

PIT STOP



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1

My lover is a woman
 & when i hold her -
 feel her warmth -
 i feel good - feel safe

then/ i never think of
 my families' voices -
 never hear my sisters say -
 bulldaggers, queers, funny -
 come see us, but don't
 bring your friends -
 it's okay with us,
 but don't tell mama
 it'd break her heart
 never feel my father
 turn in his grave
 never hear my mother cry
 Lord, what kind of child is this?

2

My lover's hair is blonde
 & when it rubs across my face
 it feels soft -
 feels like a thousand fingers
 touch my skin & hold me
 and i feel good.

then/ i never think of the little boy
 who spat & called me nigger
 never think of the policemen
 who kicked my body and said crawl
 never think of black bodies
 hanging in trees or filled
 with bullet holes

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never hear my sisters say
 white folks hair stinks
 don't trust any of them
 never feel my father
 turn in his grave
 never hear my mother talk
 of her back ache after scrubbing floors
 never hear her cry -
 Lord, what kind of child is this?

3

My lover's eyes are blue
 & when she looks at me
 i float in a warm lake
 feel my muscles go weak with want
 feel good - feel safe

Then/ i never think of the blue
 eyes that have glared at me -
 moved three stools away from me
 in a bar
 never hear my sisters rage
 of syphilitic black men as
 guinea pigs -
 rage of sterilized children -
 watch them just stop in an
 intersection to scare the old
 white bitch.
 never feel my father turn
 in his grave
 never remember my mother
 teaching me the yes sirs & mams
 to keep me alive -
 never hear my mother cry,
 Lord, what kind of child is this?

And when we go to a gay bar
 & my people shun me because i crossed
 the line
 & her people look to see what's
 wrong with her - what defect
 drove her to me -

And when we walk the streets
 of this city - forget and touch
 or hold hands and the people
 stare, glare, frown, & taunt
 at those queers -

I remember-
 Every word taught me
 Every word said to me
 Every deed done to me
 & then i hate -
 i look at my lover
 & for an instance - doubt -

Then/ i hold her hand tighter
 And i can hear my mother cry.
 Lord, what kind of child is this.





My hands are big
and rough & callused -
like my mother's

My innards are twisted
and torn and sectioned -
like my father's

Now - some of
my sisters see me
as big & twisted
rough & torn
callused & sectioned
definitely not pleasant,
to be around -

I

Had i listened to my father

i would be
married & miserable
dreaming of fish
& open space
& bellowing my needs -
waiting for some one
to listen to the second run
& know -

it is difficult to be
strong -
& appear sure
no one ever believes
when you cry

Had i listened to my mother
i would be married & miserable
dreaming - praying
of security
& choking on my needs
wating for some one
to listen to the second run
& know

It is difficult to be
quiet -
& appear sure
no one believes
when you
don't
show your tears.

III

My hands are big & rough
like my mother's
my innards are twisted & torn
like my father's
my self is
my big hands -
like my father's
& torn innards
like my mother's
& they both felt
& were -
& i am a product of that -
& not a political consciousness

"i like your friends.
they're real people.
not phony - like your
sisters' friends."
Marie Cook

