

# AMAZON QUARTERLY

Volume 1  
Issue 2

\$1.



A LESBIAN-FEMINIST ARTS JOURNAL



# AMAZON QUARTERLY

VOLUME ONE

ISSUE TWO

Editors: Gina and Laurel

1 year subscription within the U.S. \$4.00  
Plain brown wrapper and out of U.S. \$5.00

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Bulk Rates: 80¢ per issue.

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AMAZON QUARTERLY  
554 Valle Vista  
Oakland, Ca. 94610

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Amazon Quarterly is published four times a year by Amazon Press of Oakland,  
California. This is the February 1973 issue. Application to mail at second  
class postage rates is pending at Oakland Post Office, Oakland, California.

# AMAZON QUARTERLY

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## LIFE WITH MISS Q.

Who are you, Amazon Quarterly readers? What is it about A.Q. that excites you? What about Her don't you like? What bores you? What inspires you? We want Amazon Quarterly to become a real communication among women wherever the magazine reaches -- both the communication and the "wherever the magazine reaches" are in large part up to you.

We've received a handful of thoughtful, critical, but most often simply jubilant letters from readers of the first issue -- response that encourages us and lets us know in what areas we are most effectively communicating. But we need more feedback -- write to us (and please enclose a stamped return envelope if you want a reply). We'll start publishing a selection of letters in A.Q. if your responses are meaty and many. So, tell us when you write if it's o.k. to print your letter.

And now from the intellectual to the physical aspects of Miss Q.: we want to keep you informed about A.Q.'s current financial state of health so that you can better help us keep Her alive and going.

We printed 1000 copies of the first issue, and ran out with bookstore and subscription orders still coming in. Since the issue was so good that we don't want anyone to miss it, we've printed 500 copies more. So, tell your friends who might want complete collections to order a subscription now.

We think A.Q. is doing well for a lady who's just come out, but we want to zealously guard her condition to avoid the fate of The Ladder which folded in debt with 3500 subscribers. We need help. We don't have the money or means for extensive advertising -- but we do have over 500 subscribers spread out through the U.S. and Canada. We know that A.Q. will survive and grow on Her own merits if enough people are simply introduced to Her. So share this issue with friends and encourage them to subscribe; give gift subscriptions if you can. And especially important, go to your local public library and urge them to subscribe, or talk to the librarian at any college near you.

We also want to encourage you to send us your writing and your visual art. This issue, we think our scope is wider than issue ones' -- and we'd like you to help us expand even further in issue 3. We want to continue our series of lives of little known feminist artists and writers. If you have some suggestions about rare journals or autobiographies please let us know.



Rita Mae Brown has written the first outrageously funny lesbian novel. What follows are two of the most delightful episodes in the early part of our heroine's life. Ruby Fruit Jungle will be published in its entirety soon we hope . . . a much needed addition to lesbian fiction.

# RUBY FRUIT JUNGLE

by RITA MAE BROWN

VIOLET HILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Leota B. Bisland sat next to me that year in sixth grade, and Leroy sat behind. Leota was the most beautiful girl I had ever seen. She was tall and slender with creamy skin and deep, green eyes. She was quiet and shy so I spent most of sixth grade concentrating on making Leota laugh. Miss Potter wasn't too pleased with my performance in the first row but she was a sweet old soul and only made me stand in the hall once. That didn't work out because I kept returning to the door-

way to dance when Miss Potter's head was turned. I also made the finger at Leroy. Right when I was in the middle of shooting the bird, Miss Potter turns from the blackboard, "Molly since you enjoy performing so much I'm going to make you the star of the Christmas play this year." Leroy asked whether the play was going to be *The Creature from the Black Lagoon*. Naturally everybody screamed. Miss Potter said no, it was a play about the nativity of Jesus and I was to be Virgin Mary.

Cheryl Spiegelglass got so mad she jumped up and said, "But Miss Potter, the Virgin Mary was the mother of little Lord Jesus and she was the most perfect woman on earth. Virgin Mary has to be played by a good girl and Molly isn't good. Yesterday she stuck a wad of bubble gum in Audrey's hair." Cheryl was bucking to be Virgin Mary, that was clear. Miss Potter said that we had to consider dramatic talent not just whether a person was good or not. Besides, maybe if I played Virgin Mary some of her goodness would rub off.

