century in this country, cut, poisoned and lied to women for profit. Iatrogenic (doctor or hospital caused disease or death) illness became epidemic among women as doctors defeated 'women's care of women' (midwife/witch/herbologist) and carried bloodpoisoning on their hands to women in labor (childbed fever). Only a few medical or psychiatric atrocities need to be listed to specifically illustrate the sado-rituals of technologized Goddess-killing: DES; radical mastectomy; mass 'prophylactic' removal of clitorises (up until 1915), ovaries, uteruses and cervixes; the vaginal orgasm: the myth of the harm of masturbation; the Pill; transsexualism; cosmetic breast modification; shock therapy; depression inducing diet drugs; the I.U.D.; estrogen 'replacement'; 'normal' obstetrical practices; menstruation and childbirth as sicknesses; the current persecution of midwifery, women's abortion and self-help clinics; and the most destructive of all, the psychiatric scapegoating of the mother.

I, the adoring mother of three daughters and one son, having always wanted the best of everything for them even at the expense of my own needs, have a long personal list of class-linked horrors (expensive) about which I now feel guilt and remorse (I chose for them, allowed to happen to them, did the best I could): four hospital and gynecologist-managed births with total anesthesia drugging their bodies before they were born, with the cord cut too soon and no mother/child bonding in the first few hours of their lives; hospital scheduled feeding from four to fourteen days; a surgical solution for a minor problem which straightened my daughter's foot at six months, permanently traumatizing her psychologically; their teeth straightened; allowed two of them to be hospitalized without me under the age of one year; took DES and had uterine X-rays while pregnant with my son; encouraged my daughter to take the Pill at fourteen, thus stunting her growth; encouraged my daughter to go to a male psychiatrist and to do Primal Therapy (mother-hating with screaming); a nose restructuring (cosmetic plastic surgery) for one daughter at 17; encouraged my daughter to get her doctorate in psychology (sophisticated mother-blaming training).

When I got my babies back from the hospital, I could tell from their smell, from their hoarse crying, from their clinging, from their new irritability, from the different way that they ate and shit and grabbed for comfort, that they were injured at a level I could never heal in them. When my daughters came back from their first real contact with psychology/therapy, I could see the monster/who/is/my/mother born behind their eyes. These things I saw, but I could not name.

We are told that the therapist/doctor is value free, functioning from the lofty heights of science and professional ethics. By performing painful but necessary mutilation to our body and our mind, by prescribing chemicals which may make us sick in a new way, by interpreting our experience and its causes for us, he/she is using modern methods to help us. If we don't shape to their version of normalcy, we are the crazy ones. We are lobotomized into acquiescent participation in our own torture.

"PATRIARCHY IS THE WORLD IN WHICH WE FIND OURSELVES AND WHICH WE FIND IN OURSELVES, NOT SIMPLY IN INSTITUTIONS - BUT INTERNALIZED, FESTERING INSIDE WOMEN'S HEADS, EVEN FEMINIST HEADS."

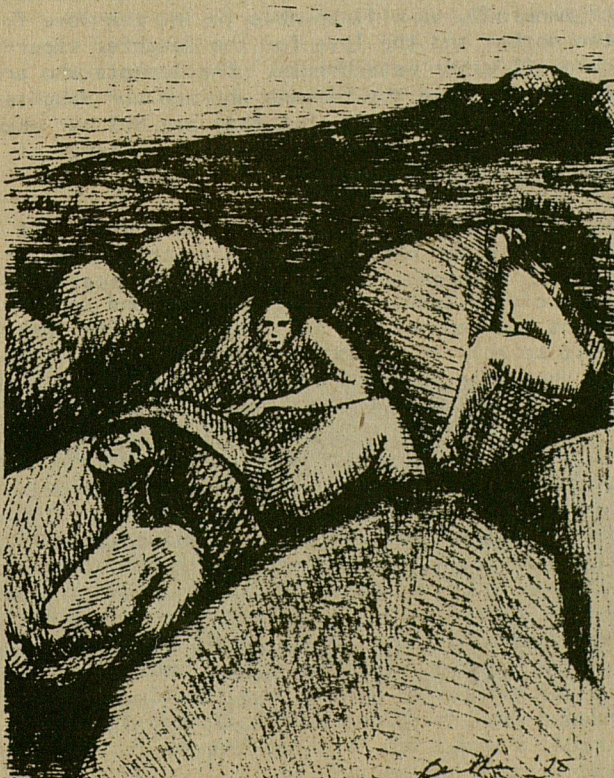
*"Gynecological/therapeutic/cosmetic preoccupation conceals the patients' emptiness from her Self. It drives the splintered Self further into the state of fixation...frantically consuming medication, counsel, cosmetics, and clothing to cloak and fill her expanding emptiness...A woman thus shrunk/frozen is manipulable/manageable...Displaced, she becomes a consumer of re-placements, as in estrogen replacement therapy, cosmetic surgery and psychiatric re-placement of her Self-identified natural history by man-made misinterpretations. These misinterpretations are magni-*



*fied into a powerful symbol system which contains women, keeping them condensed and displaced; reducing them to replaceable replicas of the standardized Symbol; the Total/Totaled fragmented Woman, made and remade after the image projected by her god."*

In a mechanized culture, mythic stereotypes are first fragmented and then broadcast (like seeds of attitudes or ethics) as fashion on the winds of the media and the professions. We assimilate the mythic fragments and integrate them into our personalities and belief systems. Feminism has identified some of the polarized mythic models which limit female wholeness: The pure Madonna vs. the whore; the fembot (feminine robot) vs. the castrating bitch; the 'desirable' young girl vs. the ugly old hag; the sacrificing supermom vs. the 'negligent' working mother. The prototype of all irrational polarizations is the Good Mother vs. the Bad Mother. I am indebted to Mickey Spenser for her creative work around this insight, and the long conversations about mothering we shared. One half of the polar opposites is rewarded by greater validation (mythic approval) and therefore greater relative power within the caste of women. Both the Good Mother and the Bad Mother are in reality variations on the sacrificial - devoid of Self, powerless except as ascribed role-fulfillers.

As adults, we blame our mother for thinking that she knows what is best for us. It was that strength to choose for our fragile dependence as infants which achieved adult status for us. All through childhood, the daughter seeks validation for her emergent maturity from her mother. All



the stepping stones of growth - giving up sucking, bowel and bladder control, language, walking upright, muscular coordination, ability to abstract, menstruation and sexuality, peer acceptance - are confirmed for her by her mother, either negatively or positively, but confirmed. When my daughter experienced the unabated and inexplicable harassing attention of a boy in the sixth grade, it was I who named her experience in a way which made it tolerable to her that he was "in love" with her.

The socializer must have some way to shape the child toward the desired goal. As we have seen from earlier examples, the very definition of patriarchal social behavior lies in the thwarting or postponement of very basic human needs or desires.

The Bad Mother punishes, limits, withholds, disapproves. The Good Mother nurtures, approves, rewards, gives. In reality, of course, all mothers must do both. The almost universal scapegoating of the primary socializer/nurturer/disciplinarian as the source of adult pain and neurosis fosters a self-fulfilling prophesy. By seven or eight, if not sooner, the daughter recognizes the Bad Mother scapegoat which the media has mythologized in her consciousness. She then sits in judgment on the negative aspects of the mothering she receives - seeing it as harmful rather than inevitable. This can turn her adolescence into a major battle ground between mother and daughter with the psychological damage to both carrying them to the major source of the scapegoating myth, the therapist.

A Good Mother is always supportive, never critical or complaining. She is perfectly focused on the well-being of others, calming and adjudicating, servicing everyone's needs but her own. She is there when we need her, she is formidable in our defense. She is malleable, positive to all our various and contradictory solutions of our lives. She is strong but unobtrusive; cheerful but realistic. She must not be complacent, nor should she be a worry-wart. She should give but not expect much, and never never make us feel guilty. She should not dominate or control us, but neither should she allow neglect or indifference to mar her record. And a record is kept - in the black book of memory - of all her transgressions. Her virtues and gifts are forgotten, for those are our expectations, which if she does not fulfill, we can hold against her.

The mother must stand in defense of her child, because if there is anything wrong with the daughter (at school, with the police, psychologically, or later, in adult "failure" such as not being a "good wife" or a "good mother") the mother finds herself asking: "Where did I go wrong?" The mother is encouraged by books, magazines and media of all kinds to be a "better mother" - not too permissive, not too strict. The Good Mother sees the defects of her child, protects her from the effects of those defects, does not use them as a stick over her head and at the same time, changes the defects in the child.



The portrait of the Bad Mother permeates the portrait of the Good Mother - being, in fact, a part of it. Whatever a mother does, it may be interpreted as wrong. The voices of the experts in child development outdo each other in disagreement over the relative destructiveness of various errors in mothering. Who should the mother listen to - the experts or her daughter, who, especially in adolescence, resents the mother as a barrier to the patriarchal pleasure pollutions.

The mother of the adolescent daughter must also deal with the real terrors of "letting go" of her daughter into a Goddess-killing emotional and physical environment. The daughter is eager to stretch herself in a world the mother already knows and fears. Rape is the most common violent crime in the United States (all of my daughters have been raped). Battered women make up nearly half of the adult female population living with men, according to a new study. Adult and child pornography are big business. The primary "career choices" open to women are still the permanent servitude of marriage or the temporary servitude of prostitution.

As the mother of small children, I can remember feeling that I glowed, with a visible halo, just like Mary in the old paintings. Everyone smiled at me, including my children. (That I was too exhausted from mothering to find much satisfaction in my "sainthood" was seen by me as my own problem.) Then as my children got old enough to resonate to other influences, without transition I found myself in the maternal Catch-22. Being the cause of human neurosis is a heavy burden to bear, especially in the light of the dimensions of madness under the patriarchy. Having someone to blame for neurosis or personal problems is a relief only if acted upon; the scapegoat is punished as absolution from the pain of inadequacy, guilt or remorse. The mother of grown daughters (E.G. the older woman) finds herself less punished if she closely adheres to the Good Mother stereotype in all her relationships and emanates an acceptance of powerlessness.

I am also a symbolic mother. By that I mean that many, if not almost all, the women I have known for the past twenty years have responded to me as if I were their mother; at least part of the time. (I have contemplated getting a T-shirt which says in large letters across my breasts: I AM NOT YOUR MOTHER.) The complexity, richness and power of my real self is often transformed by this misidentification into forbidden qualities. I have been told by imaginary daughters that my articulateness is diminishing; my talents, intimidating; my anger, overpowering and unallowable; my originality, disorienting; my radical feminist perspective, threatening. I attract the hungry daughter and the angry daughter. If I evoke the daughter/in/me by revealing my needs, insecurities, vulnerabilities, this is perceived as a role switch, and the ravenous or furious daughter turns magically into the scolding socializing mother, lecturing me on how to make my way in the world and improve myself. When I defend myself, I am "armored or armed".

An easy explanation for this lies in the possibility that I am a difficult harsh person. However, my experience reflects the experience of many powerful women who have talked with me about their relationships with their adult daughters, and with other women. However, in analyzing woman-to-woman interactions in workshops on "Daughterism", younger women also testify to finding themselves captive to the mother role with women older than themselves. The "daughter" polices the imaginary mother, punishing any show of power - not just power/over, but the power of presence, the power of self-defense, and the power of skills and ideas. *"...women often have wrong expectations of strong women. That is, such women are expected to be Self-sacrificing for their sisters rather than Self-affirming. Thus in a convoluted way, they are asked to be feminine in the name of female bonding."*

**"RADICAL FEMINISM IS THE DISCOVERY AND CREATION OF A WORLD OTHER THAN PATRIARCHY."**

The powerful woman - the essence of the Goddess - is the desirable model for all daughters/mothers/Selves. All mothers emanate power to their daughters - as the mythic Source, the spawning place of creation, birth and nurture. Whether or not all daughters bear a daughter, we must learn to nurture and value the strong mothers, for they are our Selves. We need, and are getting from writers like Mary Daly, an analysis of history and the present from our frame of reference. The moment that we stop denying the magnitude of our containment and start denying the false "harmony of mankind", we will be able to let the love for the mother and the love for the daughter supercede all other attachments. The fembots who are our mothers and the fembots who are our daughters may be our tormentors, but they are NOT our enemy. By scapegoating our mother, we are relieved of taking responsibility for our Selves.

In a feminist world of honor between women, it is central to our healing that this ethic be maintained. We can no longer afford to repeat the same old mistakes of lying, secrets and separations between mothers and daughters. The mother must be able to say to the daughter: The way out of "becoming your mother" is to find a real path out of the Great Victim System - patriarchy. *"Radical feminism releases the inherent dynamic in the mother-daughter relationship toward friendship, which is strangled in the male-mastered system. Radical feminism means that mothers do not demand Self-sacrifice of daughters, and that daughters do not demand this of their mothers, as do sons in patriarchy. What both demand of each other is courageous moving which is mythic in its depths, which is spell-breaking and myth-making process. The "sacrifice" that is required is not mutilation by men, but the discipline needed for acting/creating together on a planet which is under the Reign of Terror, the reign of the fathers and sons." ♀*



# Leaving

By Marcy Sheiner

When I was primarily a daughter, I was always leaving. Then I became a mother, and I learned that you can't leave, but you have to let go.

You have to be there like a rock, letting go.

I let my babies be pulled from my belly, kicking and screaming all the way. Even under the influence of drugs, my body fought to hang on to the strongest connection it had ever known. For nine months my body had housed another. Now I was alone again. I missed the company.

I let my babies be taken from my arms by efficient nurses. In between feeding times, I stared at them through thick plate glass. My first baby had to spend months in the hospital, and I let others care for him, biting my tongue to keep from screaming, "Take your hands off him!"

I let them crawl from my lap when they were ready to explore the world. I let them go to sleep when I wanted to play with them, but I couldn't force them to sleep when I wanted to be alone. I let them be taken from home to attend school, to let others teach them how to think, and I missed having them around; but when I wanted peace and quiet, I couldn't throw them out of the house.

They fought for me to let them go. Across the street, down the block, into a world that might do them harm. They begged to go into the ocean; they wanted to climb hills. Every day of my life I was forced to decide whether or not to let them go. If I said no, they cried.

I let them go visit their friends. There came a time when their father no longer lived under the same roof, and I let them visit him.

I let them go. And all the time I was still a daughter, and I wanted to leave. Came the day I finally did it: I sent them to live with their father.

There was a bit of confusion here. Was I letting go, or was I leaving? Sometimes I felt I had let go, and I felt virtuous. Sometimes I felt I had left, and I felt guilty. I learned the first rule of motherhood: You have to let go, but you can't leave.

Now my daughter doesn't want to visit me so much. She says she's not coming on Thanksgiving. She's leaving. She's nine years old and she's leaving. She's had enough.

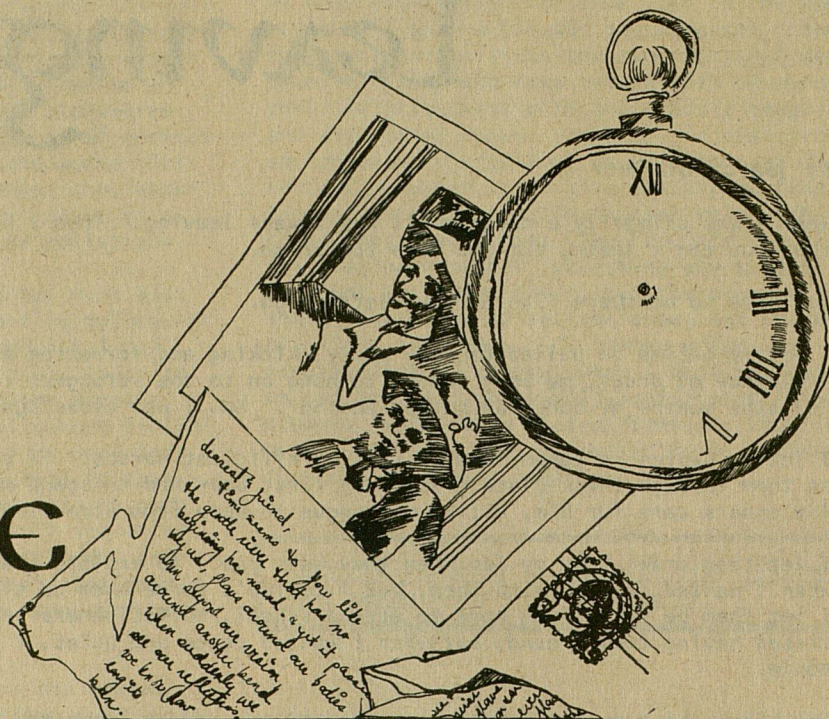
Let go let go let go let go.  
You can't leave you have to let go.  
You can't leave you have to let go.  
I can't leave I have to let go. ♀

DURGA





# PREFACE



JO TENN

by LORETTA MANILL

"I think you should stop writing about your mother," he said; looking at me in that stern paternal, military way. The comment did not especially surprise me, I have been waiting for someone to say those exact words to me, for almost two years. I know, as a writer, there is a danger that I can become obsessive. And because I am so eternally grief-stricken by my mother's death, I recognized the possibility that I might always write about her. Becoming "maudlin," "morbid."

"I think you should stop writing about your mother." I have probably said those exact same words to myself, each time I write another piece about my mother.

And yet, when he said it, I felt no guilt, no re-crimination. "It gives me a way to write about myself," I said. For the first time, it was articulated, that through writing about my mother, I can write about myself ("A woman is her mother/ that's the important thing." Anne Sexton). Myself, as a Daughter, as a Woman.

"I had a dream of her the other night that was the purest "visitation" in years. Her voice, her words. Sometimes, when that happens, I miss her so very much, and know, for better or worse, she has been the greatest love of my life."

(from a letter I wrote to a friend)

My mother died November 1, 1976. It seems longer,

or, it seems removed from time. Somewhere inside 'the timelessness of grief and loss'.

"I'm not ready. I am never ready. Even when I was having my children, when it was time to go to the hospital, I wasn't ready."

These are my mother's words. When she found out she was to soon (too soon) die.

I am not ready. To write again about my mother. To face her death, her absence, again and again. But suddenly, sometimes, I do, in these black birds as they fly before this window.

There is a subtlety to this kind of mourning. Depressions I cannot quite name, except to say, "This would have been the anniversary of..." Or, when my life feels lousy and I want her, "Mama always said - 'don't worry about it, everything will be all right,'" to say, "everything will be all right." like her mother did.

"The finality is still/always a shock---one that I am trying---and maybe it's impossible---to prepare myself for."

(Journal entry, August, 1976)

For a year and one-half before her death, I began to prepare myself. I became the necessary "ready." I was given to know before anyone else, psychically. Awakened from sleep to a mysterious "knowing." The feeling, the jolt, I awoke with was the severance of the umbilical cord. Separation, not leading towards life, but into death.



I made a telephone call "home" at 2 a.m., "Is everything all right?"

"Yes, why?"

"I had a bad dream."

A bad dream.

That I could not dismiss.

The next afternoon I was walking through the De Young Museum, "The Chinese Art Exhibit." I began to weep, weeping in the museum amidst centuries of passing dynasties, and the sudden realization of "the relationship between Mother and Child." As it is, omnipresent, primal, inescapable, and in the face of loss, relentless.

I had just had an abortion. I had just had a premonition of my mother's death. I felt myself, then and sometimes now, as a woman in the middle of two severed cords.

"One thing about cancer, it gives you time to say good-bye."

My mother and I are sitting across from each other, having late night tea and toast at Howard Johnson's Motor Lodge/Restaurant, Mill Valley. She begins to talk about her "stomach problems," the tests, the surgery, she says to me: "It could be cancer."

At this moment, over tea, very civilized, the word, the terror, the knife--cancer--enters our lives, our consciousness.

There will be the confirmation, the surgery that is supposed to work, the pain, the recuperation, the prayers, the projection of "five to fifteen years," the relapse, the pain, the pain, the pain.

"I guess I'm dying," she says to me from her hospital bed. It is one year since our tea at Howard Johnson's. She is not always "clear" now. There have been the mysterious "breakdowns" both physical and mental; the psychiatrists, the brain-scans. But right now, she lies there, thin and vulnerable as a child, my own child, and says, "It looks as if I'm dying." I look at her, I look away and the tears that fall from my eyes are the only answers I give her.

"There are all kinds of ties in one's life, all kinds of friendships, loves, complexities, but there is only one person whom one needs for dying. To have such a person is a great good fortune. To be that person, to have been such a person, is a heavy and blessed experience...Once...in each lifetime, we are meant to be a blessing to another."

Gerda Lerner from: *A Death of One's Own*

I am, I remain, grateful for the time there was. To say good-bye; "closure" as counselors call it.