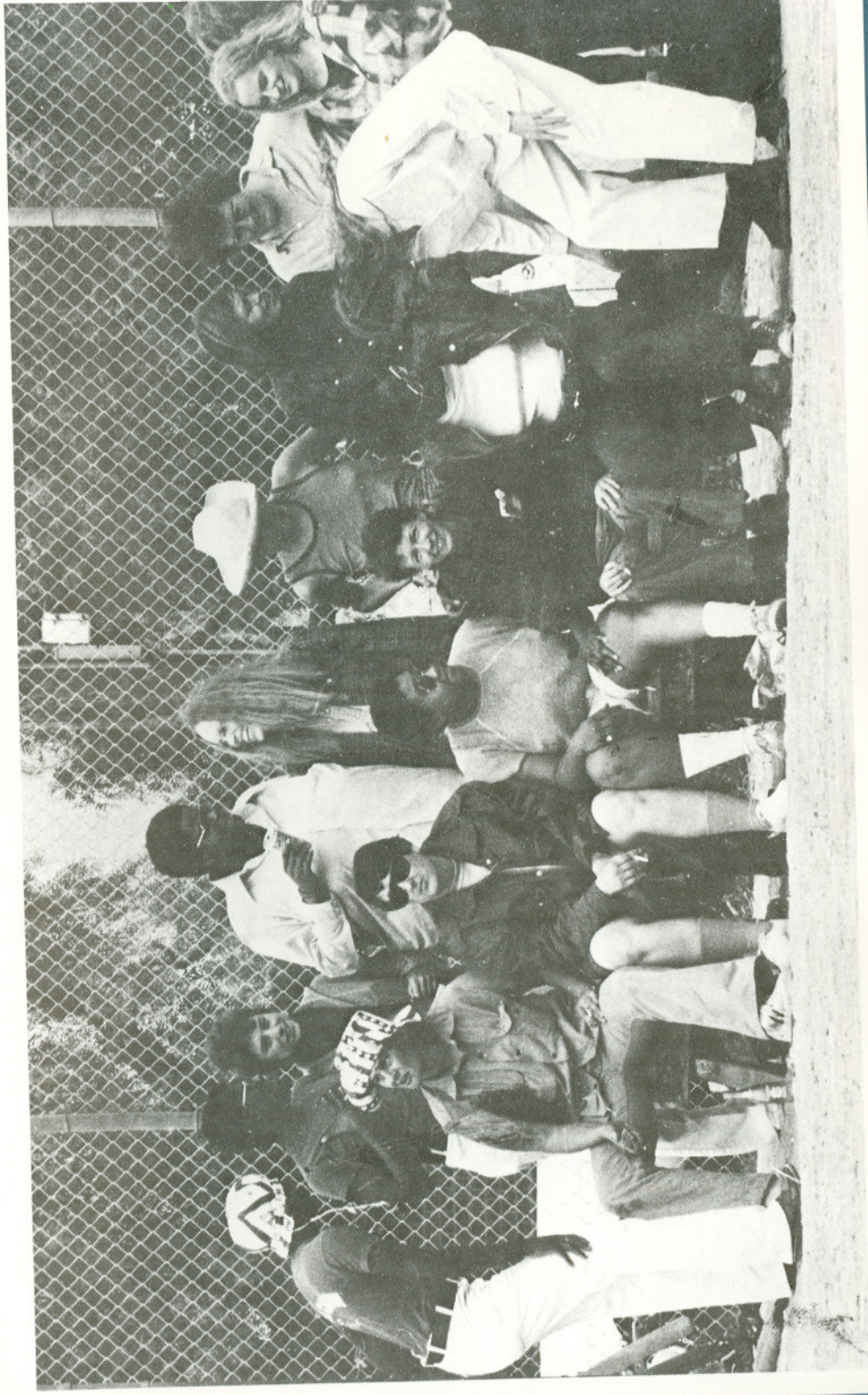
COP - OUT

To My Mother

All of these
real people -
are real,
live in the
flesh

dykes -
& all the boyfriends
that they have
are a part of my creativity.

All of these real people
are real -
& i can only tell you
real live in the flesh -
lies -



To an Unlabelled

I'm playing a
game.
I don't know the rules.
& I should know,
that's why there are P.E. majors?
But I'm playing
anyhow

The umpire or referee
or match maker said play.

& you

jumped in the game.
unlabelled

So who are you.

Sister,
do I call you that.
I hope not.
Sisters are fat ladies
in church,
sweating away sins -
without rumpling their clothes
& keeping me in my place.

His wife - but,
you quit that game
back there,
you changed your uniform.
A regular on the squad

Concert pianist -
I don't know what that means.
I play drums.
but I fake it.

I think that's wrong - but
like I said I don't know the rules.

The game keeper is mad.

Friend?
I've heard that before.
It doesn't quite mean

I call you friend -

&

you know what I mean.

I have a solitary lover
she digs it
moves with it
moves
alone well
moves alone
well
i have a solitary
lover
she digs it
she digs moving
digs
moving
alone
& when i barge
into her world
she
in spite of herself
graciously
comes
with me
calms with me
solitary

For Willyce

When i make love to you
i try
with each stroke of my tongue
to say i love you
to tease i love you
to hammer i love you
to melt i love you

& your sounds drift down
oh god!
oh jesus!
and i think -
here it is, some dude's
getting credit for what
a woman
has done,
again.