Leota was a lady of Bethlehem so she was in the play too. And Cheryl was Joseph. Miss Potter said this would be a great challenge to Cheryl. She was also in charge of costumes, probably because her father would donate them. Anyway she got her name in the program twice in big letters.

Leroy was a Wise Man, and he wore a long beard with Little Lulu curls on it. We all had to stay after school every day to remember our lines and rehearse. Miss Potter was right! I was so busy trying to get everything perfect that I didn't have time to get into trouble or think about anything else except Leota. I began to wonder if girls could marry girls, because I was sure I wanted to marry Leota and look in her green eyes forever. But I would only marry her if I didn't have to do the housework. I was certain of that. But if Leota really didn't want to do it either, I guessed I'd do it. I'd do anything for Leota.

Leroy began to get mad that I was paying so much attention to a mere village inhabitant and he was a Wise Man. He forgot it as soon as I gave him my penknife with the naked lady on it that I clipped from Earl Stambach.

The Christmas pageant was an enormous production. All the mothers came, and it was so important that the fathers even took off work and Cheryl's was sitting right in the front row in the seat of honor. Carrie and Florence showed up to marvel at me being Virgin Mary and at Leroy in robes. Leroy and I were so excited we could barely stand it, and we got to wear makeup, rouge and red lipstick. Getting painted was so much fun that Leroy confessed he liked it too, although boys aren't supposed to, of course. I told him not to worry about it, because he had a beard and if you had a beard, it must be all right to wear lipstick if you wanted to because everyone will know you're a man. He thought that sounded reasonable and we made a pact to run away as soon

as we were old enough and go be famous actors. Then we could wear pretty clothes all the time, never pick potato bugs and wear lipstick whenever we felt like it. We vowed to be so wonderful in this show that our fame would spread to the people who run theaters.

Cheryl overheard our plans and sneered, "You can do all you please, but everyone is going to look at me because I have the most beautiful blue cloak in the whole show."

"Nobody's gonna know it's you because you're playing Joseph and that'll throw them off. Ha." Leroy gloated.

"That's just why they'll all notice me, because I'll have to be specially skilled to be a good Joseph. Anyway, who is going to notice Virgin Mary, all she does is sit by the crib and rock Baby Jesus. She doesn't say much. Any dumb person can be Virgin Mary, all you have to do is put a halo over her head. It takes real talent to be Joseph, especially when you're a girl."

The conversation didn't get finished because Miss Potter bustled backstage. "Hush children, curtain's almost ready to go up. Molly, Cheryl get in your places."

When the curtain was raised there was a rustle of anticipation in the maternal audience. Megaphone Mouth said above all the whispers, "Isn't she dear up there?"

And dear I was. I looked at Baby Jesus with the tenderest looks I could manufacture and all the while my antagonist, Cheryl, had her hand on my shoulder digging me with her fingernails and a staff in her right hand. A record went on the phonograph and "Noel" began to play. The Wise Men came in most solemnly. Leroy carried a big gold box and presented it to me. I said, "Thank you, O King, for you have traveled far." And Cheryl, that rat, says, "And traveled far," as loud as she could. She wasn't supposed to say that. She started saying whatever came in her head and sounded religious. Leroy was choking in his beard and I was rocking the cradle so hard that the Jesus doll fell on the floor. So I decided two can play this game. I leaned over the doll and said in my most gentle voice, "O dearest babe, I hope you have not hurt yourself. Come, let Mother put you back to bed." Well, Leroy was near to dying of perplexity and he started to say something too, but Cheryl cut him off with, "Don't worry, Mary, babies fall out of the cradle all the time." That wasn't enough for greedy-guts, she then goes on about how she was a carpenter in a foreign land and how we had to travel many miles just so I could have my baby. She rattled on and on. All that time she spent in Sunday school was paying off because she had one story after another. I couldn't stand it any longer so I blurted out in the middle of her tale about the tax collectors, "Joseph, you shut up or you'll wake the baby." Miss Potter was aghast in the wings, and the shepherds didn't know what to do because they were back there waiting