"I want to be with her---I want to carry her in my arms to the threshold and hand her *personally* to Death," I wrote in my journal, in my letters to friends. It sounds overly dramatic now, but I remember feeling it; deeply, deeply feeling it. The image of the Madonna with the crucified Christ. The Pieta. Mother-Love.

I put a mattress out on the back porch of our family home, and every day, after the hospital visits, I go out there, weep, curse, beat with my fists.

At the hospital, I feed her (the food she no longer wants), I hold her hand, I read to her: *Honeycomb*, by Adela Rogers St. John. It doesn't matter what I read, I know that. She is not really listening anymore. It is just for "company."

When she comes home, I bathe her, replace the bags that replace her internal organs. She always says, "Thank you," I always kiss her on the forehead.

The word "devotion" is whispered by the rabbi, by the hospital staff.

The word "despair" enters my life.

"Do you believe in Destiny?"

"What's that?"

"It's like Luck, whatever's going to happen, is going to happen."

"Well, I don't believe like the rabbi believes...in reincarnation. Do you?"

"Yes. I do. What do you think happens to our Souls?"

"Well, what are you coming back as? A book?"

(from the last conversation between my mother and I)

There is an accident, she gets up to go to the bathroom and falls. I ride in the ambulance with her, back to the hospital, and I know this will be the last time.

"Where am I?" she asks me.

"Mother, you're in the hospital, can't you tell by the wall-paper?" I answer.

And we smile at the old domestic sensibility of women.

"Mother, I'm going to write. No matter what happens."

"And what if a man wants you to give it up?"

"I'll say forget it! I'm going to write."

She has gone into a coma. Is this it? We're all asking ourselves. Her sisters and brother arrive. There is the worry about burial plans, not yet made. There are the regrets.

"It's too bad Bessie couldn't have finished redoing her house."



Everyone goes to her bedside and tries to make her "come-to."

"Bessie! Bessie!! Bessie!!!" But her blue eyes just stare out like a fish.

The doctor comes in and shakes his head, "I don't know."

Then, there is nobody in the room and I go and sit beside her. I have prepared, I have grieved, but suddenly, as I feel the drama of the situation, as I look at her, I begin to cry, I say, "Oh mother."

And her eyes turn towards me, she comes out of the coma.

"Mother, why are you staring at me?" I ask her once when I am visiting.

"Because you're so cute," she answers.

The double image. The intense sense of responsibility towards her daughter that can literally, if temporarily, call a mother back from her grave.

"Do you want me to give you my life?"

"I gave you mine!"

Anger. Bitterness. Grief. Guilt. Sentiment. Struggle. Put them all together and they must spell "mother." The exact spelling of the word "daughter", I am still trying to figure out.

A year and a half after my mother's death, I am talking to my sister on the telephone, I tell her "I am feeling sad about mother." "Bury it, Loretta!" she says to me.

The conclusion is, that the relationship between a mother and a daughter is never buried. The flesh is gone between us. That's all.

She brought me out of one side ("Where's the baby's head?" I heard her ask, during one of her "hallucinations") and I helped to see her out the other.

There is a reverse process from Genesis, like reading the Bible backwards, until there is only The Word, in which I attempt to put the flesh back on her.

And so, I will keep writing about my mother.

"Have you written anything about your mother?"

"My mother is in everything I write now." ♀

January 2 and 3, 1978

## Street

You were running, mother,  
running across the street, thin  
and spritely like you never were  
until you couldn't get out of bed  
to prove it. You were running,  
your arms and legs such a beautiful  
dance. The wind was in your hair  
You were almost about to fly.

And I knew it and Jenny was on  
the other side of the street. You  
were missing each other, crossing  
just in passing, for she  
belongs to the earth awhile  
to grow in like a sweet  
potato. She's solid, don't worry about her.  
It was just you who were about to fly

And I knew it and I took your hand  
and held it tight. Not because  
I wanted to go with you anymore.  
That much here is done, we are different  
companions now--I held your hand tight  
because I've learned everything is in  
that moment that moment  
between the earth and the sky.

## Mothers and Death

The hollowed mask will triumph  
Your mother will rise  
from blood-soaked sheets  
to stand before the window.

She will not know you  
when she turns back her eyes  
(what once were her eyes)

You will tuck her quietly into bed  
watching as her face climbs back into  
a star.

A loneliness will come over you  
A night you cannot identify.

But it belongs to you now.

by Loretta Manill



# MOMENT OF TRUTH

BABA

Sometimes 'perfect union' happens between mother and daughter. Sometimes mother and daughter share a closeness which defies time and space. Sometimes mother and daughter act out the mutual nurturance of the sacred dyad throughout their lives.

All daughters join with their mothers in the am-biotic unity of biochemical sameness in their nine months of one body space. There are rumors that a few mothers and daughters exist who are genetically identical - daughters born of the spontaneous division of the mother's egg. Would these women be more closely entwined psychically and emotionally? Do the daughters born of very young mothers feel more like sisters to each other? Do mothers and daughters born in the same sun sign understand each other more easily?

For me, the daughter of my later years - the one who demanded life through my body against my better judgment - has been the closest to me psychically of my three. Our lives meshed like a temporarily interrupted conversation with a lover of long standing. So much need never be said between us. Now that her life journey has taken her far from my body, we often communicate without benefit of the telephone - feeling each other's needs, responding to each other's calls.

The stories of mother-daughter union have not been shared between women--we have forgotten how they heal us. I would like to begin the collection of such stories with one called "A Moment of Truth" by a woman named Barbara Latham:

"My mother Joan, until her marriage, lived in the South Island of New Zealand. I was born and always lived in the North Island, the south being the unreal but special place of my mother's past to which she alone would sometimes return. When I began my first year at University, she revisited her old home and was killed in a car accident. Nine months later I made the journey to the South Island, hoping her death might seem like an established fact if the place itself became "real" for me, but also hoping to make contact in some way with my mother (sometimes even wondering if I'd find her living).

I was met on arrival by four "cousins" I did not know but with whom my mother had been staying, and was immediately taken out to sea in their new boat. Hours later, as we were heading back to the shore, about two miles off, a sudden storm began; the boat overturned and then began sinking fast. Only one of the party had on a life belt and it became obvious that I was the only reasonable swimmer. Several of us had been injured as the boat overturned, we had been what seemed an age in cold, very shark infested water. It was nearly dark, the surf was very rough, and I felt exhausted when I suddenly became completely calm. I said to the others with utter conviction: "It is all right, Joan is here." To them I then sank from sight with the next wave and was probably drowning, while my own experience was first feeling my mother's presence with all my senses, but far more powerfully than I usually register anything; then I felt as if my

mother was still all about me but I appeared to be inside a rainbow. Wonderful colours pulsed in harmony with my heart beat and breath until all were fused and quite, quite still. The light in this complete stillness became an extraordinarily brilliant white light. My overwhelming sense was of being totally contained and at peace in it, not in a numbed, half sleeping way, for I was alive in all the intensity, vibrance and great beauty of that light which seemed then, and has seemed to me since, to have been before my birth.

I had no sense of time at all and cannot now recall a move from that light except as a disturbing jar, as if I had assumed it was perfect and forever and suddenly it was gone. Before me flashed images and it seemed my life was being thrown up to make a hill; I then stood at its summit in awe with the knowledge that I had to go back down that hill and go through it all again. I felt I was then shot to the surface of the water and heard myself saying to the others that I would swim to land (a feat which before had seemed quite beyond my powers and, anyway, before, I'd been too afraid to leave the others and set off alone). With amazing new strength I swam through rough sea the distance to the nearest rocks from which I could see two fishermen with a boat who then brought all the others safely to land.

That incident stands by itself but it may be of interest to others who have had a similar experience to know something of how I coped with what was for me a profound disturbance of my understanding of myself. I fled the town as soon as I was physically able - I'd had more than enough contact with my mother for the time being! I was ill from all the salt water and so reported to my own doctor as soon as I got back. I tentatively hinted at what had happened because I wanted to talk to someone and I thought he might know of such things happening to others. He promptly prescribed tranquillizers saying "It's just shock." All I could plead was "You are taking something from me," which made him all the more convinced I needed the tranquillizers I was refusing. To be left in peace I took the pills and hid them. I was living in a hostel for students, many of whom were interested in the drama of the accident, but I was too caught in it all to be able to share their way of talking about it, so I retreated to total silence about what had happened and had long restful baths which I felt to be healing; this behaviour proved enough to bring down on my fragile state a heavy-handed psychiatrist I had no reason to trust. When he suggested "rest", i.e. his mental hospital, I got out of bed in a hurry, defensively, to assert my sanity. I set about "proving myself well" at the expense of integrating my experience. I was cut off from finding meaning for myself in what had happened, and left with simply a dramatic story and a disconnected fear of madness..."

By repeating this story here, perhaps others will tell the stories they know to each other or write them to me, in care of this magazine. By recognizing their healing value for us, they become part of women's heritage. ♀



# SON

SHARON DOUBIAGO

The bullet went through me  
and lodged beneath my heart  
and swelled and grew until the birth  
was a man I rode between my legs  
into the bloodstained hands of the world  
that laid you on my belly, the prairie, the plains

-----

The earth got inside me  
too large you came against  
my young girl's will  
you came too large, I broke  
you were not---  
you were the first thing not---  
my will

you were so large in me  
the child I was could not know  
what was coming

But it was you coming  
so large, my child  
's body cried and bled to contain you

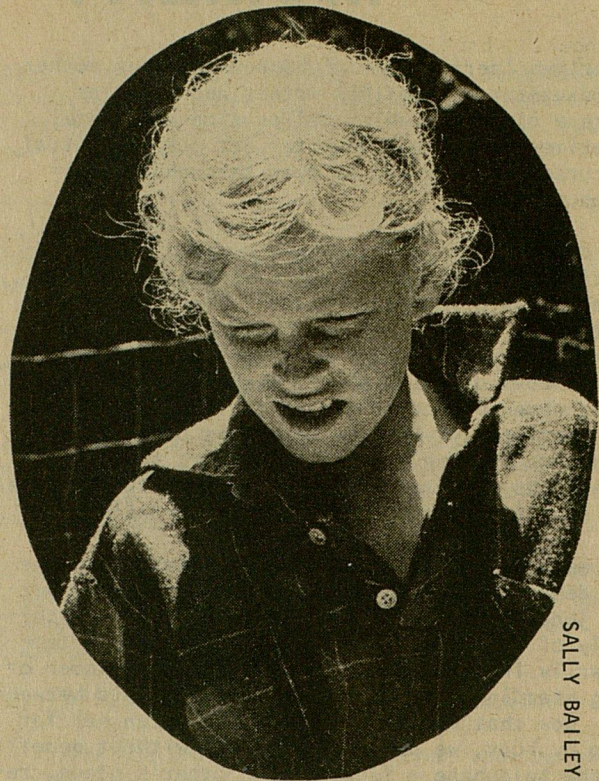
so hard you were, so hard I tried, I stretched  
and pushed and cried and tried  
to keep up, you dwarfed me  
you were coming, too large

I bled you, I was torn apart in you  
my skin you split and shed and left  
behind

my belly    too large  
     broke    I broke  
my body    I broke open too large

you came against my young girls' body

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SALLY BAILEY

It was you  
coming, my son so bright  
it was the golden garden of your hair  
I first saw, so large, the light  
so large I opened, too large  
you were coming. Some voice  
kept saying  
don't be afraid, I was enraged  
Stupid! you stupid...!

Fear is nothing, fear  
is such a small thing.

Death was born to me when you were born.  
The Sunday morning I labored to give you up  
they moved the sun back an hour to wait.

Everyone thought  
I thought  
there were two of you.  
You came to me too large, I  
was too young. They laid you  
on my ripped belly  
too small, too small,  
You had outgrown me.

And then you came, too large you came  
larger than anything that had ever happened  
larger than anything that will ever happen.

Shattering everything, Love came  
and ripped through me  
the violent encounter of my life  
I was not prepared



my heart broke

open my

baby boy

opened

me

Love, I had not known love before.  
I will not know love again, no man

could ever pull me like you  
turned me  
my body and soul  
back around  
down to you, so small, now at my breast  
too large,

I was not prepared  
too small

I was not prepared

like the famous Pieta, the too large

Son in his Mother's small lap  
I took you to see,  
no one had told me, strange  
how women never tell

God died when you were born.  
He was too small.

-----

I brought you home  
the house was too small  
the father too small, I

was too small

you lifted my arms  
you said grow  
you arranged them  
around you  
you called me  
Mother

I loved you

the only thing that has ever matched your size  
has been my love for you

you kept growing straight up  
I kept growing to catch up

I was Jack, the young boy  
I sold my cow for the magic seed  
I climbed the giant beanstalk  
for the golden egg  
I met there instead

the giant

I was the little tugboat that cried  
I was the little tugboat that tried

-----

When I conceived you, I conceived the world  
and Death was born to me when you were born.  
Never again did I believe in war  
the world too large  
my country too small.

So that now as you grow  
to the age of the soldier  
I am amazed, I am unbelieving  
that any mother  
has ever given  
her son  
to the bloodstained hands of war

just when I've opened enough  
just when I'm large enough

it is you going  
into the larger world.

And now I go out, this too-small girl  
who birthed a giant into the world  
this too-small girl who raised up a giant

is pulled and bled and ripped and grown  
into the larger world and comes now

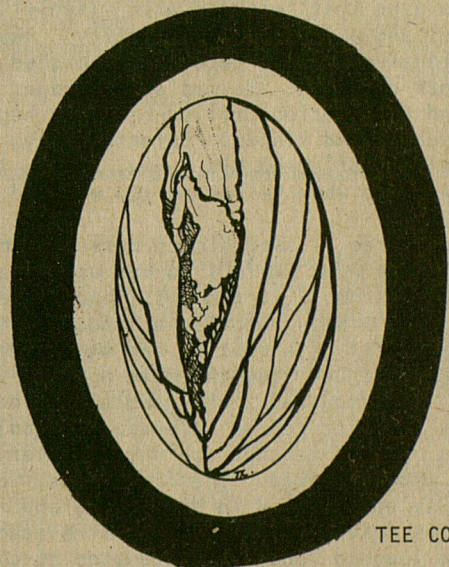
large into the world I follow you out

you said grow

you lifted my arms, my son  
no longer my son, the son  
I love you, you leave me  
now I will always be pregnant with the world  
you arrange my arms around it

I ride it between my legs

I am huge



TEE CORINNE



# NONVIOLENT MOTHERING

By Anne H. Martin

December, 1978. At this time last year, my son Devin, and I entered the worst crisis we had yet faced in our four years together. He went into an emotional tailspin that terrified my husband, Doug, and me. Emotional problems are difficult to understand or correct. Fear, grief, anger and guilt overwhelmed the three of us. Doug and I had to analyze our relationship with Dev, and then we had to have the courage to admit that we had made some serious mistakes. This process of self-examination was extremely difficult for me. I felt that the fault was chiefly mine, because I was with Dev all day. My self-respect was nearly shattered, and I began to fear for my own sanity. But, I knew that Dev's emotional well-being depended upon me. I had to face the fact that I had hurt Dev in some way.

What had I done to create the anger, violence, and fear that our small four-year-old unleashed? Until Dev exploded, I never knew that the fury in him existed. How could I be so out of touch with my own child? In order to understand our nightmare, I had to retrace the events and pressures that built one upon the other, increasing the tension and finally causing Dev to explode.

Dev was always a restless, easily excited child. When he was an infant, the only thing that calmed him was rocking in an automatic swing. Doug and I ate dinner in time to the click-click of the swing. By the time Dev was four, he had become a short, sturdy little fellow with wavy brown hair, blue eyes that twinkled with mischief, a huge smile, and a friendly personality. Dev was never aggressive, and he hated to be pushed or hit by other children. He was always eager to please, and his emotions filled him with hugs, tears, laughter and kisses. Unfortunately, his emotions always affected his tummy, and he frequently threw up when he became too excited.

When he was three, I sent him to nursery school four mornings a week while I worked as a teacher's aide in adult school. I thought I had chosen the nursery school wisely, wanting a school that would have the security of a routine and enough discipline to protect Dev from the more aggressive children. Unfortunately, the gentle routine was in reality a strict regime enforced by a bullying directress. Dev's teacher was a young, very gentle woman whom he liked. The directress, however, occasionally substituted in his class, and her presence was felt throughout the entire school. If a child laughed loudly or attempted to chatter with the other children, the directress thundered at her or him demanding silence. Dev was terrified of her and began to throw up in the morning.

Sometimes I had to go to work during the afternoon, and I scheduled Dev to remain at school all day on Wednesday. He did not want to be marched in and forced to nap in the afternoon. He screamed and threw up. The directress berated him and isolated him in a back room. Dev began to cry every morning. Once he threw up shortly after he arrived at school, and they forced him to mop up his vomit. Then he was sent to the corner. I find it hard to believe now that I accepted this violent treatment of my child. At that time, I thought Dev could control his vomiting and was just trying to get his own way. I did not want him to think that he could go through life avoiding things in this way. The teacher told me I should put Dev in school four full days a week until he settled into the nap routine. I agreed, and Dev was forced to accept a disgusting environment. He finally did go without resisting.

I kept him on this routine for three weeks. When I picked him up, he looked drawn and exhausted. He was impossible to control at home. He would refuse to do anything I asked, and he ran screaming around the house. At that time, I thought spanking was an acceptable method of discipline. I began to spank Dev more frequently, trying to subdue him. I thus heaped more violence and repression on his already overloaded emotions. It was as if he were a wild horse that I was trying to break. And he almost broke.

I finally let Dev go back to morning sessions. He was relieved and seemed more relaxed and happy. I took him out of the school in June. I had begun to hear an increasing number of disturbing stories about the school, but I did not really comprehend the damage I had done to Dev by sending him there. I also did not understand the damage I was doing with my treatment of him at home. Nevertheless, I did take him out of the school.

Luckily, I found a nursery school in the fall that was based on love and nonviolence, one which emphasized children's interactions with one another. The teachers imposed no rigid routines. Dev had not learned to get along easily with other children, because the old nursery school did not allow children to interact. He had lots to learn.

I was no longer working. In July I had had my second baby, and Dev now had to cope with having a little brother. He was no longer the center of everyone's attention. He seemed to accept the baby beautifully, but I was still having trouble with him. Our battles increased in intensity. My anger began to frighten me. I was getting out



of control. Dev had tantrums and then threw up. I was tired of mopping up after him and took it personally. One afternoon I remember making him sit in his vomit on his bed until he stopped screaming. By the time the whole episode was over, we were both crying.

By Christmas last year, I was run-down physically and emotionally, and by New Year's I was seriously ill with viral pneumonia. I was too weak to lift the baby or walk farther than the bathroom. We had to hire a woman to care for me and the children. She was not a bad sort, but Dev was afraid of her. He was also upset, because Mommy was no longer caring for him. The woman, in jest, said she would spank him with a strap if he misbehaved. I would never have let her do such a thing, and she had never even touched Dev. He was too young to know all that. He turned against me. I suppose he thought I had totally abandoned him. One afternoon the woman went home a half-hour before my husband came home. Dev lost his temper over something. I no longer remember what. He screamed and hit me. I was furious and spanked him. Then I sank into a chair and nearly blacked out. Doug came home, and he punished Dev again.

By the time I was well, Dev was emotionally ill. Doug and I were heartsick and confused. What had we done? We loved our child. We thought that we were well-educated, nonviolent people. The next month was a nightmare. Dev's uncontrollable fury was aimed full-blast at us. His anger frightened us, and it frightened him even more. His fear of his own emotions caused him to be hounded by strange anxieties too numerous to be believed. "Mommy," he said, when we were in the store, "I almost knocked down those clothes." He had only brushed lightly against some blouses. "Mommy, I kicked Colin in the head." He had not touched the baby. The list went on. I suppose the things he confessed were things he feared he would do - things he wanted to do.

One afternoon I took him to the movies. It was a cold winter day, and the rain was pounding down around us. Dev was in a fragile mood. He was excited about the movie but afraid he would throw up. By this time, I had gone to the head of Dev's new nursery school and had received help and comfort. Dev was now in school five mornings a week, because he was better when he was away from me. That hurt me. His teacher showed me how violent I had been. I had subjected my child to physical and emotional aggression. She helped me to see how both Doug and I had gone wrong, and she showed us how we could help Dev through this period.

Dev and I enjoyed the movie, and he did not throw up. We stopped for a bowl of ice-cream after the show, and when we climbed back in the car, his mood changed. For a reason I no longer remember, he burst into a tantrum. He threw himself at me. I followed the teacher's instructions and told him I would not let him hit me. I held him firmly and tried desperately to speak calmly. For over fifteen minutes we struggled. The rain continued to pour down around us. I did not dare drive. He might have sprung at me. Finally he

became more calm and began to whimper. He made me want to cry with him. "Please, Mommy," he said, "put a big piece of cardboard between us so I won't hit you." When we stopped at my mother's apartment to pick up the baby, he laughed hysterically and crawled through a puddle. My mother looked at me, and her eyes were wide with fear.