I Kumquat You
Some one said
to say,
I love you -
is corny.

A Small Contradiction

It is politically incorrect
to demand monogamous
relationships -

It's emotionally insecure
to seek
ownership of
another's soul -
or body &
damaging to one's psyche
to restrict the giving and
taking of love.

Me, i am
totally opposed to
monogamous relationships
unless
i'm
in love.

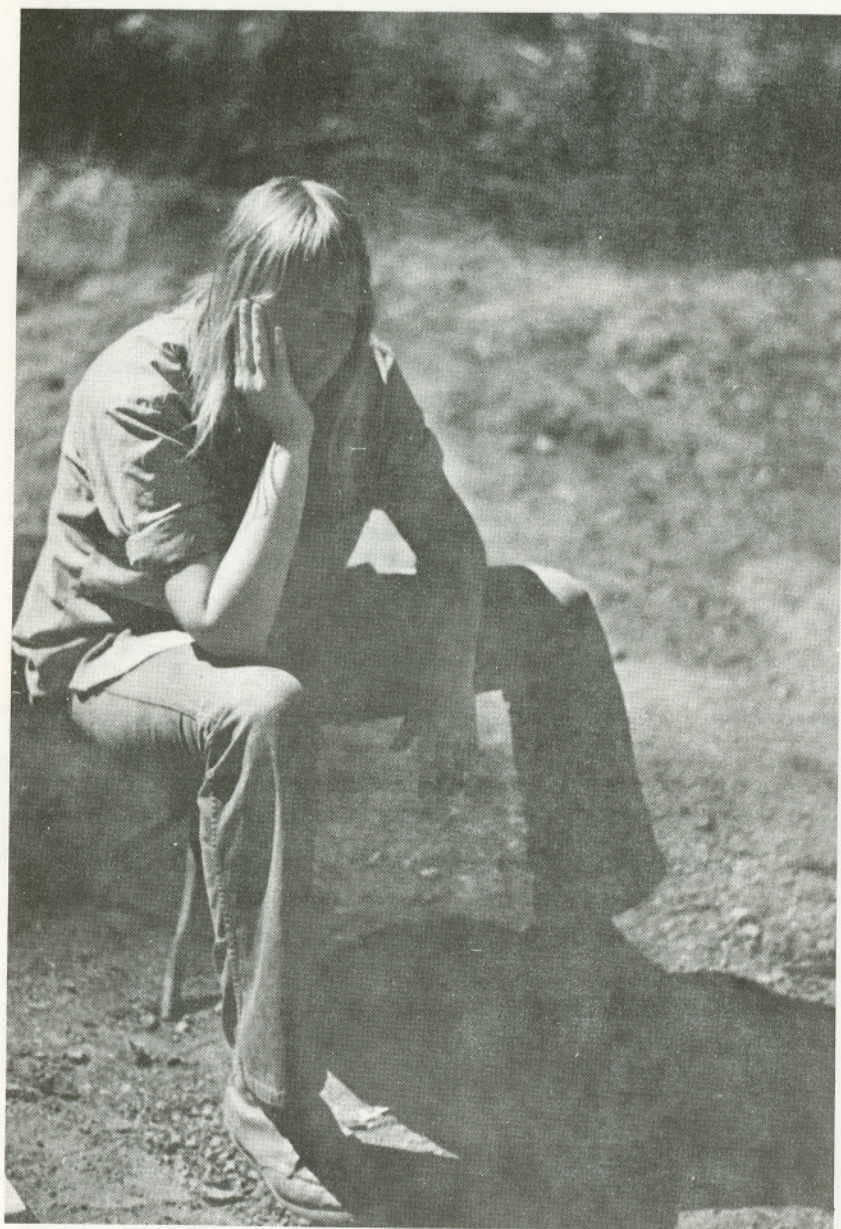
i wish that i could hate you
when you brush against me in sleep
your breath slapping life in my innards
& i feel my body go soft in wanting you
i wish right then that i could hate you

i wish that i could hate you
when i sit not able to see you
cursing the something that came up
& know i will still come when you call -
i wish right then that i could hate you

i wish that i could hate you
when i hear you on the phone
planning time away from me
& wish it was me that you're talking to
i wish right then that i could hate you

I wish for enough anger to hate you
- My love for you keeps getting in my way.