to come on. As soon as I told Joseph to shut up, Miss Potter pushed the shepherds on the stage. "We saw a star from afar," Robert Prather warbled "and we came to worship the newborn Prince." Just then Barry Aldridge, another shepherd, peed right there on the stage he was so scared. Joseph saw her chance and said in an imperious voice, "You can't pee in front of little Lord Jesus, go back to the hills." That made me mad. "He can pee where he wants to, this is a stable, ain't it?" Joseph stretched to her full height and began to push Barry off the stage with her staff. I jumped out of my chair and wrenched the staff out of her hand. She grabbed it back, "Go sit down, you're supposed to watch out for the baby. What kind of mother are you?" "I ain't sittin nowhere until you button your fat lip and do this right." We struggled and pushed each other until I caught her off balance and she tripped on her long cloak. As she started to fall, I gave her a shove and she sailed off the stage into the audience. Miss Potter flew out on the stage, took my hand and said in a calm voice, "Now ladies and gentlemen, let's sing songs appropriate to the season." Miss Martin at the piano struck up Oh Come All Ye Faithful.

Cheryl was down there among the folding chairs bawling her eyes out. Miss Potter pulled me off stage where I had started to sing. I knew I was in for it.

"Now Molly, Cheryl did wrong to talk out of turn, but you shouldn't have shoved her off the stage." Then she let me go, not even a little slap. Leroy was as surprised as I was. "It's a good thing she ain't mad but wait until Aunt Carrie and Florence get a hold of you."

True enough, Carrie nearly lost her liver with rage and I had to stay in the house for a solid week and all that time I had to do the chores: dishes, ironing, wash, even cooking. That made me give up the idea of marrying Leota B. Bisland if she wouldn't do the chores or at least half of them. I had to figure out a way to find out what Leota would agree to.

That week I thought of how to ask Leota to marry me. I'd die in front of her and ask her in my last breath. If she said yes, I'd miraculously recover. I'd send her a note on colored paper with a white dove. I'd ride over to her house on Barry Aldridge's horse, sing her a song like in the movies, then she'd get on the back of the horse and we'd ride off into the sunset. None of them seemed right so I decided to come straight out and ask.

Next Monday after school Leroy, Leota and I were walking home. I gave Leroy a dime and told him to go on ahead to Mrs. Hershener's for an ice cream. He offered no resistance as his stomach always came first. "Leota, you thought about getting married?" "Yeah, I'll get married and have six children and wear an apron like my mother. Only my husband will be handsome."

"Who you gonna marry?"  
"I don't know yet."  
"Why don't you marry me. I'm not handsome but I'm pretty."  
"Girls can't get married."  
"Says who?"  
"It's a rule."  
"It's a dumb rule. Anyway, you like me better than anybody don't you? I like you better than anybody."  
"I like you best but I still think girls can't get married."  
"Look, if we want to get married we can get married. It don't matter what anybody says. Besides Leroy and I are running away to be famous actors. We'll have lots of money and clothes and we can do what we want. Nobody dares tell you what to do if you're famous. Now ain't that a lot better than sitting around here with an apron on?"  
"Yes."  
"Good. Then let's kiss like in the movies and we'll be engaged."  
We threw our arms around each other and kissed. My stomach felt funny.  
"Does your stomach feel strange?"  
"Kinda."  
"Let's do it again."  
We kissed again and my stomach felt worse. After that, Leota and I went off by ourselves each day after school. Somehow we knew enough not to go around kissing in front of everyone, so we went into the woods and kissed until it was time to go home. Leroy was beside himself because I didn't walk home with him anymore. One day he trailed us into the woods and burst in on us like a triumphant police sergeant.  
"Kissing. You two come out here kissing. I'm gonna tell everyone in the whole world."  
"Well now, Leroy Denman, what you want to tell for? Maybe you ought to try it before you shoot your big mouth off. You might want to come here after school too."  
Temptation shone in Leroy's eyes, he never wanted to miss anything, but he hedged, "I don't want to go kissing girls."  
"Kiss the cows then, Leroy. There's nothin else to kiss. It feels good. You're sure missing some fun!"  
He began to weaken, "Do I have to close my eyes if I kiss you?"  
"Yes. You can't kiss and keep your eyes open, they'll cross forever."  
"I don't want to close my eyes."  
"All right then, stupid, keep your eyes open. What do I care if you got cross-eyes. It's not my problem if you don't want to do it right."  
"Who do I kiss first?"  
"Whoever you want."  
"I'll kiss you first since I know you better." Leroy puckered up and