That evening Dev had terrible tantrums. He attacked me again. Doug and I took turns holding him. We cringed when he screamed and banged around the house. After Dev finally fell into an exhausted sleep, I sat by the fireplace. Doug had built a fire to cut the cold dampness. I shook from emotional and physical fatigue. I drank a glass of wine, and then the tears came - tears of shame, and fear and sadness. I cried until I could cry no more, and then I too slept. Very gradually, Dev pulled out of his emotional break-up. Doug and I learned painfully and slowly how to treat him with love and nonviolence. We had to recognize and combat the violence and lack of control in ourselves.

I cannot say that things are perfect and smooth now. No one can be a perfect parent. Dev is much stronger and resilient emotionally. His big smile is back, and the violent behavior has mostly gone away. Dev and I still have tense days when we are angry with each other. I have to struggle to overcome my own urge to scream at him in frustration or spank him when he seems to be deliberately trying to make me angry.

Just this month, I at long last discovered that if I speak in a low voice and combat his high-strung behavior with a determined calm, I can diffuse his tantrums. Being a loving, nonviolent mother is the toughest challenge I have ever faced. I have never felt so ashamed and humiliated, so frightened and frustrated. I used to think that I was a highly intelligent woman capable of doing anything, and I had been confident that I would be an excellent mother. I thought anyone could be a mother. I do not feel perfect and strong now. I do feel more human. Nothing has demanded more of me than motherhood. As a result of last year's nightmare, I have grown as a person, as a woman. ♀

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*This article is included with some important reservations on my part. Anne Martin's story is written in an individual voice, but it is the experience of too many women raising children. The origins of violence in the family are societal, not individual. The structure of the family, the isolation of the mother and child, the institutions children children are exposed to - all mirror the violence of our culture. Her article does not reflect this. By BG*

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# THE MYTH TURNED INSIDE OUT



SALLY BAILEY



My initiation into motherhood arose from a grasping desire to be nurtured myself. A child's dream, "If I have a baby, I will never be deserted." Inside out the dream unfolded; I was trapped by a fragment of the myth of motherhood.

The mythos of motherhood traps us, as mothers and as daughters. A whip, a crutch, a mask, it distorts the reality of our experience. It creates an untenable dichotomy. Mother as Goddess: all nurturing, self-sacrificing, the font of unconditional love. Or Mother as Destroyer: cold, angry, crazy. The imagery leaves little room for the integration of our experience as whole women.

My own life as a mother has had only some of the form and little of the expected content of the mythic man/woman/child scenario. I got pregnant in Central Java, by my lover from California. I had been gone almost a year and was extremely disoriented and was very young. I arrived home before I allowed myself to deal with my condition. My lover, Philip, was gay and beginning to deal with it again. He had only dreamed of ever fathering a child. He was ecstatic and terrified simultaneously. I was in agony emotionally - if I had an abortion, it would be the ultimate treachery; if I had the child, I would have to raise myself and the child to maturity at the same time. I forfeited choice to the emotional paralysis I felt. In my gut I knew Philip would be leaving, his interlude with heterosexuality over. I tried to fool myself. If I had his child, perhaps he would stay. I desired nurturing and love and ended up in a common trap: young, pregnant and terrified. During my pregnancy, I felt my consciousness submerged. I was slowed down, numb. The creation taking place within my womb was irresistible. I cried, fretted, slept for days and still the child within me grew. Whether or not I came to terms with it, the life went on.

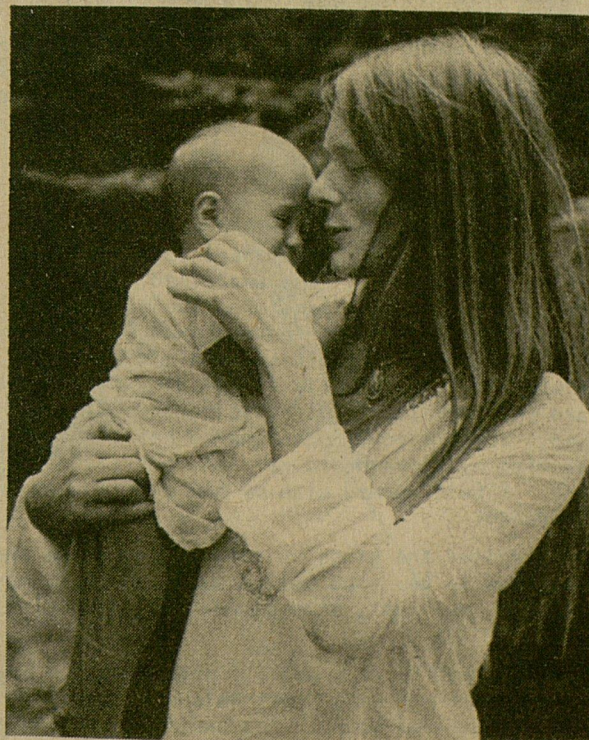
I found few outlets for my feelings. The midwives at the Birth Center were interested in diet and whether or not the baby's head was engaged. They were preoccupied with the myth of Earth Mother. I had no desire to share my demons with them. The isolation I felt during my pregnancy was profound. My companions were Phil's friends - all of whom were gay. I became a figure at the local gay bar: Phil's wife, pregnant and underage, who hung out with all the gay boys. Those men were my only support system but they could not relate to or love my body as I experienced pregnancy. It was as if I was betrayed by my dreams, my body and my mate. I can remember worrying about how the baby would wiggle and twist inside when I cried. The feelings that coursed through my blood coursed through hers. Already I was powerless to protect this little being.

I was pregnant, by my calculation, for ten months. The last several weeks I weighed more than two hundred pounds. Every night before I would go to sleep, I would think, "Perhaps tonight." When I woke up I would hope, "Maybe this will be the day." The evening I did go into labor, Philip

had a lover there. The first part was long and slow - the last bit was fast, painful and amazing all at once. That's the part they call second stage, where you can actually feel the baby's head in your vagina, being pushed out between your legs. The people watching could see her

head appearing and receding. They asked me if I wanted to watch in the mirror while I pushed. I felt guilty because I had no interest in catching that first glimpse of my child. I was engrossed in my body. During an incredible push, she came flying out, all slippery and wet. Philip's hands were outstretched to catch her, but she slipped right up on my belly. The response in my heart when I looked at her was a blast of fierce love. A totally unsuspected hook. I loved this little being. Compelled by a million year old love of Mother for Daughter, I was to be responsible for this woman-child in a desperate society, during a particularly dark era. In a sense, that love and responsibility I felt towards Sophia required me to change, to take better care, to survive.

Sophia's birth provided a point of departure, an interface for change. I had made a commitment to grow myself and my daughter. In order to create a supportive and integrated reality, I took giant risks. I left Philip, assured of his sharing in Sophia's rearing. I've gotten a job and I've realized my own lesbianism. The women with whom Sophia and I lived made it possible for me to work. My lover and our friends eased my terror of being left alone. By choosing a community of women, I grew stronger and more self-loving. This growth on my part has an important model, of her mother taking care, loving, and being able to create a niche where she and I can grow together. ♀



LYNDA KOOLISH



# A DAY IN THE LIFE

by Angelika d'Chapparel

Bone tired from working all day in the fog, clearing log jams from the Albion river, I walked the last one and a half mile stretch home. The historical, near century old barn that I lived in with my twelve year old daughter Isadora, was my destination. The end of Autumn wind was dispersing any shade of optimism to which I was trying desperately to cleave. In the midst of a biting breeze up my wet trouser legs I shouted, "Fucking wind! Why don't you just go to Hell where they need you! Can't you see that I am tired and cold and you are making me miserable." The wind immediately died down. I was not surprised. Things happen that way now and again. Sorry tears sprang into my eyes. It was almost November. Less than a mile to go, I tried to console myself. A little breeze flew ominously past, ruffling my hair. I stuck my tongue out at it, banked my collar against my neck and squeezed a sob back down my throat. "No power," I said to the giant eucalyptus tree in passing. "No power whatsoever. I feel so disenchanting."

I blew my red, running nose. The tissue in my pocket was wet from the tople in the river I had that afternoon. A piece of tissue got stuck in one nostril. Stopping momentarily to fish for the tissue, I looked up to see my neighbor in her sky-blue Chevy driving toward me. "Naturally!" I thought. The woman of my dreams would come tootling down the road now. Lovely Gloria with her sparkling eyes, enticing intelligence, vivacious perspectives. Light. Etheric. Meanwhile, to offer life the contrasting juxtaposition I so dearly love, I stand here covered with mud, in the fog, dripping wet with a lousy piece of toilet paper lost in my left nostril! "Maybe I'll kill myself," I said to the raven that seemed to laugh as it flew overhead. "Caw ha ha ha ah," the raven replied.

The Chevy cruised up beside me and pulled to a halt. Gloria unrolled her window sticking her head out through the space where the glass had been. "Why Victoria," she exclaimed, "you look absolutely beautiful!" she drew the word beautiful out slowly with her fading Texan accent. My heart fluttered. I could see plainly that she was sincere. Immediately I filled my part as the "hard working-class River Rivetter!" "Gloria," I mused, "How are you?" She shared her difficulties with my sympathetic ear and understanding heart. I felt warmed with my new position as confidante.

Gloria rolled the glass up between us, where the space used to be. She pulled away, up the bumpy dirt road, due east, with blonde curls bouncing.

Chuckling softly to myself, I picked up the bag of groceries and sang Ricky Nelson's "Lonesome Town" on the way home. "You can find a dream or

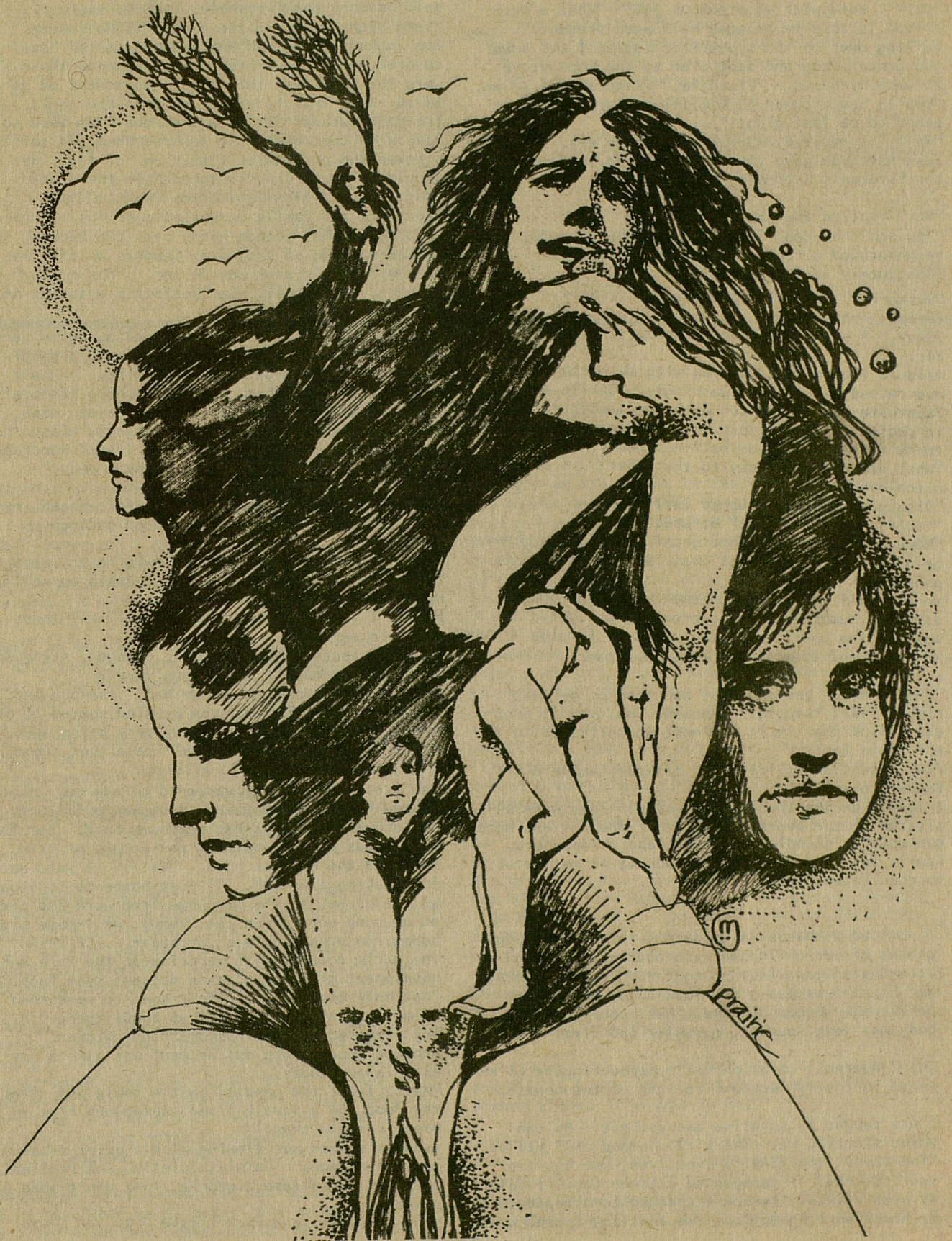
two, to last you all through the years, but the only price you pay is a heart full of tears." "Gadzooks," I reflected. No wonder my personality is a little warped, growing up on songs with images like that.

Around the last bend the barn came into view. It looked friendly enough. IF only the roof didn't leak like a sieve; the windows weren't broken; the walls were insulated; the wiring would stop sparking when the frigidaire was plugged in; the winter wood wasn't wet and the ancient pasture fences weren't falling down, letting the horses escape into mid-night escapades continually, things might feel a little cozier. But then why should I complain, I thought to myself, after all, we have running water and a shower this year! And after all, I am a single mother weaning herself off of welfare, working all day on the river project for minimum wages, raising adolescent children, training an orphaned stallion, growing an adequate garden, often hitch-hiking and walking twenty-five miles to work and back, pioneering the field of publishing, searching for my menstrual cycle that has been lost for three years; dreaming of a career as an actress, writer, singer and Olympian masseuse for the 1980's team; NOT to mention RELATIONSHIPS with lovers, children, animals, comrades and community. . .

"Maybe I will take a month off work and get a job moonlighting at the Playboy Club in San Francisco," I laughingly told my cat named "Lassie" as he ran up the road to greet me. "I will just slide into that world of vice, make some fast bucks so I can buy a stove for the girls' room and slide back home." Lassie meowed his reply and rubbed his furry orange mane on my tired ankles. The smell of redwood burning, the summer's hay stacked in the barn and the cooking carrots all ran together surrounding me like a lover's midnight poem. I felt capable of venturing into the evening with a certain amount of goodwill.

The sound of young women's laughter was coming from behind the closed door of the living quarters. Opening the door and entering I was greeted by the most lovely sight. Snuggled in the arms of the large oversized, brown ranch rocker, were Isadora and two of her companions, Camile and Tapathata. Camile was sitting on one of the rocker's arms with her arm stretched cat-like over the rocker's back. Her hand gently stroked Isadora's brow. As I walked in, Tapathata hopped up, and tending the evening fire, arranged the cinders in the wood stove to suit the flame for the cooking meal. The massage table was magically transformed into a supper table all set for four. Freshly picked flowers were arranged in the thrift shop vase of white porcelain. Napkins were neatly folded beside the china plates, and my handmade redwood chopsticks were placed with the carved







initials face up. The animals had all been given their supper.

"Oh!" I said with spontaneous joy. "What a surprise! Is this my belated Halloween present?" Walking over to the typewriter table, I set down the grocery bag and went over to the wood stove to warm my hands. "Victoria," Isadora said to me, "you'll never guess in a million years what happened to me last night." "Well," I replied playfully, "let me try. A headless horseman gave you all a ride to Mendocino to the Fireman's Halloween Ball?"

"No," replied the three.

"You saw the grand Pope of Rome at a friendly neighborhood witch-burning party in town?"

"Absolutely not!" gasped Camile.

"Victoria," Isadora spoke out impatiently, "be serious."

"Okay," I said, "but first you must answer a riddle."

Isadora looked much annoyed with my shenanigans and raised her eyebrow warningly. Camile and Tapathata were delighted with the scenario, but in dedicated comradeship with Isadora, responded to my riddle condition half-heartedly.

"What did one ghost say to the other?" I asked mischievously.

"Disappear creep," laughed Camile.

"You're nowheresville," offered Isadora.

"Nope," I responded, "one ghost said to the other on a cold dark Hallowmas Eve, 'Do you believe in people?'"

We were all in mutual agreement with the philosophical humor the riddle brought to light. I was feeling uplifted to the point of forging through the cold and damp to the outside shower.

"You'll never believe what happened to me last night," said Isadora. "Knowing you, you'll probably think that it is the most wonderful thing in the whole world."

"Pay attention to Isadora!" ordered Camile condescendingly.

I looked at the three young women. They were all sitting on the oversized rocker. The kittens were contentedly sleeping on their laps. Tapathata, Camile and Isadora were all looking at me now with focused intensity.

I noticed a change in Isadora's face. The pudgy cheeks of her childhood were suddenly replaced by accentuated jaw lines. Angular. Proud. Strong. Her hazel eyes had a new look about them. Not unlike the Wisdom of Time. Her bouncing young body was long, curved, muscular and firm.

The fingernail paint on her tapered fingers glistened in the reflected firelight of the hearth.

I was caught by surprise and delight. My own voice startled me. The girls jumped as I yelled, "You mean! You MEAN! . . . you, you, you started your period?" I managed to stammer out. I felt my eyes dilate. My heart changed to a rapid beat. My knees were trembling like a willow in the wind.

Tiny tears of happiness sprang to my eyes. I stood motionless for what seemed like an eternity. Momentarily the girls joined me there. "Yes," said Isadora calmly, shyly, transformatively. "Last night right in the middle of Halloween." She looked at me with the most beautiful hazel-colored eyes I have ever seen. Somehow those were the same eyes that I saw the moment of her birth when they first opened into the world. The dark lashes that grew from the lids were so lovely in contrast. She lowered them and softly stroked the pure white kitten on her lap. Her shoulder length sandy colored hair threw off golden blonde highlights from the firelight. Tapathata and Camile wore gentle smiles of mixed emotions. They joined hands over the back of the rocker forming an arch over Isadora as they sat on the rocker's arms beside her. "How noble," I thought, "how regal. How perfectly graceful and true."

I walked slowly over to them, swallowing my verbal exuberance, seeing how it offered a painful contrast to their delicate flowering. I knelt down in front of them, gently touching Isadora's knee. Leaning toward her I took a slow, deep, breath. Savoring the moment I lightly kissed her rosy cheek. "Congratulations," I said honorably "you have grown into a young woman's body."

Similar to the moments of time before death, my life flashed with lightning speed through my head.

Hadn't I been instrumental in raising at least a dozen children since my parents' death as well as my own daughter?

Hadn't I indeed worked hard and well all these years in service?

Hadn't I sacrificed, amended, changed, struggled and transformed all these long years?

Yes! I had. Yes indeed, we had. Isadora and I. The thoughts flying through my mind seemed to be coming to a climax. I felt my very being open. In that moment I had a mental image that seemed like what one might call a vision.

The Statue of Liberty appeared before me. Appeared to be me. Her blazing torch was brilliant.

Her crown was light resting on my head. Her feet were lotus petals, walking the waters of life.

Her head the Heavens bled. "Well!" I said out loud taking a breath. "I just happened to stop at the market on the way home from work and picked up some very expensive, yummy, well-made with honey, no preservatives, or sugar...ICE CREAM."

The girls cheered with surprise at the rare announcement of me purchasing dessert type food.

"Not only that, but I didn't seem to need much sleep last night, so I got up about three A.M. and prepared a crisp Albion-fried chicken!"

Another cheer broke out as meat was also a novelty in our house.

"May I light the candles on the table and offer the food and a lovely linen tablecloth from my Hope/Treasure chest?"

Isadora's face was flowing with a quiet transparency of changes. Calmly, quietly, she replied, "Do what you please, Victoria, just don't make a scene."

"I understand, Isadora," I said. ♀



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she was a thin lady.  
her hands and her voice  
shook  
ever so slightly  
when she spoke

she said  
I threw out god and my mother  
when I was fourteen or fifteen.

god went over easy  
it was mother came hard.