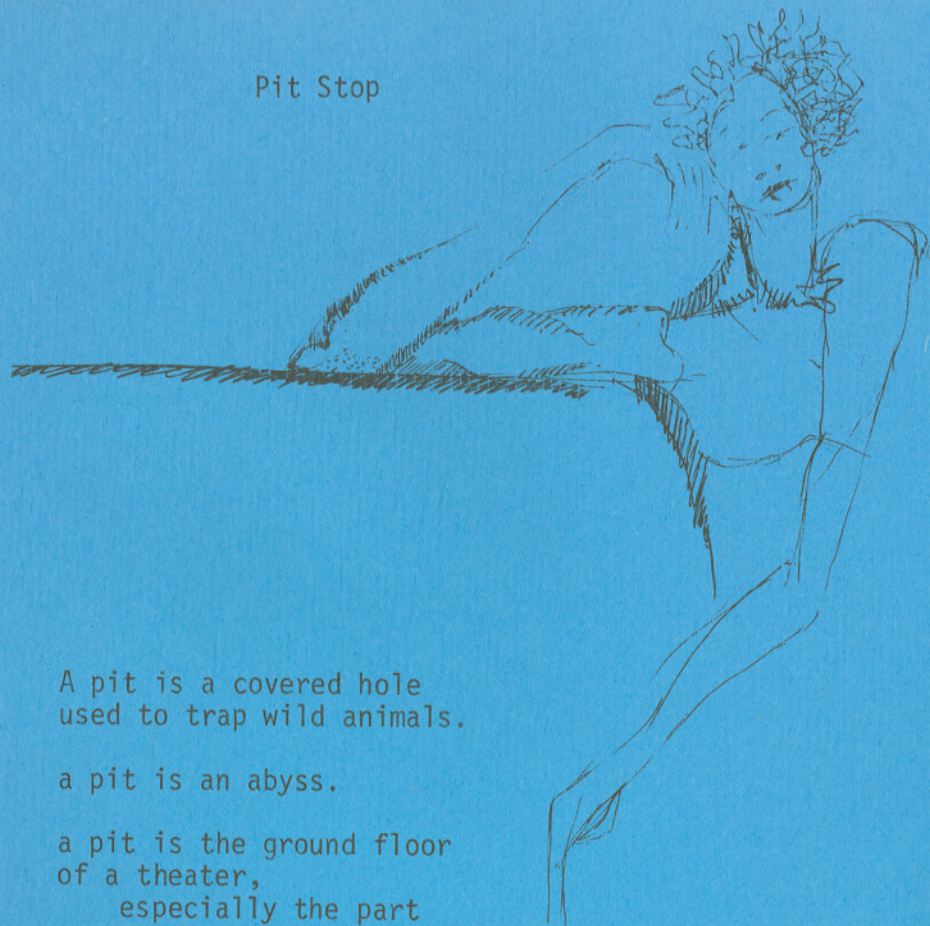
Bitch!
i want to scream
I hate you
Fuck you for this pain
You used my guts
& now you stand here
Write my pain off
an unworkable experience
Bitch!
i want to scream -
& the words -
- unreal
from my mouth
i love you -
i hope you'll be happy.



Best Friends
(for Whitey)

So how come
we can't touch
when we hurt most?
Can only
sense &
hurl ourselves
against forces
& each other
& laugh away
our agony
tomorrow -
as drunk
yesterdays.

Pit Stop



A pit is a covered hole
used to trap wild animals.

a pit is an abyss.

a pit is the ground floor
of a theater,
especially the part
at the rear.

a pit is a coward's suicide.

a hearty drink to anything -

Let us drink to your new lover
Let us drink to your lover - gone
Let us drink to my lover
Let us drink to my lover - gone
Hey let's drink to the good people
Let's drink to the nearest holiday

Let's drink to our ability to drink.