gave me a kiss like Florence gives at night.  
"Leroy, that ain't right. You got your mouth all screwed up. Don't squinch it together like that."  
Leota was laughing and she reached out to Leroy with a long arm, drew him to her and gave him a fat kiss. Leroy began to get the idea.  
"Watch us," Leota advised. We finished a kiss then I gave Leroy another one. He was getting a little better at it although he was still stiff.  
"How's your stomach feel?"  
"Hungry, why?"  
"Don't your stomach feel funny at all?" Leota asked.  
"No."  
"Maybe it's different for boys," she said.

After that the three of us went off after school. It was ok having Leroy around but he never did get to be an accomplished kisser. There were times when I felt kissing Leota wasn't enough, but I wasn't sure what the next step would be. So until I knew, I settled for kissing. I knew about fucking and getting stuck together like dogs and I didn't want to get stuck like that. It was very confusing. Leota was full of ideas. Once she laid down on top of me to give me a kiss and I knew that was a step in the right direction, until Leroy piled on and my lungs near caved in. I thought maybe we'd do it again when Leroy wasn't around.

Leroy convinced me not to tell anyone that we were kissing and all going to be famous. He figured it was another one of those rules and the grown-ups would keep us from running away to act. And the grown-ups did keep us three from running away together, but not because we were kissing in the woods.

One bitter night in February with the oven on and the gas heaters going, all the adults asked us into the kitchen. They told us we were moving to Florida as soon as school was over. There'd be warm weather all year round, and you could pick oranges right off the trees. I didn't believe it, of course. It can't be warm all year round. Another trick, but I didn't say anything. Carrie assured us we'd like it because we could swim in the ocean, and jobs were easier to find so there'd be something for everybody. Then they put us all to bed. Going to Florida wasn't so bad. They didn't have to tell lies to get me to go, I just didn't want to leave Leota, that's all.

The next day I told Leota the news and she didn't like it anymore than I did, but there seemed to be nothing we could do about it. We promised to write each other and to keep going out into the woods until the very last day.

Spring came late that year and the roads were muddy. Carrie and Florence had already gone through the house, throwing things out, packing things we didn't need for everyday use. By May everything was

ready to go save for a few kitchen utensils, the clothes we wore and a few pieces of furniture in the living room. Every day I felt a little worse. Even Leroy started to feel the pinch, and he didn't care about Leota or kissing quite the way I did. It seemed like if I was going to leave I ought to leave knowing more than kissing. Leota wasn't far from the same conclusion. One week before school ended she asked me to spend the night with her. She had a bedroom all to herself so we wouldn't have to share it with her little sister, and her mother said it was fine. This was one time things worked in my favor. There was no question that Leroy could be asked to spend the night. If Carrie wouldn't let me sleep in Leroy's room, it was a sure bet that nobody was going to let Leroy spend the night at Leota's. Leroy didn't care much anyway. Sleep was sleep to Leroy.

I put my toothbrush, pajamas and comb in a paper bag and walked down the road to the Bislands. You could see their house from far away because they had a tv aerial on it. We stayed up and watched the Milton Berle Show. He kept getting pies in the face and everyone thought that was so funny. I didn't think it was so funny. They should have eaten the pies instead of throwing them at each other. If they were mad why didn't they just knock the crap out of each other? It made no sense to me but it was fun to watch. I didn't care if Milton Berle didn't know better.

After the show, we got into bed and pulled up the sheets. Leota's mother closed the door and shut off the lights because they were still watching TV. That was fine with us. Soon as the door was shut we started kissing. We must have kissed for hours but I couldn't really tell because I didn't think about anything except kissing. We did hear her parents turn off the TV and go to bed. Then Leota decided we'd try lying on top of one another. We did that but it made my stomach feel terrible.