Judy Askew

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Jeanice,  
you loved  
the woman's face,  
your moth-winged hands covering  
her lips, like shadowed hills;  
her cheeks worn  
like a woman measuring flour.

I wish I had a mother for you  
but they are lost in the nursing homes.  
A field of moths rising  
in the irised night,  
they whisper as you enter,  
"A daughter,"  
brushing your arms  
with their winged  
hands.

Janice Zerfas

## Rendezvous

Lunch with Grandmother, Mom and me. Three generations of women. My mother hesitates to walk to the restaurant even though it is a short walk and a cool summer day. She walks stiffly, as if she is afraid. She talks about the nap she will take when she gets home. She clutches her sweater and her words are slurred more than usual this morning.

We walk by the hospital on the way to lunch. "I was volunteering there as a nurse's aid," she said. "Only for three days."  
"How come?"

"Because I didn't like it. I sat around for thirty or forty minutes at a time before there was anything to do."

"Perhaps another job?" I suggest.  
She does not answer. She does not wish to try again. She does not wish to venture outside her three room apartment that she meticulously cleans every day before taking her long nap.

I feel angry about what the years of medication and doctors' labels have done to my mother. I try to see into the future. She is now fifty years old, a walking zombie from fourteen years of heavy medication. What will she be like at sixty and what relationship will I have to her?

We haven't much of a relationship now. She is afraid of being intruded upon and treats her daughters like she treats the rest of the world, like strangers that may cause her harm. She hides within her helplessness and listlessness. Every once in awhile she really looks at me. When she does she notes my sadness. She asks once. I respond, "I'm all right."

Grandmother looks forward to and enjoys the walk. She is seventeen years older than my mother. She talks a lot and feels little inhibition about

saying what she thinks or feels on any subject. She chides my mother for wearing a sweater on such a warm day. My mother removes the sweater. Over lunch, Grandmother offers to buy me some new clothes. I know she doesn't have much money and refuse, saying that I don't need any. "Well, if you need some, let's go buy you some." "I'm all right."

Grandmother has high blood pressure and high blood sugar. We talk about relaxation techniques that can help her control her condition. She shares her dreams with me, both the pleasurable ones and the nightmares. She tells me of the voices and spirits she hears and about her belief in God and life eternal. I always feel a bit uncomfortable around Grandmother. She is like an actress whose presence fills up the entire stage. Her honesty leaves me feeling embarrassed and bare. I love her very much and will miss her when she dies.

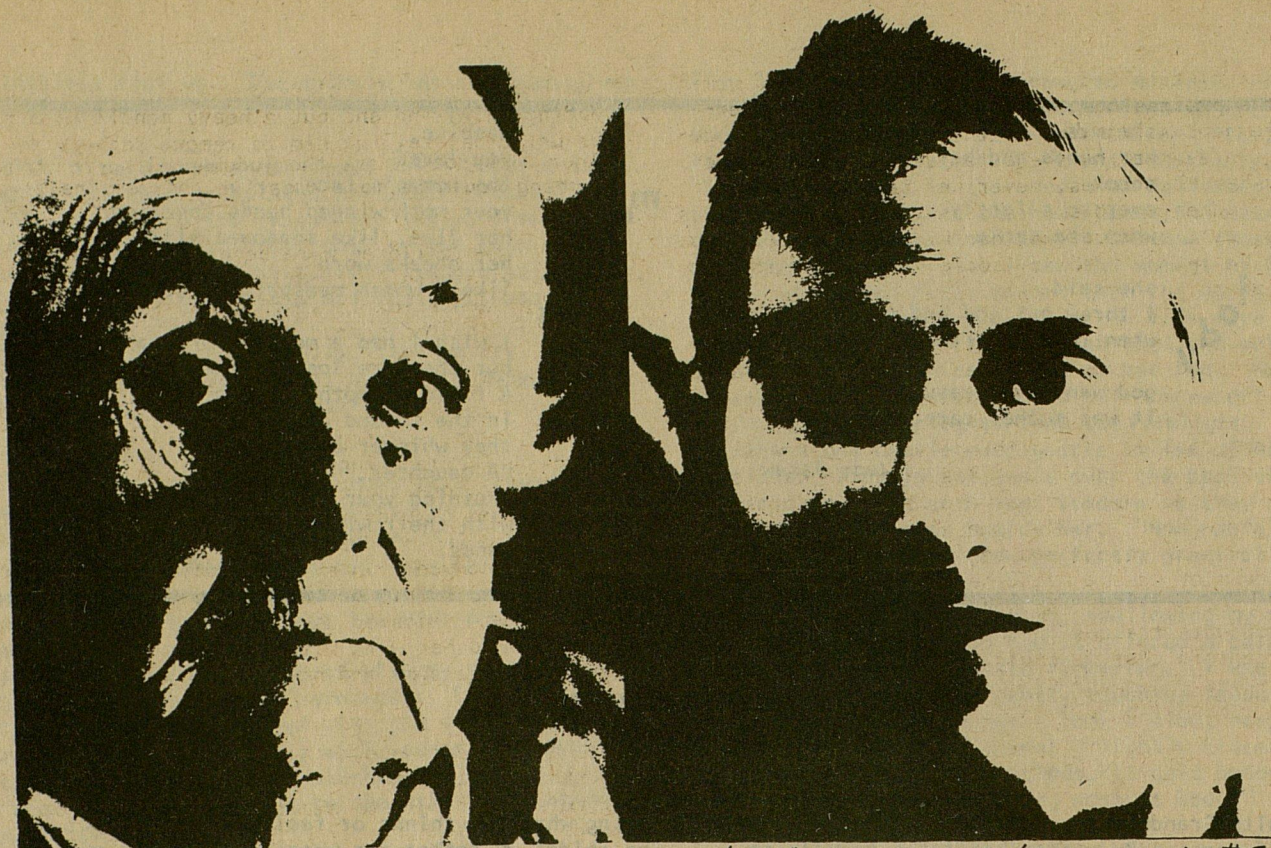
Mom orders lunch. She speaks loudly and slurs her words. I am embarrassed. I am angry because I am embarrassed. I am angry with the woman who takes the order because she is so obviously unsympathetic and annoyed. I am hurt because my mother is not someone of whom I can be proud. She is someone I love as I would love and care for a sick child. My arm encircles her shoulder and she feels so fragile.

She takes a cab home after lunch and Grandmother and I walk home. We ask if she minds. "No, I'm always alone. I'm used to it."

I'm hurt for my mother's loneliness and angry that she will do nothing to change her life in order to be more alive. I feel how the years have beat upon her and with every passing, beating year, she has retreated further until she hardly feels at all. ♀

Patricia Marrone





TEE CONNING

"mabel and me"

matrilin eage series #3

# My Mother, My Daughters, Me

By VIRGINIA BUTLER

Part One

When I was a child I was preparing for being a mother. My own mother was what I call a Super-Professional Mother. When I first saw her as a separate entity from me I was in awe of her greatness, and the feeling lasts to this day! She could do anything she wanted to do. In 1924 she designed and built a ball-bearing turning teeter-totter. I have pictures of the teeter-totter in action and can prove that it was the finest ever built. In the warm sunshine air of the place she chose for our first home my little brother and I would ride that thing up and down in a wonderful whirling motion over a base of soft sea sand. The sound of the sea nearby, combined with the lullaby of her sweet voice, made for me an early childhood beyond compare.

In my twenties I passed through the resenting phase when I could not balance my own capabilities against what I saw as her's. Later, my own daughters would pass through the same phase of imbalance. Strong daughters, strong mothers. We spend a lifetime trying to outdo a strong

mother. "See how well I am writing! Just as well or better than you did it."

My mother was a great R.N. I have talked to well-known M.D.'s who still remember her. One of her patients told me that when my mother walked into a room of sickness wearing her starched whites, it was as if health and joy walked in like a brightness with her. Her cap with its black stripe was, for me, better than a warrior's helmet or even a crown.

During World War I, my mother defied the custom of flag salute, encouraged my father to refuse wartime fighting, and battled for autonomy in the medical profession for nurses. She did all this alone. And all the time she gave tenderness and love to her two children until periodic mental depression thrust her under. Her own sisters helped her when the problems mounted too high. And so I must salute my aunts too.

My mother's name was Ruth Shore. Florence Nightingale's true family name was Shore. Like F.N.,



who revolutionized medicine and established women in the professions, my mother suffered her terrible depressions due to the constant rate of defeat in everything she attempted to do. She won only her skirmishes, never her battles or her wars. When at 58 she felt as if her main job was done, that of educating her kids, she took her own life in retaliation for social injustice against womanhood.

She was quick and efficient with her last act. She prepped herself, prepped me, set her affairs in order. She phoned me and instructed me with her last will before she gave herself rest. She did not consider any alternative but her will to get out of the losing battles with the Patriarchal system. She was unaware of these terms I use now. Had she only been able to wait until the winds of change had begun to blow! I used to daydream of how we might have been able to help her. But now that she has four direct feminist descendents trained in the professions I still am not certain that we could...even if she were alive and young and still fighting her unending skirmishes with failure.

## Part Two

For my daughters, Becky and Beth, I must sculpt with restraint...candid with care in the telling for they are very much alive. Becky was born a maximum child. She was fashioned naturally to be healthy and efficient. Prenatally I took care of both of us; she in turn can be said to have finished the job "raising" me that my own mother started. Becky completed my maturation as I worked hard at being the best possible of mothers for her. The patriarchal system was a challenge to her as she tromped her way joyously to achievement after achievement in her highly competitive environment. She lives today on her own apple farm in California tending animals and plants for her own enjoyment. She teaches sixth grade in a pleasant school nearby and has good rapport with a Speech Pathologist husband. It is difficult to summarize the life of a living human being, and in order to describe Becky as my child, I have had to speak with surety. This is the truth for me. I speak as a mother of a daughter. What others might speak or what she herself might say, I have taken into consideration.

Beth, the second of my two daughters, was born with artistic creativity in her hands, and in her mind the psychic power of seeing herself in others. She responded to her own life force in early childhood by climbing trees and riding their limbs in the wildest winds, and by riding the backs of the goats and ponies on the farm. She danced airily as if floating along the top rails of fences. After the earthchild Becky, this second daughter stunned me mentally and physically because of the chances she took. I could not understand why she seemed unaware of the careful efficiencies of her sister who was seven years older than she. Several of her early teachers tried to tell me that something was wrong with her...so I questioned. One of the teachers, a woman, labelled Beth a "queer duck."

I walked out of this classroom like a slowly advancing whirlwind and put a heavy pencil note to the principal telling him to remove Beth to another classroom where the judgmental approach to teaching would be more creative and less restrictive.

Since my two children were born far apart I was able to devote full attention to each of them in turn. My education in selfhood went on to a new maturity with the second daughter. My own ability now to tune into the artist in me is directly due to Beth's influence. I remember how I felt the day I saw Beth's first ceramic sculpture. It was an artwork showing her Welsh mare asleep lying down, forelegs folded, regal neck arching comfortably, great eyes closed, muzzle nearly touching the ground. A great artist once told me that the bodies of deer and horses are the hardest to reproduce. In my daughter's piece of fired clay was the spirit of the living mare. In a moment I was released as if from a shell or prison. She did her work with ease; and I felt courage to do the same and sculpt with words the animals I love.

Once a few years ago when I took some time off my household duties to work as a volunteer Registrar of Voters I requested permission to write the word "Mother" on the line for "Occupation or Employment" in the application forms for a number of young mothers who requested this from me. The County Clerk turned red in the face with anger, and looked very much like a person about to have a cardio-vascular accident. He sputtered, "There are thousands of 'em! You can't do that!" A small, well-dressed woman seated beside the man asked, "But what about Foster-mothers?"

I worked at my job of motherhood for years. I refuse to quell expression of my pride when I talk about my motherhood and my daughters. Determined to overcome the mysterious curse that was my mother's fate, determined to stop it where it was and not to pass it on to my own daughters, I fought often violently to turn the whole awful path in some new direction that might work out right and for our good as women. Sometimes my struggle was blind. Other times I saw results. I validated my daughters as individuals. I countered society's condemnation of their femaleness and validated their beings.

## Part Three

Now I will say a few feelings in words about me as a woman. I grieve. I am fifty seven years old as of Halloween 1978. I am a witch. I could not save my mother. That is the grief. I think that I witnessed my mother's defeats from the first days of my life. I think that I live in an effort to overcome the feelings that were aroused in me by mother's life of misery. Knowing that men refused to give her the rights and privileges of an intelligent human being. I believe that some witches must be women who deal with their feelings in ways that are unknown to men. I do not think that I will live long enough to realize a healing; it will come in the century ahead. ♀



# THE WIND, THE RED JACKET

BY DOREEN STOCK

"This morning  
what is caught  
between the screen and the window  
is your daily work stained red of the  
blood you have been given by your mother.

There is only one way to honor  
this gift; you must open the window  
from the inside, take the work  
shaped like a jacket and put it on  
every day until it is worn to silk.

Whenever you wear it, wherever you are  
you will be at one with the sea."

Think of it this way, my mother's name is a place.  
Do I come in bowing? Do I come in raving? Do I come  
in to polish the furniture? Do I come in weeping,  
staring around, asking is this not a place to know  
what is sacred?

My grandmother's hands slowly setting out the plates  
with little red flowers on the rim, grandpa speaking  
then of their oldest daughter.

"She was pregnant with her first child and she  
was thrown from the car onto the road."

He holds up his own hand now as he says this, "I  
remember she was dying and she looked at me.  
"Pa, you look tired" she said. They could have saved  
her. If only they had known to cut off her arm  
she would have lived."

Who are you mother of my name I never knew? A  
few photographs, your olive skin, your dark  
eyes, the gangrene of your death running inextricably  
through the bodies of your mother and sisters giving  
birth to an anguish that flowers under their throats  
even now; and the pure white mortal sweat of your  
going out working its way into your fathers' eyes  
forever.

Bless the unborn child within you. I name it silence.  
I name it sorrow, name it hunger for the others, the  
living ones who need to touch their mother, who need  
to eat to live.

My name is Chiayah Anna. Daughter of Hannah  
Bloomer. We watch each other struggle to stand up  
in the little boats of these names. Look mother,  
I'm painting mine with words. I see yours hung  
with a few paintings, sculpture, family photographs;  
but mostly garlands of kindness. Remember how  
we were so tired after Rebecca was born and finally  
came home; So nervous and tired that you dropped a  
raw egg on your foot when it was time for breakfast?  
How we laughed?

You say eat; or you say "you're getting fluffy  
aren't you?"

You demand, I refuse.

You compare, I shrink.

You push, you push, I open

a book, I tell lies.

I demand, she refuses.

I compare, she shrinks.

I push, I push, she opens

a book, she tells lies.

We bang against each other. The broom, the  
square of dishwater, the pot of soup, the piece  
of clean white paper, the body of the old woman  
her grocery list needing to be gathered...we yell  
at each other; we do not know what we want; We want,  
we want.

You hurt me, I do not tell you how.

I hurt her. She squawks plenty. I learn  
from my daughter how to squawk plenty.

We all squawk like hell. Now we can't eat  
anymore. We say "You finished yet? Good.  
Now get out of here."



6

The white square floating your hand/grandmother  
your bones rise up in knuckles/familiar as diamonds/  
smooth shining position/ of a fish on a plate.

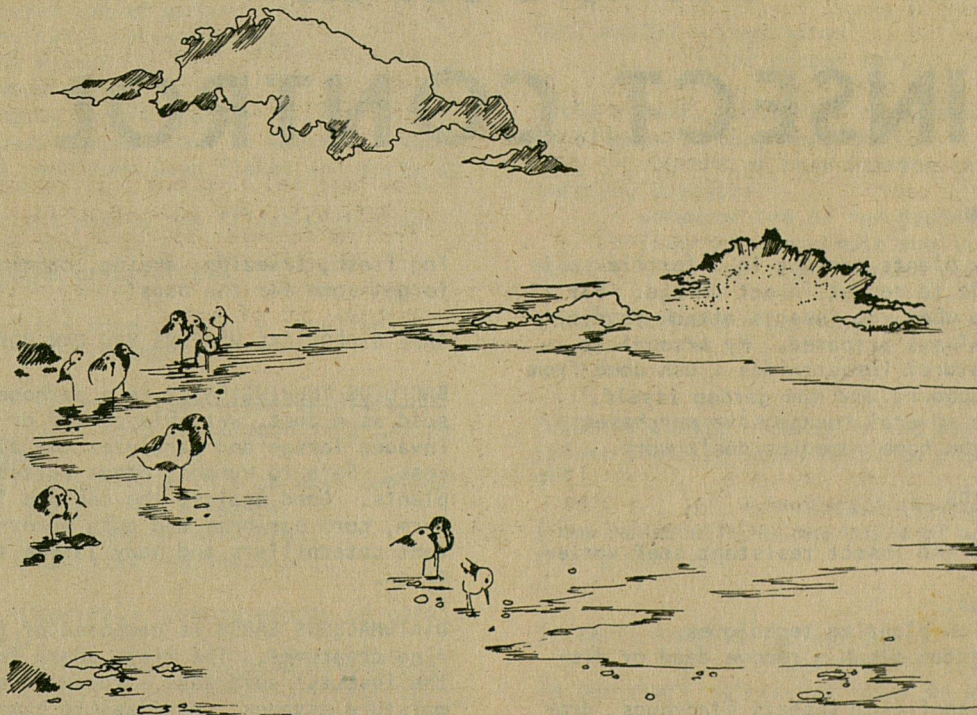
It is unspoken between us - it is one of the deepest  
blessings of my life that I never named a child for you.  
That they all know your living voice instead.

Someday a child streaming and bloody with  
grace and innocence will learn to talk and  
learn to say "My name is Hannah Bloome." Her  
hands growing years and years away beneath  
the cloth.

She is now this whisper in my ear:

You are the flesh pushed forward.  
You are the flame, the word.  
This next thing you put your hand  
to, how will it return her name  
to her...

*Excerpted from a longer work by Doreen Stock.*







# NATURAL INSECT CONTROL

By Rae Farrell

Strong healthy plants growing in a fertile soil seem to be able to resist insect damage. But what do you do when the insects attack your plants? I'm always prepared. My arsenal is ready! The natural insecticides I use come from the kitchen cupboard and the garden itself. I've also made several inexpensive purchases - just in case the home remedies don't work.

## THINK PREVENTION

1. Buy disease and insect resistant seed varieties.
2. Rotate crops.
3. Use companion planting techniques.
4. Keep the garden clean - remove dead or diseased plants.
5. Encourage beneficial insects (ladybugs, dragon flies, etc.) and toads.

Remember that you're planting vegetables for eat-

ing fresh, freezing, drying, canning and don't forget some for the bugs!

## SAFE BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS YOU CAN BUY:

**BACILLUS THURINGIENSIS** is a pathogenic bacterium sold as a dust, wettable powder or emulsion. It invades larvae and paralyzes the digestive process. Safe to humans, other vertebrates and plants. Good against the cabbage looper, cabbage worm, corn earworms and corn borers, cutworms, tent caterpillars and many larvae that attack trees.

**DIATOMACEOUS EARTH** is composed of fossilized marine creatures. The tiny, sharp fragments scratch the insects' soft waxy structures and the body moisture escapes. Harmless to humans. Good against leafhoppers, beetles, certain aphids, mites, slugs, and many others. Repeat use after a rain. Do not inhale the dust.



PYRETHRUM is made from dried, ground flowers of the perennial PAINTED DAISY (Chrysanthemum co-cineum). Safe for warm-blooded animals. Good against caterpillars, aphids, mites, beetles, leafhoppers and moths. You can also buy seed and grow it yourself. Pyrethrum will produce flowers the second year and is hardy in cold climates.

ROTENONE comes from derris and several other tropical plants. Non-toxic to humans and animals. Good against aphids, spider mites, imported cabbage worms, beetles and many other insects. Apply in the early evening and repeat if necessary. Read labels carefully to see if synthetic toxins have been added.

When bugs attack your garden, study the damage. Find the culprit and observe it with a magnifying glass. There are four stages of growth: egg, larva, pupa and adult. Some bugs like only one plant. Others are voracious and attack several different plants (e.g. aphids, red spider mites, slugs) Once you have identified the insect, half of the battle is over.

Before I get into non-toxic methods of control, I'd suggest hitting the bugs with a forceful jet of water. If that doesn't work, dissolve some pure soap flakes in a gallon of water and spray the plants. Leave on for a short time and rinse off the soap. And there's always the handpicking method for the less squeamish.

ANTS - red hot pepper and water/pour into the hill.

- tansy, mint, pennyroyal, sassafras.

APHIDS - forceful jet of water.

- soapy water, rinse leaves.
- onion spray.
- seaweed spray.
- stinging nettle tea.
- rhubarb leaves (boil in water for half

an hour, cool, add some soap flakes and spray on plants).