A pit is a covered hole
used by wild animals

it's hard to withdraw the fangs, now
in public places

the anger spills over

to be mopped away, later

too much drink

slow fang withdrawal

our animalism is showing

a bad image -

Let's drink to a bad image

Let's drink to a covered pit

& happy animals

& withdrawn fangs

a pit is an abyss
Let's drink to my shame.

a hustle
a grand hustle

i love you, so

i won't call you fool.

Let's have another drink

you love me

you won't walk away from me.

Let's have another drink

to our hustle

let's hustle another drink

& drink

to our ability to hustle.

Let's have a drink to our shame.

Let's have a drink

to drink



a pit is the ground floor
of a theater,

especially the part
at the rear.

It was a good show last night
full of venom

i thought for sure she would hit her
& did you see that woman fall off her stool?

yes indeed a grand show

everybody was

& it ended safely -

How's your head this morning dearie?

Let's drink to a good show

Let's drink to the rear of the theater.

It's hard to get hit with a bottle here.

Just watch the show.

Let's drink to a ground floor.

Has anyone ever priced the
balcony?

a pit is a coward's suicide.

what do you mean kill yourself.

that's a bummer - makes me sad.

Let's have another drink.

yes i've gained weight -
it's the beer you know.

cold - yes
caught a lot of colds -

just need to take more vitamin C

Let's have a hot toddie for my cold.

wow that's too bad - over dose huh.

won't touch the stuff -

if anything kills me
it will be the booze, ha ha.

Let's have a drink to her & her drug.

she was a good kid

One of these days i'll have a check-up -
getting winded too easily - getting old.

Let's have another drink.

i can't imagine anyone committing suicide.

the mechanics are too slow here.

the tires should be on -
the gas in.

what's the matter?

you want to cost us the race?

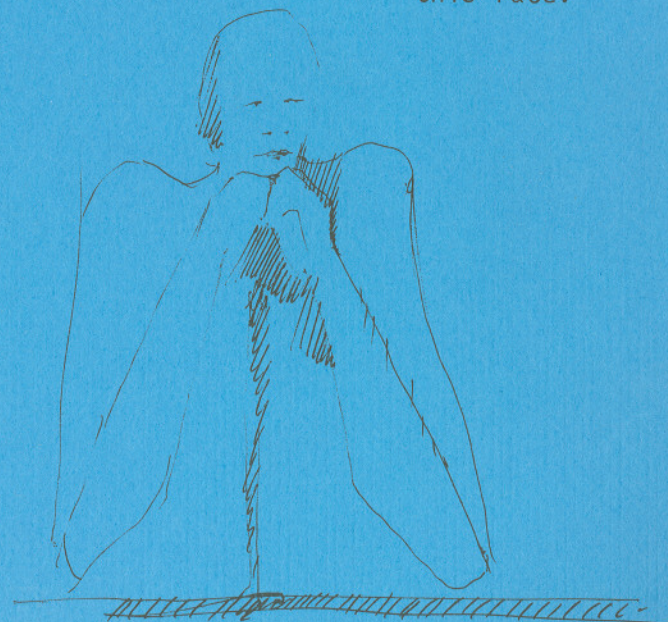
Oh - one more drink

Let's drink to the race.
Let's drink to the pit crew.
Let's drink,

let's drink
let us drink
let us drink
drink
drink

excuse me friends,
i must go now

i cannot afford to lose
this race.



"Give strong drink unto him
that is ready to perish, and
wine unto those that be of
heavy hearts. Let him drink
and forget his poverty, and
remember his misery no more."

Proverbs 31:6-7

When i drink

i scream

i fight

i cry

i don't

do these things

when i'm sober.

so far,

my friends

think the
solution

to my being

a problem

is for me
to stop

drinking.

i wonder
how many matches
it would take,
to lay a single-file trail
from here -
to richard nixon's ass.

It's probably not a good idea.
I can see him now -
Waving his singed prick
on nation-wide television,
telling how it was saved
by a tub of confidence
provided by
his silent majority.

Tour America!
a T.V. commercial said.
I will -
there are things I need:
travelers checks in new york
gas mask in berkeley,
face mask in los angeles,
National guardsmen to protect me
- in the south,
Marines to protect me
from guardsmen
- in the mid-west,
Police to protect me
from hustlers
- in the ghettos,
Bullet-proof vest and helmet
to protect me from police
- everywhere

Tour America!
perhaps,
it would be better

to blow it up.