"Molly, let's take our pajamas off and do that."

"Ok, but we got to remember to put them back on before morning."

It was much better without the pajamas. I could feel her cool skin all over my body. That really was a lot better. Leota started kissing me with her mouth open. Now my stomach was going to fall out on the floor. Great, I am found dead in the Bisland home with my stomach hanging outa my mouth. "Leota that makes my stomach hurt a lot more but it's kinda good too."

"Mine too."

We kept on. If we were going to die from stomach trouble we were resolved to die together. She began to touch me all over and I knew I was really going to die. Leota was bold. She wasn't afraid to touch anything and where her knowledge came from was a secret but she knew what she was after. And I soon found out.

The next morning we went to school like any two sixth-grade girls. I fell asleep during fractions. Leroy gave me a poke and snickered. Leota looked at me with those dreamy eyes and I hurt all over again. We couldn't move to Florida, we just couldn't.

But we did.

#### FORT LAUDERDALE HIGH

Carolyn was captain of the cheerleaders and she usually showed up in the lunchroom in her uniform with blue tassels on her white boots. Connie and I scoffed at such a thing as cheerleading, but Carolyn was the social leader of the school because of it. The three of us also dated boys who were close friends. Whenever we were seen with our respective boyfriends we paid the usual fondling attention to him demanded by rigid high school society but in truth, neither of the three of us gave a damn about any of them. They were a convenience, something you had to wear when you went to school functions, like a bra. Carolyn was becoming tighter than a violin string because Larry kept pushing her to sleep with him. Connie and I told her to go ahead and get it over with because we were sick of hearing her bitch about Larry grabbing her boob at 12:20 a.m. every Saturday night. Besides Connie and I were both doing it with our boyfriends with no harmful side effects. No one was supposed to know of course, but everyone did in that behind-the-hand manner. All this overt heterosexuality amused me. If they only knew. Our boyfriends thought they were god's gift because we were sleeping



with them but they were so tragically transparent that we forgave them their arrogance.

Carolyn decided, again with her relentless logic, that if we won the football game against Stranahan, she'd do it with Larry. We creamed them. Carolyn's face walking off the field of honor was not the usual bright cherry red from screaming her lungs out but an ashen and drawn white. Connie and I went over to her to bolster her. Then the three of us went back to the locker room to wait for our dates, all Princeton haircuts, Weejun shoes and Gold Cup socks. Clark came out with a gash on his cheek and wanted sympathy. I told him he was a football hero, which he was, having made two touchdowns. Connie's Douglas lumbered out, right tackles tend to grow large, and she told him he was a football hero. Larry stumbled coming out of the door he was in such a rush to see Carolyn. She didn't have time to tell him he was a football hero because he gave her a bone crushing kiss which was a rerun of an Errol Flynn movie and picked her up bodily, placing her in his Sting Ray convertible. Carolyn nervously waved goodbye and we all waved back. Then the four of us climbed into Doug's car and headed for Wolfie's for endless tackle about this missed tackle and that fine block interspersed with bananas and hot fudge sundaes.

The next morning the phone rang around 9:00. It was Carolyn, "I have to talk to you right now. Are you awake?" I guess I am if I answered the phone."

"I'm coming over and we can have breakfast at the Forum, ok?"

"Ok."

Fifteen minutes later Carolyn arrived looking paler than usual. As I slid in the front seat of the car I asked, "How is Ft. Lauderdale High's newest harlot?"

She grimaced, "I'm all right, but I have to ask you some questions so I know I did it right."

Over eggs that looked as though the chickens rejected them she began, "Is it always such a mess? You know, when I stood up all this stuff ran down my leg. Larry said it was sperm. It was so disgusting I nearly barfed."

"You get used to it."

"Yech. And another thing -- what am I supposed to do during all this, lie there? I mean, what do you really do? There they are on top of you sweating and grunting and it's not at all like I thought."

"Like I said, you get used to it. It isn't very mystical if that's what you're waiting for. I'm not an expert or anything but different people are different. Larry may not be the hottest lay in the world, so don't base your judgement on his one performance. Anyway, they're supposed to get technically better as they grow older. We hit them at that awkward age, I guess."