- a bright yellow pan filled with soapy water attracts them.

- rotenone or pyrethrum.

ASPARAGUS BEETLE - bone meal as a repellant.

- rotenone.

CABBAGE WORM - sprinkle wood ashes on plant.

- salt (one tablespoon in a gallon of water), spray.

- or sprinkle salt on dewy cabbage leaves two or three times a season.

- rotenone or pyrethrum.
- Bacillus Thuringiensis.

CORN EARWORM - sprinkle cayenne pepper on corn when it tassels.

- after the silks have wilted and begun to turn brown, drop mineral oil into the silk on the tip of each ear.

- Bacillus Thuringiensis.

CUCUMBER BEETLE - dust bone meal on dewy leaves.

CUTWORMS - collars (cardboard, tarpaper, or tins with the top and bottom cut out.

- place collar at least one inch deep in the soil; it should be at least two inches above the soil and one or two inches in diameter.

- try toothpicks, sticks, or small twigs in either side of the stem (cutworms encircle the stem).

- wood ashes sprinkled on the ground around the plant.

- eggshells (crushed) dug into the soil around the stem.

- tansy repels cutworms.

- Bacillus Thuringiensis.

FLEA BEETLE - dust the plant with wood ashes.

- pyrethrum or rotenone.

GRASSHOPPER - half-fill two-quart canning jars with one part molasses in ten parts water.

- hot pepper spray (hot peppers, pure soap and water).

MEXICAN BEAN BEETLE - handpick/destroy eggs.

- cedar chips boiled in water, spray.

- rotenone.

POTATO BEETLE - sweet basil spray or wood ashes.

dust the tops of dewy potato plants with wheat bran (causes the beetle to bloat up and rupture).

- rotenone.

RED SPIDER MITE - wash off with a jet of water.

- onion spray.
- pyrethrum.

ROOT MAGGOT - wood ashes.

- hot pepper spray.

SLUGS - salt, soot, lime or wood ashes sprinkled on slugs will dehydrate them.

- saucers of beer attract them, also sliced turnips, potatoes.

- wormwood tea or red pepper repels slugs.

- inverted grapefruit shells (each morning harvest the slugs hiding under your citrus dome)

TOMATO HORNWORM - sprinkle pepper on the tomato plant.

FUNGUS DISEASES - camomile tea used to water flat before planting seeds helps to prevent damping-off.

- horsetail (Equisetum) spray:

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup horsetails in one quart of water, boil for twenty minutes.

TO REPEL RABBITS - blood meal.

- Epsom salts (two Tablespoons in one quart water), sprinkle on plants.

- bone meal.

- cayenne pepper spray.

- a border of onions around the garden.



TO REPEL MOST ANIMALS- plant a border of wormwood around the garden.

Now let's go into the kitchen to try some blender magic and some heavy-duty teas. Hot tasting and strong smelling things make the best sprays. Here's an example:

BLEND one medium onion, one teaspoon very hot red pepper, three cloves garlic and one quart water. STRAIN and SPRAY.

CHIVES TEA for mildew on gooseberries, cucumbers, etc. Boil water, steep chives for fifteen minutes. Cool, strain and spray.

Chop up TOMATO LEAVES, boil in water, strain, let cool and use as a spray against aphids, black fly (on beans), and caterpillars. Also keeps cabbage butterfly away from cabbage.

When you're inventing sprays use onion, garlic, horseradish (both root and leaves) hot peppers, etc. Try using mums or marigolds. Grind nasturtiums as a spray for squash bugs. Blend leaves from plants that insects never seem to bother like lilac and many types of weeds and trees.

While you're in the kitchen, don't forget the HERBS. Herbs are amazingly pest free. To make an herb spray cover the herb with water, bring to a boil, remove from the heat and let stand ten minutes. Dilute with four parts water.

SWEET BASIL SPRAY - crush basil leaves, steep in a pail of hot water and leave overnight. Strain. Use as a non-toxic spray for all plants.

Make a THYME or CAMOMILE spray for mildew on plants.

Moths are discouraged by a spray made with mint, rosemary, tansy, sage or wormwood.

## RECIPES

### PEPPER SPRAY

one clove garlic	BLEND
two or three red hot peppers	IN
$\frac{1}{2}$ mild green pepper	WATER
$\frac{1}{2}$ onion	

Let sit for a day or two, strain and spray.

### GARLIC SPRAY

six chopped cloves of garlic  
Soak in one teaspoon mineral oil for 24 hours. Slowly add  $\frac{1}{2}$  pint of water. Add one Tablespoon pure soap flakes. Stir well. Strain. Store in glass container. Dilute one to twenty parts water.

### INSECT REPELLENT SPRAY

The sense of smell in insects is more sensitive than that of humans. This method involves gathering samples of the insects which are attacking your crops, grinding them in a blender with water, straining the mixture and spraying a diluted solution back on the crops. You can also freeze this

juice. As repulsive as this may seem to some, it has proven to be very successful.

A balance of life in the garden is dependent on this cycle: humus-rich soil, compost, mulch, and natural soil enrichment, strong healthy plants, and a balance of good and bad insects. Each part of the cycle is dependent on the others. So don't use homemade sprays indiscriminately. Even the use of a forceful jet of water TOO OFTEN can cause disruptions in the cycle. ♀

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Staff of Organic Gardening and Farming Magazine, *Getting the Bugs Out of Organic Gardening*. Emmaus, Pa., Rodale Press, 1976.

## MAIL ORDER SOURCES:

### CANADA

William Dam Seeds  
West Flamboro, Ont. L0R 2K0

Rotenone Dust \$2.45 lb. postpaid.

Organic Garden Spray (*Bacillus Thuringiensis*) 4 oz. \$4.25.

Fossil Flower Garden Dust (combination of Diatomaceous Earth and pyrethrum) 7 oz. \$2.95.

Stokes Seeds Ltd.

Box 10

St. Catharines, Ont. L2R 6R6

Atox Rotenone Vegetable Dust 1 lb. \$3.40 postpaid.

Dominion Seed House

Georgetown, Ont. L7G 4A2

Rotenone Organic Insecticide 1 lb. \$2.79.

Organic Garden Spray 4 oz. \$4.29.

Fossil Flower (Diatomaceous Earth and Pyrethrins) 6 oz. refillable duster \$2.95, 2 lb., \$6.95.

### USA

Burpee Seed Co.

Warminster, Pa. 18991

$\frac{1}{2}$  Rotenone Dust (Garden Guard) 1 lb. can \$2.50.

Thuricide (*Bacillus Thuringiensis*) 4 oz. \$2.95.

Nichols Garden Nursery

1190 North Pacific Hwy.

Albany, Oregon 97321

Rotenone 1 lb. \$3.75.

Thuricide 4 oz. \$2.85.





# On the right track

Judy Herman

WITH C. BERTEA

As young girls, many of us passed through a stage of being madly in love with horses. Some of us may have had the opportunity to explore that interest, others not, but the option is not altogether unavailable for those with a lingering interest. Racetracks both in the countryside and in the middle of large cities hire women to work with thoroughbreds.

It had been my lifelong dream to work with horses, but, well-indoctrinated that a career and pleasure do not go hand in hand, I passed off the desire as a pre-adolescent Freudian fantasy that I should have outgrown. When a friend told me there was a racetrack outside of Berkeley, I couldn't resist investigating. It was 1971 and the immigration bureau had just performed one of its rare and token raids to rid the track of illegal Mexican laborers. This created vacancies and I was taken on as a groom by a very skeptical, but desperate trainer. Only a handful of women worked there at the time, mostly wives and girlfriends of trainers. Since that time many more women have been hired to work at the track. Trainers have learned to appreciate women as devoted and reliable employees whose personal involvement with the animals makes them easily exploited and willing to endure working seven days a week for low wages.

If you choose to work on the track, I will try to give you an idea of what you will encounter so that you may be better prepared than I was. Though I had confidence in my ability to work with horses, it was a challenge learning to handle the high-strung nervous athletes found on the racing circuit and adjusting to the racetrack lifestyle.

As a groom you will be assigned anywhere from three to six horses. Your job may start at 4:30 in the morning when you clean your stalls and

groom and tack your horses for the exercise riders. When your horses return, you bathe and "cool them out" and bring them back to a freshly bedded stall. The most important part of a groom's job is treating leg ailments with medication and applying bandages. It's often between 10 A.M. and 12 P.M. before the morning work is done. If the horses entrusted to your care are not to be seen by a horseshoer or veterinarian, then your time is your own until 3:00 when you return to "muck out" stalls and to feed and water.

Sunday and Monday are "dark days", days when there is no racing. Tuesday through Saturday, if one of the horses in your care is running, you are responsible for preparing and leading the horse to the saddling paddock before the start of the race. If another groom's horse is running, you may expect to bathe that horse and bed its stall when it returns.

Average monthly salary is \$125 to \$150 for each horse rubbed (the expression used for grooming). The more professionally run barns pay the higher salary, with fewer horses to each person. This insures more individual attention to the animals.

If my description of grooming sounds formidable, consider starting as a hotwalker. Each horse is walked every day, either for exercise or to cool out the hot ones returning from the track. This is done by hooking them up to a machine that revolves in a circle, or by hand leading. The job requires little expertise. It is a good entry-level position, though it is a low status job, and consequently the pay is poor.

Higher on the social scale, above hot walkers and grooms, are exercise riders. Free lancers earn three to four dollars a horse. On a good day one



can ride up to twelve horses. Some riders are hired to gallop exclusively for one stable. They are responsible for cleaning tack when the morning work is done.

Galloping is one of the more appealing jobs. The work day is over at ten A.M. after morning workouts. There is less dirty work and more status in riding horses than in cleaning up after them.

If you want to learn to ride race horses, the best way to start is by breaking two year olds at one of the many training centers. No matter how much experience you've had riding horses in your own back yard, whether or not you've ridden hunters and jumpers or galloped over cross country fences, it is an entirely different experience controlling an animal as finely tuned as one fit to run nearly forty miles an hour. You will also be in a saddle that looks as though it couldn't hold a person the size of an infant. Because thoroughbreds are in stalls about twenty-three hours a day, are given high energy foods, and are bred and conditioned to want to run, they can be difficult to control on the track, endangering themselves, their riders, and any other horse and rider that may be in the way. The two year old babies at the training centers, not yet having learned to run fast enough, do not present the danger of the older horses.

Another drawback to trying to learn to exercise horses on the track, is that it puts you in the vulnerable position of asking a trainer to do you a favor by giving you a chance. He has little to gain from hiring you other than to be in a bargaining position to ask favors from you in return. He would generally prefer to hire a man, who he believes to be stronger and more capable of controlling the animals. Complaints by women of sexual advances by potential male employers are common. If you're interested in galloping thoroughbreds, seek the job with experience and you will be confronted with less problems, both from people and horses.

If you find it difficult to envision galloping horses but still want to ride, you may want to try your hand at ponying. "Ponies" are horses used to lead thoroughbreds around the track at a gallop in lieu of exercising them with a rider. They also have a calming effect on the thoroughbreds and so are used to take horses and riders to and from the track in the morning or to the starting gate before a race. Most large stables have a pony of their own that the trainer for whom you are working will be willing to let you ride. There are also people who have a string of ponies that are hired by different trainers for both morning and afternoon work. Since the number of stalls allotted to ponies will usually be spoken for already by the established pony riders, it is difficult to enter the business independently. From time to time, a person in this line of work is willing to take on an assistant. From there you can build a clientele of your own until you are established enough to reserve stalls and support your own horses. For morning work you

will earn three to four dollars for each thoroughbred you pony. In the afternoon, you are paid ten dollars for each horse taken to the starting gate.

The most glamorous job is that of the jockey. Don't consider this work unless you can keep your weight below 110 or are willing to deal with a regimen of diet pills and the sweat box. If the glamour of riding a Secretariat into the winner's circle is your dream, forgive any discouragement on my part. There is only one woman actively riding races in California. You may have the ability and courage to participate in this sport, but the competition is tough, even for men. Riding races is a physically demanding task and it takes a fit rider to win. It is difficult to hustle enough rides to become fit and to accumulate the necessary name and experience to build a career. Trainers, in order to protect themselves and reassure their owners that their horse has the best possible chance, tend to use established and reliable jockeys. Don't expect the few women trainers to give you mounts out of a feeling of sisterhood. They're fighting the same battle a little harder and may be less sympathetic than the men. If you think you can overcome the many obstacles you will face trying to make a living riding races, then I sincerely wish you the best of luck. We need more women jockeys.

At the top of the racetrack hierarchy are the trainers. It is the position of decision-making and power. As a trainer, you will plot the daily training schedule to prepare each horse for the races. You will determine when, how often, and against what level of competition your horses will run. The role of trainer is essential because people buy horses as investments hoping that they will win races and earn purse money. As most owners know little about horses, they must hire someone to manage their animals. This decision is based on the reputation of the trainer or the daily fees charged.

As a trainer, you may have anywhere from one to forty horses at one track at a time. Owners pay from twenty to thirty-five dollars per day for each horse. Out of that you must feed and bed the animals, buy all necessary equipment, and pay your employees. Your responsibilities also include hiring and firing help and seeing that the barn is run smoothly and according to schedule.

In order to maintain a certain standard of ethics and conduct, the track requires that you pass a licensing exam. The test covers knowledge that you will absorb if you work your way up through the ranks. Finding a job as an assistant trainer is good preparation. One day you'll find someone willing to give you a horse to train, or you may buy one of your own.

The most aggravating part of the job is dealing with owners, the necessary evils in maintaining a stable. Excuses must be made as to why their horse did not run well. You also have the near impossible task of convincing them their horse is



not Kentucky Derby material and should be run in lower class races where the purses are smaller. The other disadvantage is rumours that will inevitably get back to you about the many mistakes you are making. Horse people, in general, are competitive and have little respect for their "comrades." Remember, you don't have to answer to anyone when you lead your horse into the winner's circle.

Whatever career you choose on the racetrack, plan on moving from one city to the next as racing meets change. If you like traveling, this can be an advantage. I met a woman who was working her way around the world taking jobs on racetracks. Maintaining a social life outside of the track is difficult because of the odd hours. Many people choose to live on the track where small rooms are provided free of charge. Keep your ears open and sift out the knowledge useful to you out of the endless, but well-meaning advice that will come your way. Since a twelve-hundred pound animal cannot be out-muscled by anyone, be confident about your ability to learn to handle, through common sense, the various problems incurred.

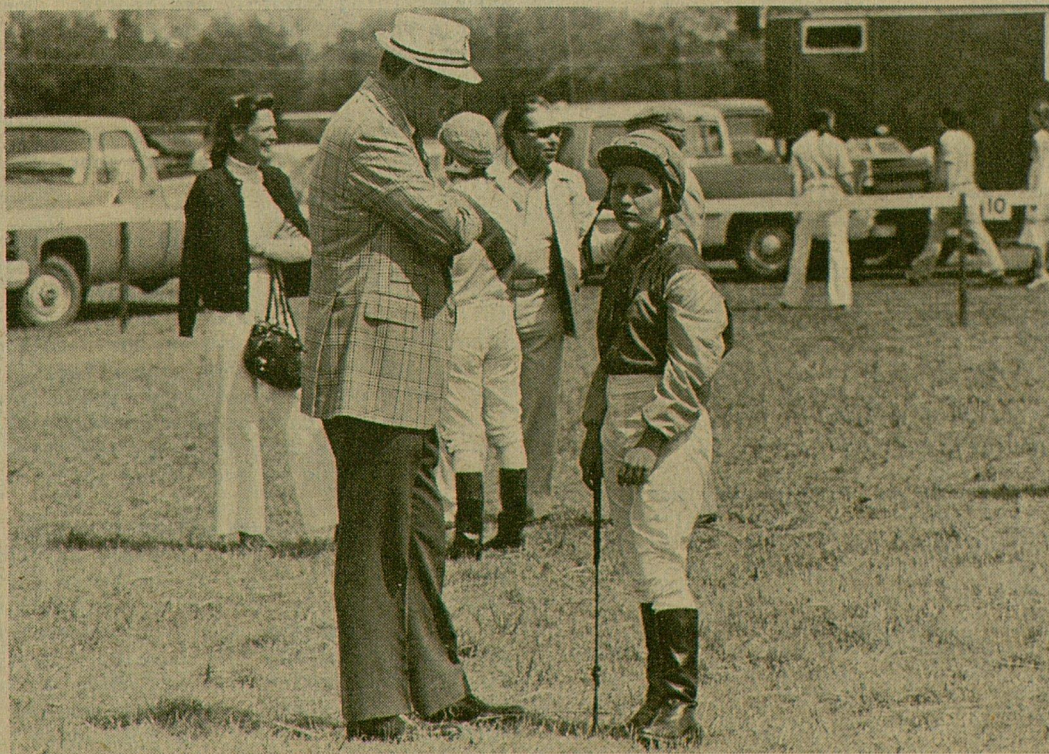
Remember, this is a business. Though you may be there, as is everyone, for the love of horses, they are expensive machines, bred and trained to make money. I never lost my compassion, but I did develop a bit of a rough edge necessary to survive in the track community. You will see many things you don't like. Most of the thoroughbreds, at one time or another during their training, de-

velop various leg ailments. Some are so sore, it is hard to imagine that they continue to run. Bringing a broken-down horse back to the barn after a race is part of the business.

On the positive side, you will learn to give the best care to horses, which I have found valuable since leaving the track. You will be able to treat a wide variety of veterinary ailments. Though you may never ride, your relationships with your horses will be extremely close, due to the nature of the work and the hours spent caring for them.

What was most difficult for me was relaxing in my futile attempts to raise the political and sexual consciousness of the men (and women) with whom I came in contact. The work ethic on the track demands all your time and energy. If you have other interests or express a desire to take a day off from the rigorous seven day a week schedule, you are made to feel guilty for it. Sick leave is virtually unheard of.

It was five years before I learned to accept the track as a unique cultural phenomena with its own sense of time, language, and morals. When I arrived at that point, I learned to love the exhilaration of all the animals and people concentrated in one small space and the drama and pageantry of the races. When your horse crosses the finish line ahead of the field, there is nothing to compare to the feeling of knowing you played a part in making a winner. ♀



KATHY JO HOWE



# Training Your Horse: Groundwork

BY FRAN RANSLEY

Ground work is the training that gets your horse mentally and physically ready to carry a rider or pull a cart. This includes putting the tack on the horse, longeing, and line driving. Some people think ground work is a waste of time, that you can take a horse that's halter-broke, put a saddle and bridle (or hackamore) on it and get on. For some trainers, particularly the rough and ready cowboy variety, this method works fine. However, a friend of mine is now wearing a cast from wrist to elbow as a result of this type of training method.

For the rest of us who are not cowboys, there are a few drawbacks. Yes, some horses will respond to being saddled and ridden with complete indifference, as though they had been doing this all along. With this kind of horse you don't need to do much ground work. But the majority of horses are going to get alarmed and put up a fight if you just walk up, throw on a saddle, cinch it down and climb on. The horse will likely do its best to get rid of you.

Horses are naturally suspicious. Ropes, straps, and hoses wiggle and undulate and resemble snakes. A saddle, after all, is made from the skin of a dead cow. Its smell and the creaking sound can scare a horse. A horse has a primal fear of anything that clings to its back. Mountain lions (and maybe bears) can attack a horse by jumping off a ledge or out of a tree onto the horse's back. The horse instinctively fights by bucking, rearing and flipping over backwards, crushing its attacker, or scraping the enemy off on a tree limb, rocks or other outcropping. So the untrained horse may revert to instinct when a person gets on its back.

Besides freaking out a horse, the transition from idleness to the work of carrying a rider can make sore muscles, strained tendons and ligaments and bone injuries in a young horse. Ground work not only teaches the horse to accept the bizarre things you are doing to it; it also serves to build up the horse's strength so it is more ready to carry you.

## EQUIPMENT YOU WILL NEED

Saddle - or a bareback pad will do.

Headstall with snaffle bit and reins (or a hackamore).

Longe line - can be bought in feed and tack stores, or a thirty foot length of half-inch cotton rope with a strong snap on it.

Halter - either wide nylon web or leather, adjusted to fit snug.

Whip - the long "stockyard" type - it's just a cue, not to be used to beat the horse - I made a good whip from a car radio antenna and two lengths of leather shoelace tied on the end - a long thin branch will also do.

Driving lines - two longe lines will work, or leather lines from a harness.

## INTRODUCING THE HORSE TO THE TACK

If possible, keep your training equipment where the horse can see it. I have a little feed room in the barn that adjoins the mangers. I keep the saddles in there and the horses can look at them while they eat. There's an empty tie stall in the barn and I keep the cart in there.