I'm so tired
of hearing about
capitalist
sexist,
racist,
facist,
chauvinist,
feminist.

I am tired
of hearing about
confrontating
demonstrating
trashing,
smashing,
surviving,
jiving.

I'm beginning to
wonder if
the tactics
of this revolution
is to
talk the enemy to death.

The What Liberation Front?

Today i had a talk with my dog
he called me a racist - chauvinist person.
told me he didn't like the way
i keep trying to change him.
Dogs - he said - do not shit in toilets
Dogs - like to shit out side & he didn't
appreciate being told to shit in the gutter -
just because i didn't like the smell of his shit -
he informed me that fish weren't so hot
about my shit either.
And property - he wanted to know why
people expected dogs to protect their capitalist interest
he never watches television or plays
records. & how come i put tags on him.
My dog - he laughed. He is his own dog.
And what's this bullshit about his sex
life. If he wants to fuck in the streets it's
his business & the genocide against dogs -
Now by this time he's growling - & i just
said - he didn't have to get nasty - i was
willing to study the problem. After all didn't
i buy him good bones and get him groomed
once a month & then he starts hollering
about if he wanted to get dirty &
have long hair that was his right too.
And another thing he said - if he wants to
sit he'll sit - so just shovel my shit about
sit, lie, roll over, stand up. And finally
he said standing up - the next time i patted
him on the head & called him a good boy
he was gonna lift his leg - With that,
he got up & left the house saying something
about a consciousness-raising meeting.



Snatches of a Day

Grey clouds floated past my window -

& I ignored them,
danced into the streets,
stoned on life.

A woman with brown hair

like dirty corduroy,
riding in a Malibu,
with an olive green suit,
& a big cigar -
stared at me.

I stopped dancing.

An old cripple dragged past me -

I offered to carry her;
She called me a nigger.
I cut her throat,
danced around her head.
sang, "We Shall Overcome."
hung her scalp over Woolworth's candy counter.

Cops started to arrest me.

Said I couldn't dance without a permit.
So, I skipped slowly.

Science teacher lectured for an hour,

Never did tell me his name,
So, I didn't tell him mine,
Just my student body & social security numbers.

A friend gave me a God's eye -

Shocked me,
Didn't know He had eyes.

My cousin died last week

He was a hero.
Died defending my liberty -
O sweet liberty
Land of the free
& the great.

Went to a dull movie.

Watched a guy masturbate.

I want to go to sleep.

My cat won't let me under the covers.

Pied Piper

She sits,
ebony skinned,
drawing sun rays.
Children cluster;
a jagged circle
presses inward.
Sand - covered feet
Lean,
in homage to
the High Priestess.
The classical reed
will not suffice.

A Conga

Willowy notes
are not heard.
Deep, tense, beats
climb down the drum,
Jumping out in the air,
Lions roaring at children.

Conga

Black hands
beat the skin;
a white bred
with sweat.

Conga

Drum beats
dance over the waves,
& children's kyaks
drift inward.

The priestess rests.
Her fingers cuddle
the drum head.
Children query, with
eyes showing no hate.
"What kinda drum is it?"
"Conga"
"You play good;
Is it a message?"
"Message?"
"Yes, does it mean?
What song is it?"

"It's a Mau Mau death song."



"Until all oppressed people
are free -
none of us are free."

Questions

I

the chains are different now -
lay on this body strange
no metal clanging in my ears

chains laying strange
chains laying light-weight
laying credit cards
laying welfare forms
laying buying on time
laying white packets of dope
laying afro's & straighten hair
laying pimp & revolutionary
laying mother & daughter
laying father & son