"That's not what the medical book says. It says they reach their prime at 18 and we reach ours at 35. How's that for timing? It's all so ridiculous. You and Connie must think I'm a real spastic."

"No, you take it too seriously, that's all."

"Well it is serious."

"No it isn't. It's a big dumb game and it doesn't mean anything at all unless you get pregnant, of course. Then it means you're screwed."

"I'll try. Hey, you want to go drinking Friday?"

"Sure. What about Connie?"

"She has to go to some journalism conference in Miami for the weekend."

"Ok, so it will be the two of us."

Friday night we went to the children's playground at Holiday Park. No one came there late at night and the police patrols were too busy beating the bushes and their own meat to harass the playground. I didn't really like drinking so I took a few swigs to make it look good but Carolyn got blasted. She slid down the fireman's pole, played on the swings and discarded various pieces of her clothing at each go round. When she got down to her underwear she made a beeline for the blue jet and crawled in the open tail to the fuselage. She stayed in there making airplane sounds and showed no sign of giving up her piloting. I crawled in after her. It was a tiny, narrow space so I had to lay down next to her.

"Carolyn, maybe you should join the Air Force when you graduate. You've got the sound effects down pat."

"Whoosh." Then she leaned up on one elbow and asked in a coy voice,

"How does Clark kiss you?"

"On the lips, where else? What do you mean how does he kiss me. What a dumb question."

"Want me to show you how Larry kisses?"

Without waiting for my sober answer she grabbed me and laid the biggest kiss on my face since Leota B. Bisland.

"I doubt he kisses that way."

She laughed and kissed me again.

"Carolyn, do you know what you're doing?"

"Yes, I'm giving you kissing lessons."

"I'm very grateful but we'd better stop." We'd better stop because one more kiss and you're going to get more than you bargained for, lady. Or maybe that's what you are bargaining for?

"Ha." She dropped another one on me this time with her entire body pressed against mine. That did it. I ran my hands along her side, up to her breast, and returned her kiss with a vengeance. She encouraged this action and added a few novelties of her own like nibbling my sensitive ears. By this time I began to worry about being in the tail end of a grounded blue jet in the middle of the children's playground in Holiday

Park. Carolyn had no such worries and threw off what was left of her clothing. Then she started taking mine off and tossed them up in the cockpit. If I was worried I got over it. All I could think about was making love with Carolyn Simpson, head cheerleader and second-year chaplain for Ft. Lauderdale High School -- and a cinch for prom queen. We were in that plane half the night coming in the wild blue yonder. I know we broke the sound barrier. Eventually the sky began to lighten and the air became chilly. I thought it was time to go. "Let's get out of here."

"I don't want to get out, I want to stay in here for ten years and play with your breasts."

"Come on." I reached up and got her underwear and my clothes. Then I backed out of the plane and collected her dew-covered bermuda shorts, Villager blouse, and white, worn-out sneakers. Shivering, we ran to the car.

"Are you hungry?" I asked.

"For you."

"Carolyn, you are so goddamned corny. Let's go to the Egg and You and get something good."

I ordered two breakfasts for all the energy I burned up, and Carolyn had bacon and eggs.

"Molly, you won't tell will you? I mean we could really get in trouble."

"No, I'm not telling but I hate lying. It seems pretty impossible that anyone would ask such a thing, so the coast is clear."

"I hate to lie too, but people will say we're Lesbians."

"Aren't we?"

"No, no, we just love each other, that's all. Lesbians look like men and are ugly. We're not like that."

"We don't look like men, but when women make love it's commonly labeled Lesbianism so you'd better learn not to cringe when you hear the word."

"Have you ever done that before?"

"When I was in sixth grade but that was about seven centuries ago. Did you?"

"At camp this summer. I thought I'd die from the fright but she was so terrific, this other counselor. I never thought of her as a Lesbian, you know. We spent all our time together and one night she kissed me, and we did it. I didn't stop to think about it at the time, it felt too good."