A word of caution: horses will be curious about these objects. A horse will come up to a saddle that's hanging on a fence. It will sniff the saddle, nibble at it, rub its head on it and eventually drag it off the fence and paw and stomp on it. Keep your tack near but not where the horse can get at it.

If you have a spot where you tie the horse to groom it, put the saddle near there while you are grooming. Then pick up the pad or blanket and show it to the horse. Give it plenty of time to sniff. Then if the horse is not too excited, rub the shoulders (withers) with the pad. Then do the same thing with the saddle.

Some horses don't fear the saddle and pad at all, and you can put them on the first time they see it. Others will be spooky and will need to see and sniff it repeatedly before you can put it on. With excitable horses it may be several days before you can put the pad on and a week before you can put on the saddle.

Do everything smoothly and gently. Don't drop the saddle onto the horse's back, or heave it on: ease it on. On an english saddle you can take off the stirrups so the irons don't fall and bang against the horse's sides. I haven't used a western saddle for training but it seems you'd have to be that much more careful not to scare the horse with all the straps and gear.

If the horse is nervous and touchy, don't do up the cinch the first time you put on the saddle. Just pat the horse a lot and maybe give it a handful of grain or a piece of apple, make it feel at ease - as though tolerating the saddle on its back might have some pleasant side effects. Then slide the saddle off as slowly and carefully as you put it on. As the days go by your horse will relax and you will be able to do these things quicker without worrying so much about spooking the horse.

When the horse relaxes with the saddle, then you can do the cinch. Do it loosely at first, just snug enough to keep it on the horse. If you pull it tight suddenly, the horse may rebel and kick or try to break away from you. Horses that are cinched too tightly also develop a nasty habit of filling the stomach with air while you're trying to fasten the cinch. Then when you get on, the horse lets out the air and the saddle is too loose. This is quite frustrating.



My two year old mare Lucille always lays back her ears and gives me ugly looks when I tighten the cinch. I never yanked it on her or anything like that, I think it's just something she personally doesn't like. She will probably always do that and as long as she doesn't try to bite or kick me I don't care.

When you're training the horse to wear the bit and headstall, it's important also to be slow and gentle. A horse can be spoiled and made permanently hard to bridle at this point by somebody who is in a hurry and too rough. A horse that throws its head around, avoiding the bridle, is annoying and dangerous.

You can always tell a novice with horses because he or she will stand facing the horse and try to cram the bit in from the front. All a horse has to do in this case to avoid being bridled is back up.

Almost any horse (except some hard-core bad actors) can be bridled if you stand *next* to the horse, facing the same direction and on the left or "near" side. Take the crown of the bridle (the part that goes over the ears) and bring this up over the horse's nose. This way if the horse tosses its nose in the air you can just pull it back down. In the first stages of training, leave the halter on and put the bridle on over it. You need the halter to attach the longe line.

Next, after you have the crown of the bridle in your right hand, put the bit up to the horse's teeth with your left hand. Don't bang it against the teeth. Put your left thumb into the horse's mouth at the bars (the space where there are no teeth) and press on the tongue. Most horses will open up when you do this. Then gently slide the bit up into the horse's mouth and ease the headstall over the ears. If the horse has been groomed and handled around the head this shouldn't be too frightening.

If you want to be more persuasive you can rub the bit with molasses or offer a little handful of grain along with the bit. For a horse that's head-shy, you could unbuckle the crownpiece and buckle it again in back of the horse's ears instead of slipping it over them.

The first few times you put on tack, you can just lead the horse around awhile so it can get accustomed to the feel of everything. Some horses will stand to be saddled but freak out when they take a few steps and the saddle creaks. So have a firm hold on the lead rope and talk to the horse.

Speaking of a firm hold on the rope, here are four safety rules you should follow when handling untrained horses (or any horses for that matter):

1. *Never* wrap a lead rope, longe line or reins around your hand to get a better grip. It's more important to be able to let go in a hurry than it is to have a good grip.





2. Always have a rope attached to the halter - don't try to lead a horse just holding onto the halter.
3. Don't get yourself (or any part of you- arm, leg, etc.) in a tight spot between the horse and something rigid (such as a post, wall, fence). If the horse panics and starts to fight, it will not be looking out for your safety. You always want plenty of room to back away from a horse.
4. Have sturdy shoes or boots on - if the horse steps on your foot you may get to keep part of your toenail.

#### LONGEING (pronounced lungeing)

This is where you train the horse to go in a circle on a long rope while you stand in the middle with a whip. . .it's not quite that simple, but that's the basic idea. Your aim is to get the horse to circle around you at controlled gaits, stop and change gaits and direction on your command.

The diameter of the circle will be fifty to sixty feet, but it's easier to start training on a smaller circle. If you have a round or square corral or other small enclosure this will make your training easier.

You can snap the longe line on the halter ring, or if your horse is headstrong, you can run a chain shank through the halter rings and over the horse's nose. If your horse is the type that tries to take off and break away from you, a tug on this chain works like magic.

Some english-style trainers use a special device called a longeing cavesson. It has a (padded of course) steel noseband and snug-fitting headstall. I had one but rarely used it. It's much more convenient just to use a good fitting halter.

You can use special side reins made for longeing, or you can unbuckle your regular reins and tie them to the cinch rings or stirrup attachments on each side of the saddle. Be sure they are the same length when you tie them. With a western saddle you could hang the reins over the horn. I keep the reins loose enough so the horse can stretch its neck, but not so loose it can reach the ground with its nose. Some trainers gradually tighten the side reins as training progresses, but I don't. You may get really frustrated with longeing at first because the horse will act so stupid, but don't give up!

As for the whip, you will rarely have to hit the horse with it, just swish it along the ground behind its heels. Sometimes a flick on the rump will help a lazy horse to get moving. Never flick it at the horse's head - you could put out an eye.

When you first start longeing the horse it helps to have an assistant who can lead the horse in a circle around you while you stand in the center. This will help the horse catch on much faster to what you want it to do and it will save your temper.

Some horses catch on after one or two lessons. Others can be exasperating. The most typical thing a horse does is to stop and back up, facing the trainer. When you try to go behind the horse to give it a tap with the whip, it just backs up some more. This is where your friend can come in handy, leading the horse back to the circle or getting behind it and chasing it with the whip while you hold the line.

Be careful and don't get too close to the hind-quarters. This is most important when you are trying to get the horse to move away from you in a circle. A horse can turn its rump and kick you faster than you can get out of the way. So don't be in the way. I know a woman with a scar on her chin who will testify to this.

In the first lessons, be content to get the horse to move on the circle in both directions at a walk or trot. A horse is sensitive to your voice so you can begin to use commands. You can cluck to the horse or say "get up" to start it. I use the command "walk" to start the horse, then "trot" and "whoa."

The horse should be allowed to stop *only* when you say "whoa." This word should mean STOP and stay there until given further orders. Enforcing obedience to this could save you a lot of trouble, maybe your life sometime.

When you say "whoa" take up on the line and pull the horse's head around until the horse stops and faces you. Then walk up to the horse and praise it lavishly. About fifteen minutes of walking and trotting in each direction is plenty for the first few lessons. You can increase as time goes on. Though it's hard to believe when you are starting, the horse's performance will become more polished if you stick with it. This work is not only building the muscles, it's also discipline, getting the horse to listen to you and to obey you.

With a mature horse, a four or five year old, I do just enough longeing to give the horse the basic idea of obedience. Then I do most of the training from the saddle. With a two or three year old I use the longe a lot more because the soft bones of the young horse are not up to a lot of riding.

Lucille does really well on the longe. She obeys "walk", "trot", "canter" and "whoa" and drives well with lines. I've been getting on her back and just sitting there. A few people have said things like "why don't you ride her? Afraid she'll buck you off?" etc., etc. But I remember another two year old I had when I was sixteen. He was a high strung horse and full of energy. I rode him often. I didn't weigh much and he didn't ever seem tired. So I rode him way too much for his age. By the time he was seven or eight years old when he should have been in his prime, he was swaybacked like a twenty year old. I learned from that. You can do plenty of training with a young horse without breaking it down.



When the horse does the walk and trot smoothly, you can teach it to canter on the longe. Right before I give the command to canter I wake the horse up a little by flicking the whip. The horse's usual tendency will be to just trot faster. You can break the rhythm of the trot by pulling the horse's head in toward you slightly and then releasing it again, at the same time giving the command to canter and a firm urge with the whip. You want the horse to canter but not run away, so use your discretion on how much urging it will need.

If you are working in a small corral, you can begin working outside now in a larger area. This gives the horse more room to move out at the trot and canter.

#### LINE DRIVING

The purpose of this is to teach the horse about the bit - starting, stopping and steering, before you get on its back. If I'm going to break a horse to drive, I use a harness for this part of the training. I will cover breaking to the cart in detail in a separate article. If I'm planning just to ride the horse, then I use the saddle.

Take off the side reins you used when you were longeing, and substitute a long twenty foot line on each side. You need something to carry the reins so they run along the side of the horse's body. On an english saddle I run the stirrups up and tie the leathers in a knot, then I run the lines through the stirrup irons. On a western saddle maybe you could tie the stirrups together over the top of the saddle and fix some small straps like a dog collar to the cinch rings and put your lines through those.

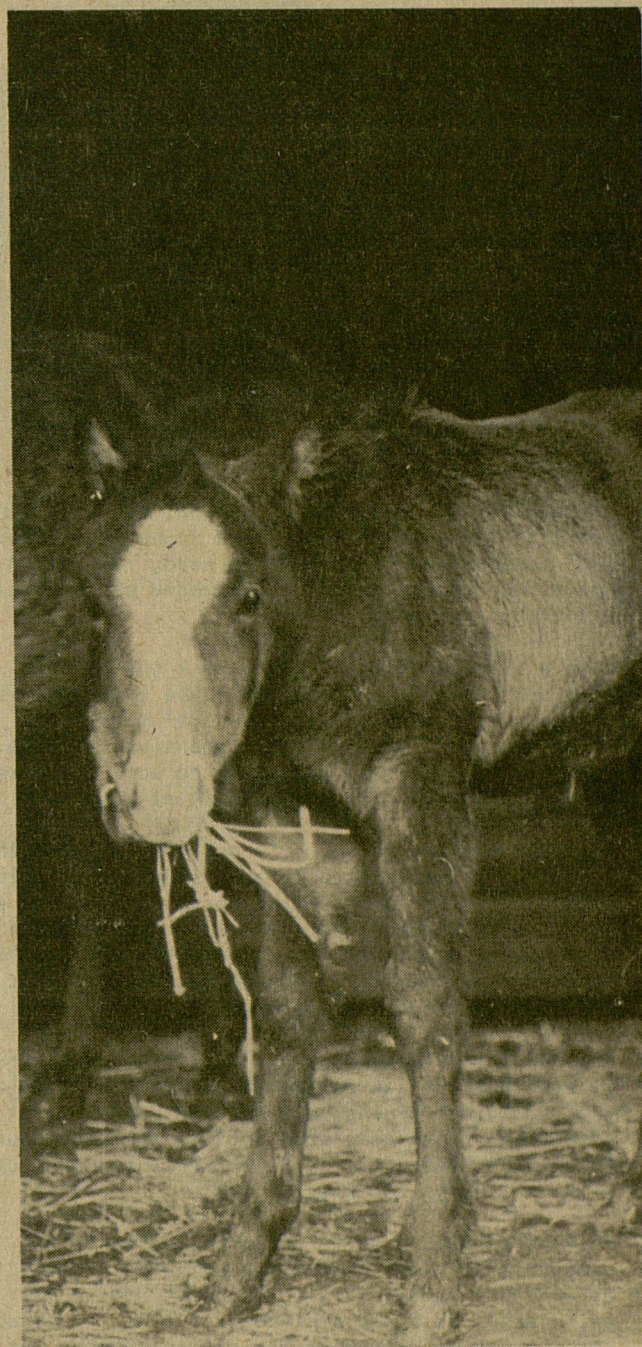
You can use a short whip, or just tap the lines against the horse's sides to start. Give your regular command "walk" or whatever. At first, walk slightly to the side of the horse and go in circles like you're longeing. Then try gently to turn the horse and take a circle in the other direction.

Gradually you can get behind the horse and give orders from there. When you say "whoa", pull gently with both lines and don't let the horse turn and face you. Part of the purpose of keeping the lines low on the horse's body is so you can use your outside line when turning circles to keep the horse from turning too sharp and moving around to face you. Your outside rein presses against the horse's body and complements the pull on the inside rein. Later when you are riding, your leg will accomplish the same purpose as the outside rein.

I've both ridden and watched a lot of horses who have an annoying habit: when you try to turn the horse, the horse will oblige with its head but its body will continue in the direction it wants to go. This is called "rubber-necking" and usually happens when the horse wants to go to the barn or to its companions. You can turn the horse's head all the way back to your knee but the horse will just keep right on going where it wants to go.

If you train your horse properly with the long lines and later with your legs when riding, you will not be likely to have this problem. It's much easier to start the horse right and develop good habits than it is to try and change bad ones. Horses never forget.

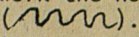
My Connemara pony, Keprigan, had been ridden by some kids before I got him and they let him get away with a few things. He was really a talented rubber-necker. Driving with the lines got him under control, but even after two years he will sometimes remember his old ways and try to scoot for the barn. A kick and a slap on the neck usu-





ally straightens him out but he will always keep that lousy habit in his bag of tricks.

As you did on the longe, practice line driving at a walk and a trot. You don't have to canter, because it's just too hard to keep up. When you stop the horse, make it stand for a minute or so before starting again.

Work the horse in figure eights and serpentine (). When you begin to drive in straight lines, the horse will wander and try to turn. This is normal because after all you have been working in circles for so long. But the horse will soon understand and will begin to go straight.

Now you can also teach the horse to back up. This starts when you are leading the horse with a rope. Stop the horse and say "back", meanwhile pushing back on the halter and the horse's chest. When the horse has taken a couple of steps backward, reward it with lots of praise. Do this once in a while until the horse responds without being pushed. Then try it with the lines. It helps to have your friend stand at the horse's head and cue it with a push, but most horses will learn without this. Don't make a big deal out of backing, as some horses make an excuse of it and go backing up every time they don't want to go someplace. When you back the horse, go forward a few steps again and stop.

#### COMMON TRAINING PROBLEMS

A young horse, like a young person, can only concentrate for just so long, then it becomes bored and restless and if pushed too hard, rebels. A hot-blooded horse seems to get bored quicker than a cold-blooded plug.

With a two year old I like to work the horse a half hour every other day, or maybe every day for three or four days and then several days rest. A three year old can take more intensive training, maybe an hour or two, and is up to some long trail rides providing it is done mostly at a walk.

Whatever age the horse, it's not good to work the animal until it is totally exhausted and dripping with sweat. Or to catch the horse once a week or so and work the hell out of it. A horse that's not worked into condition will get sore and will remember this next time you go to catch it. It may retaliate by becoming hard to catch.

Another thing that happens a lot with young horses is souring. It can relate to boredom, like doing the same old training routine over and over, or sometimes it can come from putting too many hours on a young horse, trying to teach it too many complicated things too fast.

Each horse reacts differently depending on its temperament. Some horses may be hard to catch or suddenly become hard to bridle. Others may get spooky, or start kicking or biting. Another horse might get stubborn and refuse to move, or start backing up, rearing, or throwing its head.

If your horse goes into a radical personality change like this you can suspect it has gone sour. Another possibility is that the horse could be cutting teeth, growing wolf teeth, or having other dental problems. Any time a horse acts crazy with its head you can suspect something like this. So before you conclude that your colt is sour, get a vet to check the teeth.

If the teeth are OK and you decide your horse is sour, just quit all training for awhile. Give the horse a vacation. A week or more of munching and switching its tail and hanging out with friends can help restore a horse's positive attitude. When you go back to working the horse, go a little easier, be less rigid in demands and change the scene a little bit. Do different things, like trail riding (or driving) instead of working in the corral or the same old work area.

Horses are just like people, with good and bad days, and you can make allowances for this without being too much of a softie. Mares sometimes change personality when they come in heat. Not all of them get moody, but some do. Even geldings have mood cycles. You have to study your horse's personality and know how much you can demand at each stage of training. Other people can help, but you have to develop your own empathy to know when to get heavy and when to be light.

You are bound to make mistakes in training. But unless you have lost your temper and beaten the horse cruelly, things can be straightened out. For example, if the horse is being poky and you slap it a little too hard on the rear and it freaks out, almost getting away from you, then you feel horrible. . . Just continue the lesson and when the horse does something else really well, heap on the praise and petting. Horses don't forget but they do forgive.

On the other hand, if you are too soft, the horse will sense this and find little ways to take advantage of your easy-going nature, like stopping on the longe without being told. If the horse has tried this several times and you realize what's happening, just get tough next time. A horse will notice if you are spaced out, and will be disobedient just to get your attention.

The relationship with your horse is much like that with another person, except that you must always be the boss. If the horse respects you and obeys without fear, that's good. If you respect the horse and are a kind and just master (not as easy as it sounds) then you will do all right. If you are afraid of your horse, or have a personality clash going, do yourself and the horse a favor and split up. Find another horse that suits you, or if you find you are just not into horses, get a motorcycle or a car. Horses are for people who really dig them. ♀



# beginning with O.



Leona

## REVIEW BY MARNIE PURPLE

In this first book of poetry, for which she won the Yale Younger Poets Award for 1976, Olga Broumas takes us back to the beginning of language, female myths, woman/mother love, and water, our first element. It is a joyous journey of rediscovery, a reunion with language and imagery that speaks to/for women; perhaps it is only to the beginning of patriarchy that we need to return, to excavate the goddess mythologies and begin to reconstruct a history of knowledge that will still speak to women today. In the first section of the book, "Twelve Aspects of God", she explores the images of pre-Classical Greek gods. In "Artemis" we hear what is perhaps her own personal statement of poetry:

" . . . . .  
I am a woman committed to  
a politics  
of transliteration, the methodology

of a mind  
stunned at the suddenly  
possible shifts of meaning -- for which  
like amnesiacs

*in a ward on fire, we must  
find words  
or burn."*

Born and educated in Greece, writing in English as an adopted tongue, Broumas is well-equipped for the task of reissuing the feminine myths in contemporary metaphor. She has an intuitive understanding of words, their roots and forms, puts them together, pulls out meanings that we have never heard before. As Stanley Kunitz wrote in the introduction, "Among the most impressive features of Broumas' supple art is her command of syntax, rhythm, and tone. Her hedonism extends to the use of language itself; she rollicks in 'the cave of sound'." Her poetry is meant to be read aloud, to feel the words in body as well as explode the images in the mind. Hearing the words resonate swells the emotion; reading aloud reveals the juxtaposition of words that creates further meanings. In "Blues/for J.C." for example, we are swept away by the lover's desire to find new words for the beloved:



"The esplanade of your belly,' I said,  
 'that  
 shallow and gleaming spoon.' You  
 said, 'Not quite  
 an epiphany,' our bodies breathing  
 like greedy gills, 'not quite  
 an epiphany, but close, close.' I loved you

then for that  
 willful precision, the same  
 precision with which you now  
 extricate  
 cool as a surgeon  
 your amphibian heart. My mouth...."

Surely some will be outraged, some thrilled by the explicit nature of her love poetry for women, more daring and revealing than that which many women write about men. Yet I think even women who are not lesbians will respond to the images which are really a celebration of all that is female, moist, lush, fertile. It is as if in her love for women Broumas has reclaimed for all women the parts of ourselves we've wished hidden because they embarrassed us and our men, and we knew no sufficient explanation. In "Amazon Twins" the lovers revel in their sameness, the subtleties of their differences:

". . . Marine  
 eyes, marine  
 odors. Everything live  
 (tongue, clitoris, lip and lip)  
 swells in its moist shell. . . ."

In "Memory Piece/for Baby Jane", a tribute to a woman bathing, she encourages acceptance of what we are:

"turning in  
 to herself, your body finds nothing  
 hard, nothing quiet, that wish  
 is blood, you have no wound  
 that would heal, you are a woman  
 you bleed. . . ."

Perhaps if our feminine mythology were more intact we would have the explanations and understanding we seek, but most of us have grown up with mothers and grandmothers who did not pass on to us the rudiments of sex, let alone the mysteries of our own bodies. In "Thetis" the god of the sea speaks:

". . . You must understand  
 everything that caresses you  
 will not be like this  
 moon-bright water, pleasurable, fertile  
 only with mollusks and fish. There are still  
 other fluids, fecund, tail-whipped  
 with seed. There are ways  
 to evade them. . . ."

This is the sort of instruction we need, from our mothers, our sisters; we have been hiding in our ignorance and embarrassment too long. It is the poetry of women, our monthly cycles, the moon, not the sun, of our existence.