chains laying strange -
strange laying chains
chains

how do i break these chains



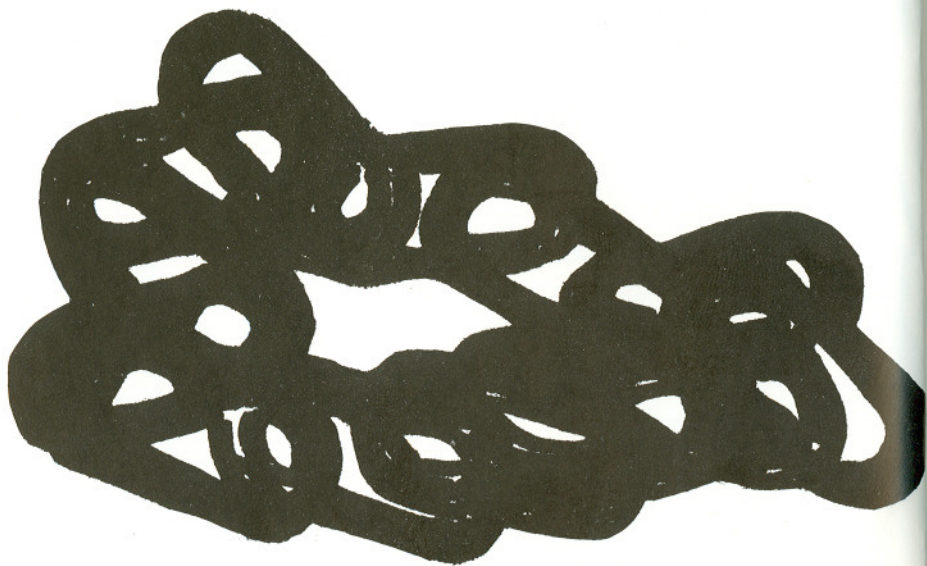
II

the chains are different now -
laying on this body strange
funny chains - no clang -

chains laying strange
chains laying light-weight
chains laying dishes
chains laying laundry
chains laying grocery markets
chains laying no voice
chains laying children
chains laying selective jobs
chains laying less pay
chains laying girls & women
chains laying wives & women
chains laying mothers & daughters

chains laying strange
strange laying chains
chains

how do i break these chains



III

the chains are still here
laying on this body strange
no metal - no clang

chains laying strange
chains laying light-weight
chains laying funny
chains laying different
chains laying dyke
chains laying bull-dagger
chains laying pervert
chains laying no jobs
chains laying more taxes
chains laying beatings
chains laying stares
chains laying myths
chains laying fear
chains laying revulsion

chains laying strange
strange laying chains
chains

how do i break these chains

IV

the chains are here
no metal - no clang
chains of ignorance & fear
chains here - causing pain

how do i break these chains
to whom or what
do i direct pain
black - white
mother - father
sister - brother
straight - gay

how do i break these chains
how do i stop the pain
who do i ask - to see
what must i do - to be free

sisters - how do i break your chains
brothers - how do i break your chains
mothers - how do i break your chains
fathers - how do i break your chains

i don't want to kill -
i don't want to cause pain -

how -
how else do i break - your chains.



"How do we know that the panthers
will accept a gift from
white - middle - class - women?"

Have you ever tried to hide?

In a group
of women
hide
yourself

slide between the floor boards

slide yourself away child

away from this room

& your sister

before she notices

your black self &

her white mind

slide your eyes

down

away from the other blacks

afraid - a meeting of eyes

& pain would travel between you -

change like milk to buttermilk

a silent rage.

SISTER! your foot's smaller,

but it's still on my neck.

i have a dream
no -
not Martin's
though my feet moved
down many paths.
it's a simple dream -

i have a dream
not the dream of the vanguard
not to turn this world -
all over
not the dream of the masses -
not the dream of women
not to turn this world
all
over
it's a simple dream -

In my dream -
i can walk the streets
holding hands with my lover

In my dream -
i can go to a hamburger stand
& not be taunted by bikers on a holiday.

In my dream -
i can go to a public bathroom,
& not be shrieked at by ladies -

In my dream -
i can walk ghetto streets
& not be beaten up by my brothers.

In my dream -
i can walk out of a bar
& not be arrested by the pigs

I've placed this body
placed this mind
in lots of dreams -
in Martin's & Malcolm's -
in Huey's & Mao's -
in George's & Angela's -
in the north & south
of Vietnam & America
& Africa

i've placed this body & mind
in dreams -
dreams of people -

now i'm tired -
now you listen!
i have a dream too.
it's a simple dream.