The third section of the book, "Innocence" includes a series of poems based on fairy tales, "Cinderella", "Snow White", "Rapunzel" and others, which remind me once again that though these stories are about females, they never quite rang true to my experience: they are the tales of some grim storyteller about women, not by them. Here Broumas takes it upon herself to speak as if in the voice of these lost images. "Little Red Riding Hood", a poem to Mother begins:

"I grow old, old  
 without you, Mother, landscape  
 of my heart. . . ."

and goes on to speak of the rift caused by the lack of communication between mothers and daughters about the wolves of the forest of sex we enter in our innocence:

". . . I kept  
 to the road, kept  
 the hood secret, kept what it sheathed more  
 secret still. I opened  
 it only at night, and with other women. . . ."

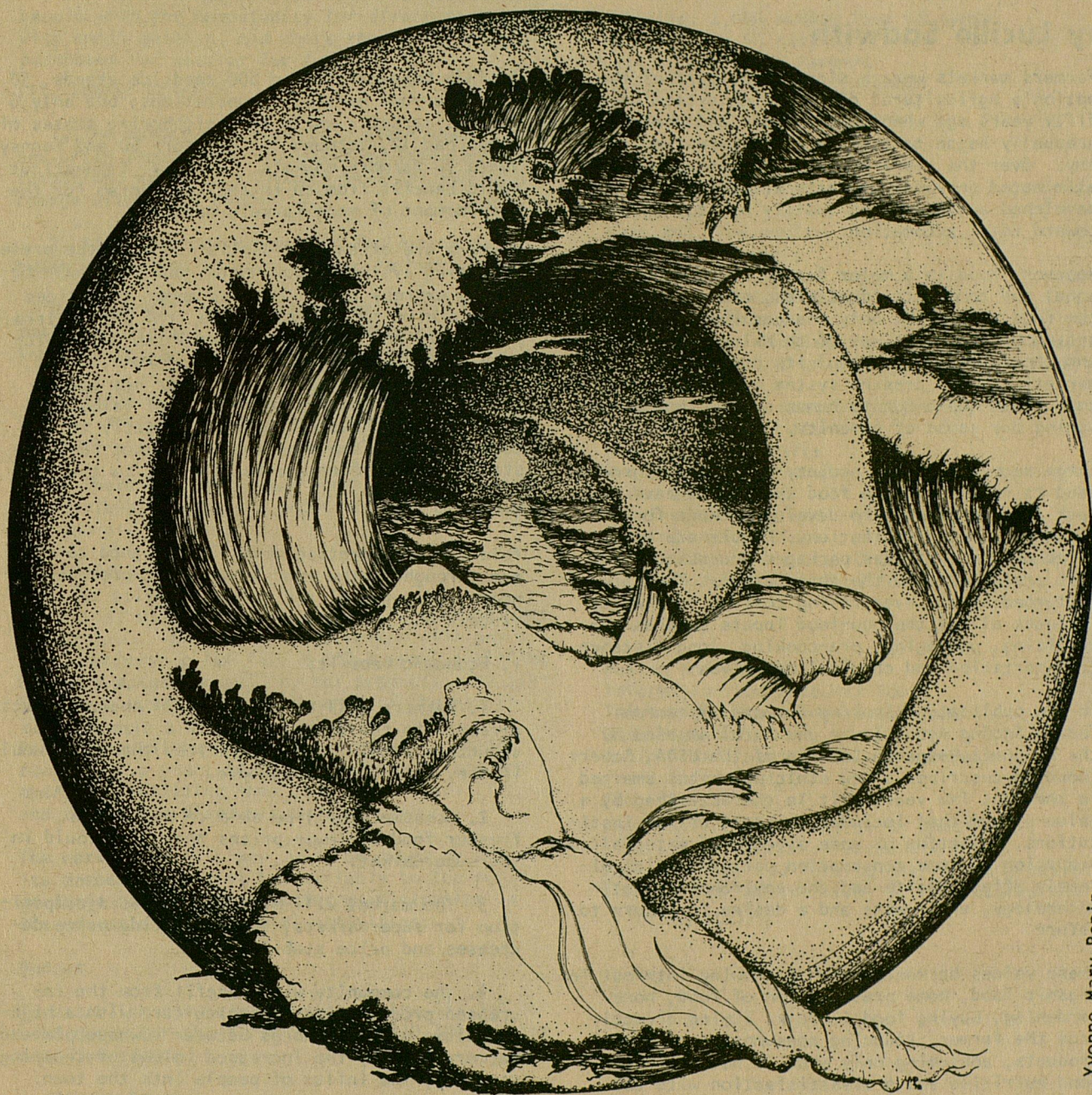
There is less despair and bitterness toward Mother in this poem and "Snow White", which follows, more yearning for union and understanding with mother, our first sister. Mothers could not tell us what they did not know themselves, and it is for us now to try to break the silence; it is not too late to begin to speak with mothers about our womanliness. It will take us back to our beginnings.

It is this return to the feminine source that I think will appeal to men also, for they understand their watery births, their moist attractions no better than we do. Stanley Kunitz says in the Introduction, "We shall all be wiser and - who knows? - maybe purer when we can begin to interpret the alphabet of the body that is being decoded here." Broumas speaks for herself, but also for all women and men who care to listen and learn; much knowledge has been buried in biology and oppression for too many centuries. In "Rumplestiltskin" she says,

"I have to write of these things. We were  
 grown  
 women, well  
 traveled in our time."

Indeed, we all need to speak of these things; it is 1979 and we are still not sure which came first, the woman or the egg. Beginning with O. ♀





Yvonne Mary Pepin



# MODEL FARMERS MARKETS

by Lucille Sadwith

Farmers markets were a significant part of the nation's agricultural distribution system until fifty years ago when supermarkets and chain stores gradually began to take over the marketing industry. Over the years this new marketing system eliminated personal contacts with consumers and developed a dehumanized quality as it progressed toward total automation.

However, food is a major factor in both our personal and community identities, and restructuring the food system not only changes the economic system but people's way of thinking about food and their power to control its production and marketing. Our present system no longer conforms to a human scale nor to human needs, thus diminishing our sense of humanity.

Large segments of our society have felt a growing need to rehumanize the food system and have gone back to older models to develop methods for its production and distribution. People are also tired of the tasteless packaged processed foods that predominate in the supermarket. They are disturbed by the ever rising cost of food which includes all of the non-food inputs such as advertising, packaging, pre-cooking, long distance transportation and chemical additives.

In the publication *Looking Forward: Research Issues Facing Agriculture and Rural America* by the Economic Research Service of the USDA, Robert Enochian describes a new ethic which has emerged in the last few years. It is characterized by a value system that includes distrust of our institutions, rejection of some aspects of materialism, reduction in some consumption patterns which directly affect health and the environment, anti-technology, anti-waste and a desire to return to nature.

These values harmonize with a growing interest in: organic food, home preservation of food, home gardening, buying food in bulk, buying directly from the farmer, reducing consumption of animal products, consuming only what is necessary for good nutrition and a dissatisfaction with the quality of supermarket food.

This new value system has played a major part in the growth of alternative food production and marketing systems. Part-time gardening, small scale agriculture, homesteading, food buying co-ops, farmers markets, pick-your-own harvesting, roadside stands, regional markets; all have begun to reappear and to prosper in cities and small towns throughout the country.

In 1976 Connecticut had 600 roadside stands, 50 pick-your-own harvesting operations, but only 6 farmers markets; while the neighboring states of Maine had 12, Vermont 15, New York 60 and Pennsylvania 70 farmers markets. Clearly, Connecticut would benefit from an intensive program for the development of more farmers markets.

Farmers are often as dissatisfied with the present marketing system as consumers, and they have begun to express their concerns about the prices they receive for their produce from wholesalers, processors and industry co-ops which often dictate the prices they pay to the farmer. Thus, the farmer as well as the consumer has become the victim of the system instead of being its beneficiary. However, selling directly to the consumer can often make the difference between staying on the farm and selling out to the developer.

## Benefits

This direct marketing model is designed to operate throughout the year in order to provide economic, educational and social benefits to individuals and the community.

### I. Economic Benefits

1. Farmers will be able to sell their products directly to the consumer within a simple co-op structure receiving higher prices than they would if they sold to middlepeople.

2. Consumers will be able to buy better, fresher food at lower prices than they could in the supermarket.

3. The market will provide increased competition for supermarkets, thus promoting price decreases and price stabilization.

4. The community will benefit from the increased productivity in agriculture with a higher volume of interchange between townspeople and farmers, and by the increased volume of shopping caused by the influx of people into the town.

### II. Educational Benefits

1. A central kiosk will function as a resource and information booth where farmers and consumers can utilize the resource person on duty and the printed materials that will be available. It will also provide a place where farmers can advertise their products and exchange information and needs with other farmers.



2. Periodic workshops will be held on topics of special interest to farmers and consumers.

3. A booth where new and interesting foods will be available for tasting, and for learning new methods of food preparation.

4. A live animal section will provide townspeople with the opportunity for direct contact with small animals, and where the animals can be purchased for pets or for food.

### III. Social Benefits

1. The market will provide a place where rural and urban people meet and exchange ideas and information, creating a broader base for social exchange within the community.

2. It will provide shopping facilities on a human scale, and in relationship to human values.

3. There will be entertainment in the form of music or informal theatrical productions providing exposure and income for local performers.

4. There will be booths for the sale of hand crafts, and demonstrations of how various crafts are made.

5. There will be a swap booth which will make it possible to exchange goods and services without the use of money.

### Organizational Structure

The market will be organized as a farmer/consumer cooperative. Each farmer and vendor will pay a small membership fee (\$20 - \$30 a year) entitling her to a space for selling her products, and giving her a vote in the governance of the market.

Consumers will have the option to pay a small fee (\$5.00 a year) to become members of the cooperative entitling them to a vote on policies and to receive discounts on some products.

The market, in this way, will be owned by all of its members, but will be available to the public at large for shopping and for participation in its educational and social activities.

### Budget

To establish the market would require \$33,300 in seed money for the first year and \$20,300 for the next two years.

#### Direct Costs

Travel	\$ 600
Advertising	2,000
Printing	1,000
Market site rent	8,000
Insurance liability	1,500
Phone	500
Utilities	300
Market Manager's salary	11,000

Assistant's salary	9,000
--------------------	-------

Total	\$33,900
-------	----------

Estimated first year income	\$ 3,500
-----------------------------	----------

### Facilities

Building: 2,000 square feet of space

Parking: for 50 cars

Loading space for farmers

Information and resource booth

### Products

Vegetables of all kinds

Fruits and Berries

Seedlings

Eggs and live poultry

Small live animals

Trees and Shrubs

Plants and Fresh Flowers

Homemade products:

Preserves, Pickles, Canned Foods, Breads, Cakes, Pies, Cookies, Cheese, Tofu, Yogurt, Sprouts

Packaged frozen meats, poultry and fish

Smoked meats and fish

Home produced crafts

Honey and Maple Syrup

Cider and Vinegar

Cooking, Canning and Drying utensils

Farming necessities:

Hay, Mulch, Manure, Organic Fertilizers, Small Machinery, Hand Tools, Seeds

### Activities

Buying and Selling

Information and Resource Booth

Tasting and Food Preparation Booth

Workshops

Musical and Theatrical Entertainment

Craft Demonstrations

Swap Booth

Food tasting and preparation booth

Live animal section: fenced off area

Workshop area: 30 folding chairs and a table

Freezer: for meats, fish, dairy products and  
ornamentals ♀



# COUNTRY JOB MARKET

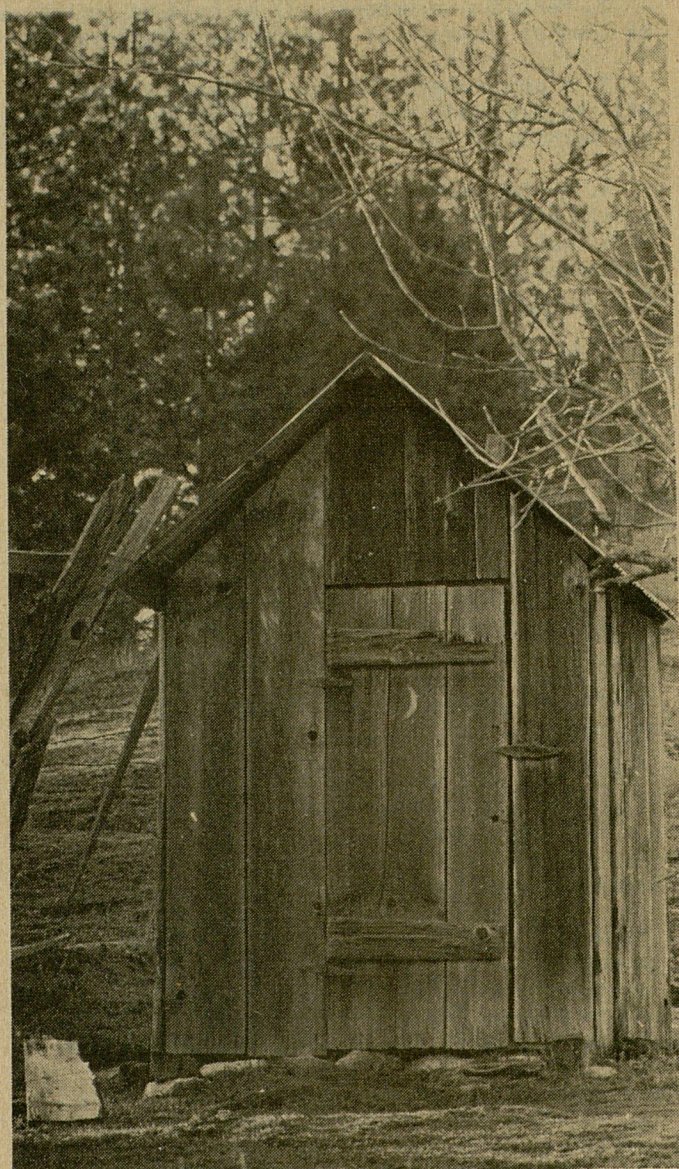
By Peggy Hubbard

The dream of country living is often distorted when one doesn't consider the reality of rural employment. This article focuses on finding work in rural areas. It will not include women who have the money to purchase large commercial farms, already generating income or who have enough money to homestead without outside employment.

Most rural areas have seasonal work. Fruit and vegetable harvesting, tree planting, bough picking and many others are among the jobs available to women. Usually the pay is very low, often below minimum wage or by the "piece", meaning you get paid by how much work you do, i.e. how many apples you pick. The hours are often long and the work usually lasts only a few months out of the year. The advantages of these jobs are that they are usually available, having a high turnover of workers, and, if you become skilled at the work you are doing and receive bonuses for extra work,

you can make a fair income during the months of work. The rest of the year you are free, which is an advantage when trying to homestead. A good worker will be welcomed back the following year. There are no benefits such as health care in seasonal work.

In some rural areas, because of the surrounding environment (the mountains, ocean, or a lake), there is a tourist season requiring hiring in motels and restaurants. Waitress work and cleaning work are usually low pay, without the advantages of bonuses for extra work. Again, this work is readily available because of the turnover. There are some better paying jobs such as hostesses, motel managers or cocktail waitresses (the tips are usually higher). Again, there are usually no benefits and the work lasts only a few months unless you're hired on as a "regular."



KAREN GOTTSTEIN



The above-mentioned jobs are known as "shit jobs" - jobs many women refuse to do because they know the work is hard and the pay low. However, in a rural area, the lack of alternatives often requires taking jobs we'd rather not. The problem is, if you are trying to homestead, chances are you are making land payments, buying building supplies, starting out animals, etc. and it is difficult to stay ahead on such low wages.

Often getting a "better" job in a rural area requires being known. There is a skeptical attitude toward "move-ins" and with the limited jobs, those available often go to people who are already known and trusted in a community. My recommendation if you want to live in a particular area is to move there, get whatever job is available, even at low pay, and become "established."

If you are open to moving to any area, there are job opportunities for better paying jobs. The irony of the rural job market is often when a professional job becomes available in an area there is no one qualified to fill it, though the unemployment in that area might be high. Subscribe to local newspapers in several areas you would be willing to move to and check frequently with the people hiring in the fields you have training and/or experience in. Just as in the city, good jobs don't get filled through ads and employment offices, but by word of mouth and who knows who. Make yourself known, *don't* count on the employment office to find you a job.

Government agency jobs are found in rural areas on a much smaller scale than in cities. Often an agency will not have an office in a rural area but will serve that area with an "outreach" worker. If there are local offices, the staff is usually small. These agencies include Community Action, Department of Social and Health Services (welfare), State Employment, Social Security, County Health Departments and other service agencies.

Many of the jobs available in the services are funded through CETA (Comprehensive Employment Training Act). Different CETA funding has different qualifications. Title IX, for example, is for people over sixty years of age. Usually CETA requires that a person be unemployed a certain period of time. If you are interested in CETA jobs you must go to the agency handling CETA funding (which you can find out from the Employment Office) and find out if you qualify for CETA by filling out an application and being interviewed. Other agencies, such as DSHS, hire from the Civil Service roster. You can find out through the employment office when and where the Civil Service Exams are offered in an area.

Health services are a growing concern in our country. After four years being a service provider in a rural area, I've noticed that health is one area of increased services, therefore increased job opportunities. People with training in the areas of health - doctors, nurses, health administrators, nurse practitioners and others have

a better chance of rural employment than other professionals. Some rural areas provide mental health opportunities, but they are limited.

Most rural areas have schools, but like other services, because of the population size, the number of people employed is small. Also, because of the scarcity of such jobs, the turnover is low. Again, becoming established in an area, doing substitution and letting them know you intend to stay will help you qualify for job openings that do become available.

One problem with employment in rural areas is that funding on the national, state and county levels is usually distributed by numbers, not by need. Therefore many service agencies are under-funded to serve the needs of their area because of a small population.

There are the opportunities of a cottage industry; making something at home. This is very compatible to homesteading because you can work your job schedule around your farm schedule. Usually the problem with cottage industry work is if you are beginning your own you need a capital outlay of money. You also need a market, which usually means getting your product to a city, as the rural market is limited.

Commuting to an urban area to work is a possibility. However, to pay for the cost of transportation, the job needs to be high paying. Also, the added time to the work day spent in transportation can drain time and energy needed for country lifestyle. This is often the best alternative however, if an urban area is reasonably close.

The missing factor in the article is the major economic basis of many rural areas: fishing, logging, construction work, work in the woods for the National Forest and National Parks and farm work. Although women are becoming accepted into many traditionally male jobs, the rural areas are slower to change, and the economic systems remain male-dominated. Farm work is probably the most available to women, but also the lowest paying. Although construction work in cities is more open to women, it is still predominantly male-dominated in rural areas. The National Forests and Parks are required to hire women in all areas of work, but the number of women actually hired in most areas is still on the level of tokenism. Fishing and logging are a major part of the economic system here in the Pacific Northwest, and although a few women are getting involved in fishing, logging is still male dominated. Women probably have a better chance for jobs in an area that is more dependent on farm labor than labor in the woods.

A word of caution: due to the lack of employment opportunities in rural areas, it is wise not to move to an area without a certain amount of financial security, at least enough money to live on for a few months of job searching. This may be a grim picture and there are many women who have been fortunate in getting good jobs where they want to live in the country. But my experience has been that these are the exceptions, not the rule.



In *Hygieia: A Woman's Herbal*, Jeannine Parvati links wonderfully the ancient knowledge of wise women (all women) with the self-help-own-our-bodies direction of this decade. Our knowledge is a heritage from Hygieia, the Greek goddess of health, and from foremothers and sisters in cultures throughout time and the world. Our bodies are ours to feel, know, love and guide us in our journey through womanhood from baby to crone - although the emphasis of this book is heavily upon the mother phase.

The herbal is divided into categories for regulating menstrual flow, treating infertility, herbs for birth control, aphrodisiacs and anaphrodisiacs, herbs for the mind and for the reproductive organs, for pregnancy, childbirth, lactation, and for the menopause. Other uses are also given for many of the two hundred herbs which are considered with care and appreciation and lovingly referred to as "she."

The author points to the necessity of belief in a method for it to work and suggests creating a ritual around gathering the herbs (gently), preparing the teas and sipping them while thinking about the effects we are asking of them. She urges us each to listen to our own body and spirit, try things and do what feels best for us. Since she has done this too, the result is a very personal book woven from her own experiences and beliefs with yoga and feminism as underlying threads.

Information given on the herbs is very good and includes many uses by Native American women that I haven't seen referred to elsewhere. Unfortunately, in many cases, no dosages are given, making it more difficult to start experimenting.

*Hygieia* is more than an herbal, for half the text is devoted to other material on healing and wholistic health. Nutrition, rest, exercise, thoughts and feelings are all basic to self health, and their importance runs through the pages like a stream. Jeannine Parvati deals with her subject creatively and in depth within the limitations of the family-centered framework she has chosen. She sees menstruation as a ritual and a time for retreat, meditation, and the celebration of our bloods. (Ritual, meditation and celebration are basic themes recurring for several

aspects of our lives.) She suggests ways to listen to symptoms and talk with them and to follow our cycles for natural birth control as alternatives to the damaging medical contraceptives. Other topics include astrology, placenta recipes, meditations for conception, pregnancy and abortion, ovulation and menstruation dreams, thoughts on being fertile, natural childbirth and total mothering.

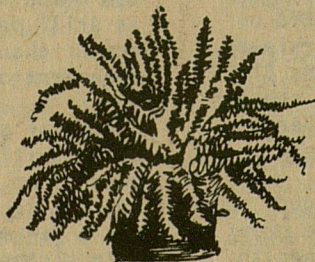
This appendix is extended with numerous contributions from others in the form of letters, interviews, dreams and short articles. It would have improved and broadened the scope of the book if some of this material had come from older women, lesbians, and celibate women rather than only friends of the author who are having babies. A high percentage of women are choosing other paths and should, I think, be represented for the book's title to fully apply. I was delighted to see that Jeannine admitted the possibility of spontaneous creation (parthenogenesis), then disappointed by the footnote immediately following, which mentions "God, as the Father." Also, I felt the intrusion of men into this "Women's Herbal" through quotations from male "authorities" both medical and spiritual - especially in a work that so often speaks of the need to look to our own experience, to make our own discoveries.

There is an extensive bibliography, a fascinating glossary of diverse terms, a list of herbs by Latin names and indexed by common names, as well as a general index. The book is beautifully illustrated with drawings by Tamara Slayton Glenn, frontspiece by womanchild Loi Medvin, and fine close-up photographs of herbs, neither identified nor credited. Design and calligraphy by Quill Cleaver are also beautiful. *Hygieia: A Woman's Herbal* is an important contribution both to the growing library of woman books and the expanding shelves of herbals. And I am gladdened by the sense of love and joy this book contains. ♀

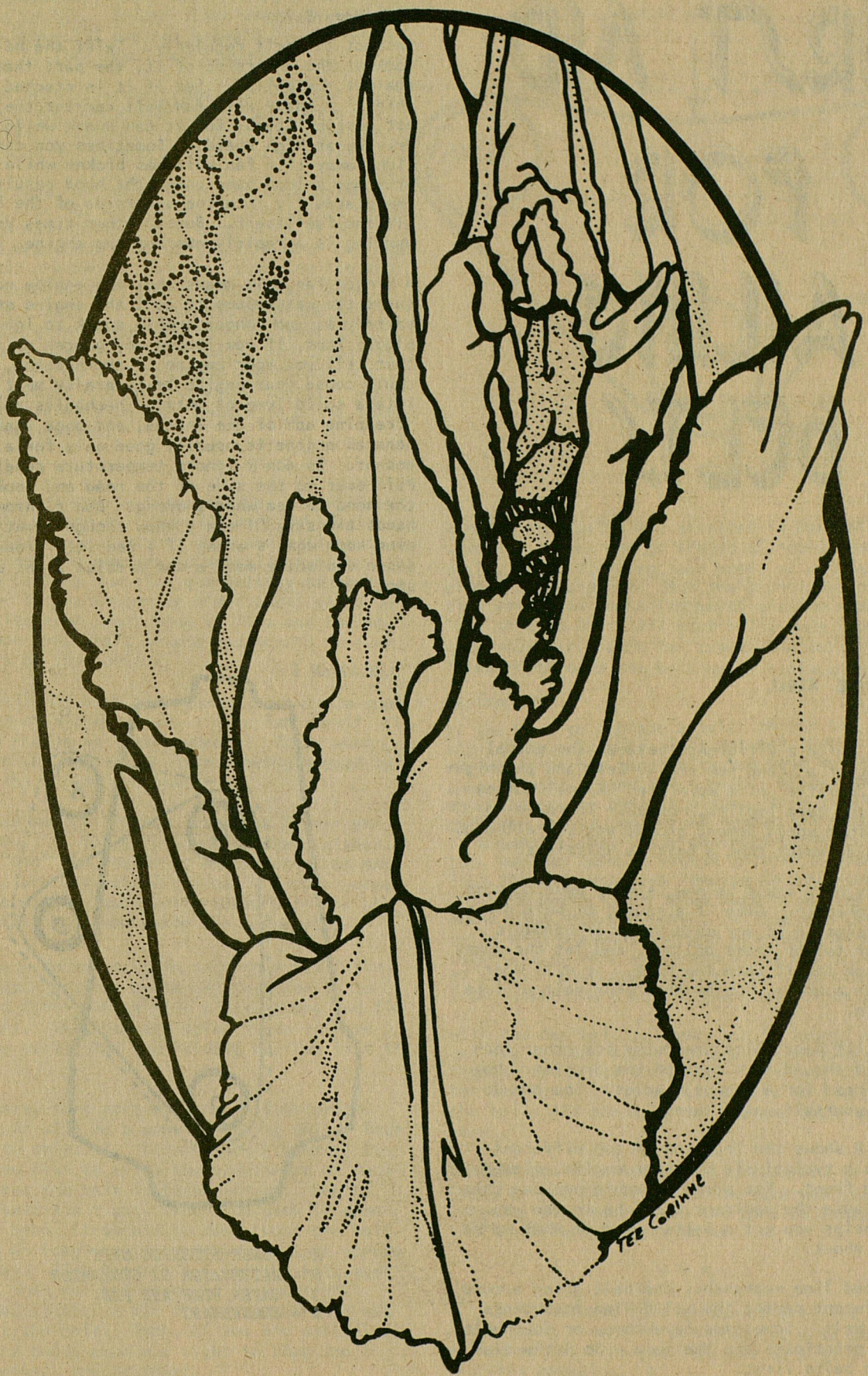
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# FIRST AID FOR AILING BELTS

JULIANNE KUHL

There is quite a difference between the normal squeaking of a brand new engine belt and the high-pitched "whistle" of a worn one. Normal noises are, as the term implies, *normal*. There is no problem that would demand prompt action, although you should expect that a belt be noiseless.

A squeaky belt could be new, simply needing time to be broken in. Give it a squirt of belt dressing, obtainable in any auto parts or hardware store for two or three dollars, and let the gooey stuff work itself into the belt. It will wear off after a while, but by then your belt will be broken in.

However, if your belts are noisy for other reasons, you should take care of the problem. No need to head for a garage, ladies. You can do the job yourself, as I have.

Diagram A shows the location of two different belts on a typical six cylinder engine, viewed from the front. You normally would not see this view because the radiator would be in the way. But it helps you get a better idea of what we're talking about.

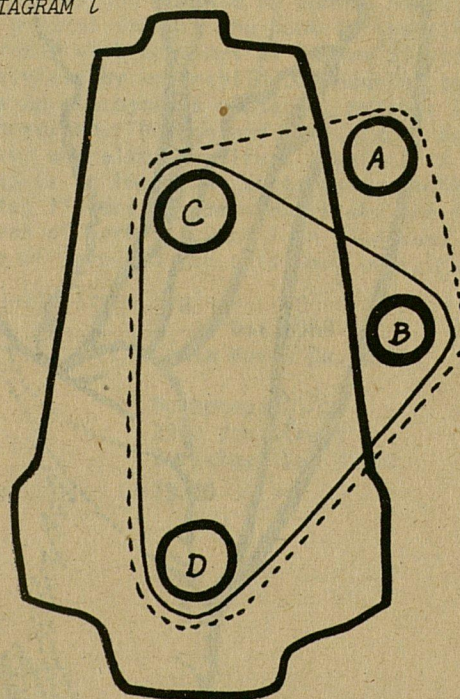
The dotted line represents one belt going around the different parts; the solid line represents another belt. Some cars have three or four belts, but the principles are the same. So let's discuss fan belts first.

## Old, Worn Belts

Inspect the belt regularly. Twist the belt and look at the underside of it, the part that is against the pulley. See if it is cracked, or shiny. A badly worn fan belt carries the nastiest possibilities, for it can break while you are driving at high speeds. Sometimes you can tell right away if a fan belt has broken while you're driving; a loud bang under the hood results when the pieces fly into the underside of the hood or hit the fan itself. But at other times your only warning is a rapidly overheating engine.

A broken fan belt means that the engine no longer turns the water pump to cool the engine *and* the battery can no longer supply spark to ignite each plug. Thus, if you ignore any gauges or lights that tell you your engine is overheating, you could cause your engine to literally melt inside into a solid lump of metal. Mechanics call this "freezing up" of the engine, and once that happens, an engine is usually good only for a boat anchor. So don't ignore temperature readings. Pull over to the side of the road and look under the hood to see what's wrong. Don't throw up your hands and say, "I don't know enough about cars to even know what's wrong if I see it!" Your common sense can solve many a car problem right on the spot.

DIAGRAM 1



- A - POWER STEERING UNIT
- B - ALTERNATOR OR GENERATOR
- C - WATER PUMP AND FAN
- D - CRANKSHAFT



First and foremost, *never open the radiator when the engine is hot. Never!* That water is scalding, well above 212 degrees because it is under pressure. So just look, don't touch.

If the fan belt is broken, and you have the pieces, you can administer "first aid" this way and this isn't fiction, friends. This solution has been done by several people I know well.

Take some rope, or heavy twine, or even nylon stocking. Put the belt where it should be, hold the broken ends of the belt together with one hand, and wrap your rope or stocking over the top of the belt around the pulleys, covering the broken belt completely. Tie it in a square knot, very, very tightly. This should give the belt a firm enough grip to get you to a gas station. If you don't have the broken belt, try tying the cord or nylon, or anything good and strong but flexible, around the pulleys where the belt was. You may get it working well enough to drive yourself to the station.

#### Loose Belt

Normally, as an engine turns inside, the pulleys outside the engine turn the fan belt, which in turn charges the battery so your car will start. You also need the battery to actually run the car. The battery supplies electricity to the alternator (or generator on older cars) which in turn enables each spark plug to fire and thereby "push" your crankshaft around and around to turn the wheels of the vehicle.

The fan belt may also turn the water pump to cool the engine at higher speeds. (The fan itself cools the engine at lower speeds.) Thus, when the belt *slips*, the water is not being pumped as fast and the engine overheats.

A loose fan belt will show itself at higher engine speeds. As the engine goes faster, either when you "gun" the engine or accelerate fast onto a highway, you can hear a gradually louder scream or whistle with no apparent problem with the engine itself. And eventually the noise stops.

An immediate solution is to slow down until the noise quits. But the permanent solution is to take about five minutes some pleasant day and fix it yourself. What you are going to do is move the engine parts that are holding the fan belt in place.

In some cars, this part will be an alternator. In others it will be a power steering unit. Both are easy to unfasten. Loosen (*don't remove*) the bolts, then push or slide the alternator or whatever so that the belt is tightened up. Don't make the belt too tight. When you push it down with your hand, it should go down about one half inch from an imaginary line drawn straight across each pulley. (See Diagram 2.) If the belt goes down less than one half inch it is too tight. Move the alternator a bit closer to where it was and retest the belt. Then, if you are satisfied, tighten the bolts good and tight so they don't vibrate loose. You're done!

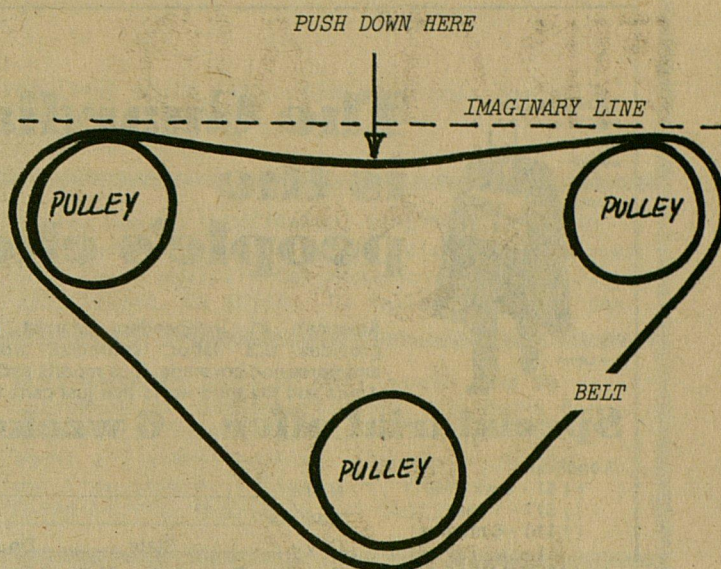


DIAGRAM 2

Other engine belts are serviced in basically the same way. They can go around air-conditioning units, power steering, air pump, or several other pieces of equipment. But the principles of tightening and loosening belts are the same. Take care to check all your belts when you service your car. Look for cracks and shiny surfaces which mean the belt needs replacement.

#### Replacement

If you have to replace a belt, things can get a bit tricky. Even so, it's not all that difficult, depending on how many belts you have and how much room to work around the engine. Unbolt the unit which keeps the belt in place. In a simple six cylinder engine, you would remove the alternator. In a complicated, fully equipped eight cylinder car, you may have to remove several pieces. Take the belt you have removed in your hand to the auto parts store to be sure of buying the exact size belt you need. Telling the clerk verbally will probably not get you what you want; there are so many different sizes and thicknesses of belts. Even the shape of the belt can vary from resembling a square thing to a V-belt.

With the new belt in hand, put it around all the pulleys it came from, replace the alternator, and tighten the bolts somewhat. Then test the belt for tension. If it's OK, be sure to tighten all the bolts all the way, and you are back in business.

Whether you live in the city, suburbs, or on farmland, as you tackle and solve each new automotive problem, you become more and more an independent, self-confident Country Woman.

\* \* \*

If you have found this series of articles to be interesting - even if you disagree with me - I'd enjoy hearing from you. Please drop me a note c/o this magazine. ♀



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—Lenin

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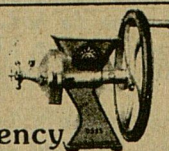
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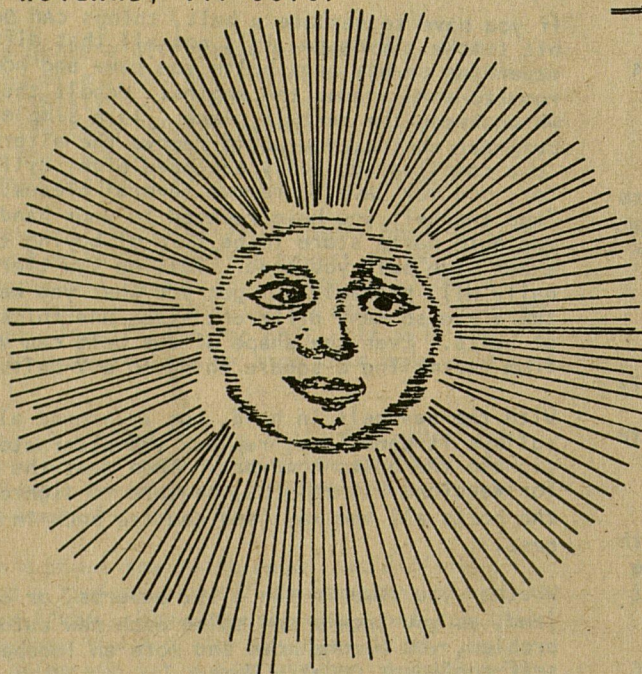
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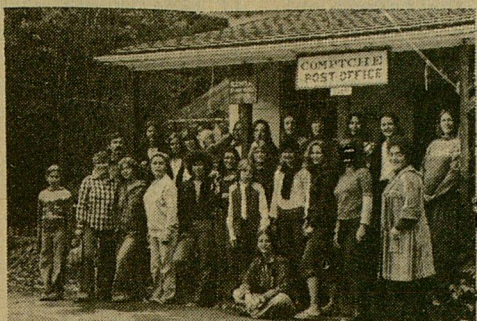
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# CONTACT

Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development in San Francisco, Ca. is planning a series of two-day workshops in cities throughout the country between April and July, 1979 that will focus on how to write fundable grants and proposals for women's educational equity projects. If you would like to receive further information and an application, please contact: Nancy Dannenberg, Far West Laboratory, 1855 Folsom Street, San Francisco, Ca. 94103, 15-565-3173.

I am planning to compile a directory of Women In Non-Traditional Employment for Northern California. Please send any information you have, along with address, phone number, and literature if available to: Thea, 22100 Bonness Rd., Sonoma, Ca. 95476.

I am looking for a woman or couple with some country experience to share 30 acres in the Mattole River Valley, 22 miles west of Garberville. Meadows, trees, own cabin on river frontage, plenty of spring water, close to country road. Write Cathy Klein, Box 574, Redway, Ca. 95560.

WANTED: A woman able to work (and play) hard - to come help woman and man on small Vermont farm. (For Summer 1979) If you want to learn about organic gardening and farming, food preservation, animal husbandry, barn building, etc. No pay but lots of organic food, good times, good people, and a chance to learn. Write about yourself and send to: Chris Richardson, RFD #1 Baltimore Rd., Chester Depot, Vt. 05144.

The National Women's Studies Association will hold its first National Conference at the University of Kansas at Lawrence May 30-June 3, 1979. The planned program will include panels, seminars, debates and papers in feminist education and presentations in the arts. Registration fee is \$25 for members; \$35 non-members. We strongly urge registration by April 15, 1979. Registration forms available from the National Office, NWSA, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742.

Many consumer, farmer, rural and environmental organizations, as well as concerned individuals, are forming a coalition - the NATIONAL FAMILY FARM COALITION - to promote needed legislation. Information and membership forms are available from: NATIONAL FAMILY FARM COALITION, 1346 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20036

We are looking for women to become Owner Members or Visitor Members in The Heartland, a Women's Wilderness Retreat. The Heartland is 800 acres of rolling hills and meadows near Ukiah in Mendocino County, Calif. Women will collectively own the land as a feminist (non-separatist), ecological and cooperative community. Owner Memberships are \$10,000 (\$2500 down). Visitor Memberships are \$2500. For more information write: The Heartland, P.O. Box 5265, Berkeley, Ca 94705

# FARM NOTES

As anyone knows who has butchered ducks, it is a frustrating job. We've developed the following method that has made the job only about twice as hard as a chicken rather than a thousand times.

Use two large pots and boil water in each one. For the initial dipping, put a goodly amount of dish detergent in. Next take some of Shaklee's Basic H and put some of that in. For those not familiar with Shaklee products these are natural products covering all family needs. Basic H makes water wetter. (It also helps your animals assimilate their food more completely. Put several drops daily into their water.) This solution wilts those old feathers down so you can pluck them off in good time.

Now, go back to the second pot of water. (When you take the first pot out to use, put some melted paraffin on top of the second pot. If time is not rushed, you can put the block of paraffin on top of the water to melt but it is quicker to melt it first.) Make sure the water is hot and then when the feathers are off, dip the duck a second time into paraffin water solution. Hang up to let paraffin harden.

You may need to dip twice. For each duck put another block of paraffin in. It takes more than you think. Peel the hard paraffin off. You'll need not to singe and hopefully you'll not be left with too many pinfeather stubs. Be sure to keep the water fairly hot for both dippings and it shouldn't take too long. I clean the pinfeathers with a sharp small knife. Pull them out away from you.

Lois Smith

I received a recipe for a terrific cure for poison ivy from a friend after our eldest son evidently swam through some poison ivy when picking grapes. The following recipe brought instant relief from the itching and dried it up in several days.

- 1 pouch of chewing tobacco
- 1 bottle Calamine lotion
- 1 small bottle iodine

Put one half tobacco into 1½ cups of boiling water. Boil together until very dark. Strain and cool. Mix with the bottle of Calamine lotion and the bottle of iodine.

This yields about two cups of lotion which will store for a long time. This does not stain as you might think and is also good for any unwanted spots that might come along.

A woman recently wrote about a suggested way to kill chickens by hitting them with a piece of wood. I have a way that leaves your hands free to kill the bird quickly. It will look funny but it works. First, I catch the bird with a fish net on a long 4' handle. I then sit on the bird. I squat with the bird facing away from me. I lay its head back with my left hand and my right hand cuts the throat with a sharp knife. Get the idea? Works with turkeys too but be prepared for a ride. Sitting on a turkey with wings that want to flop is similar to bronc riding! Denise Needham



## FUTURE ISSUES

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### BREAKING BOUNDRIES

Reaching beyond our inner and outer limits-  
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