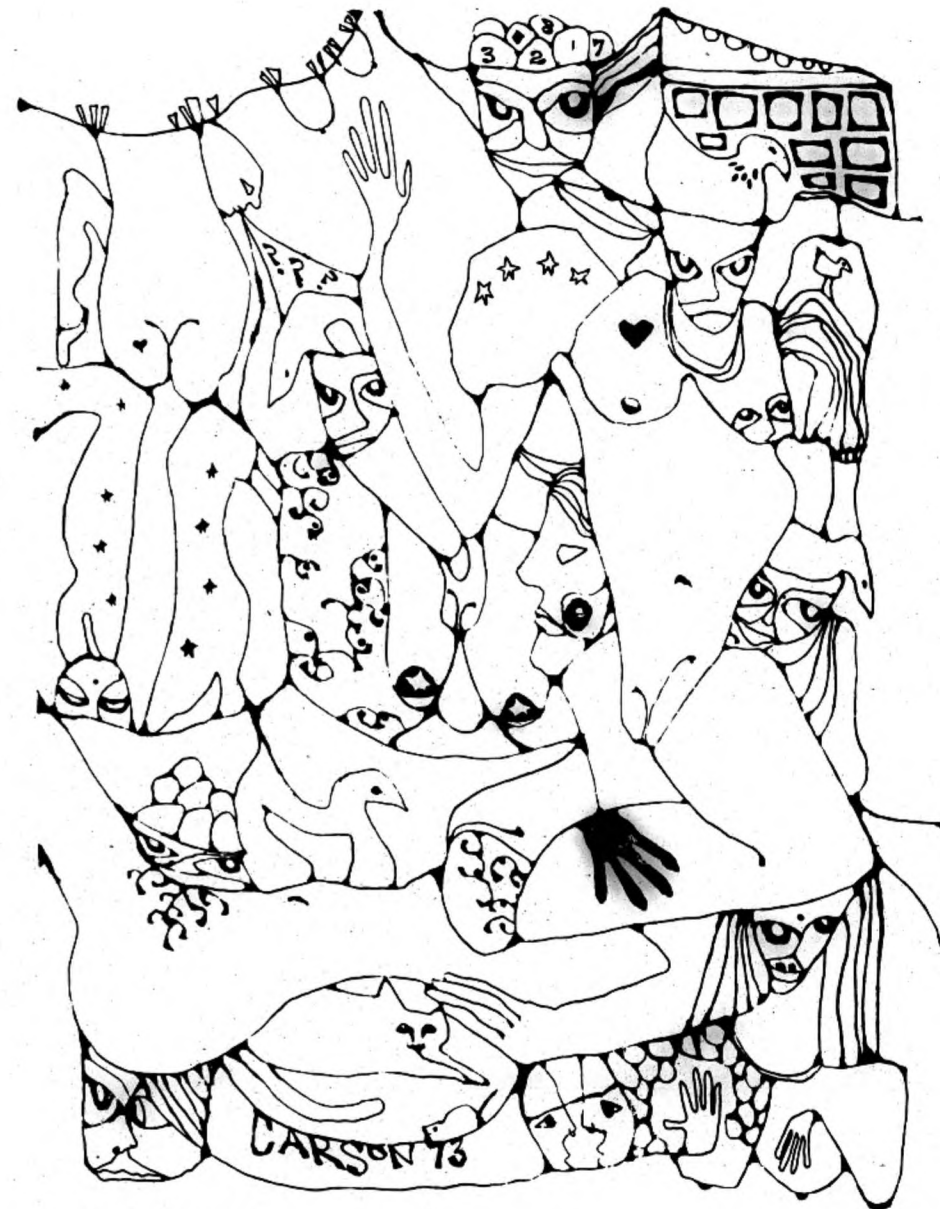
"Do you write her?"

"Sure. We'll try to go to the same college. Molly, do you think you can love more than one person at a time? I mean, I love you and I love Susan."

"I guess so. I'm not jealous, if that's what you're after."

"Kinda. You want to know something else? It's a lot better than doing it with Larry. I mean there's no comparison, you know?"

"That I know." We laughed and ordered two hot fudge sundaes at 6:00 in the morning.



by CARSON BYERS

by JANE RULE

## Like A Woman

I really don't want to argue about hating men. I want to feel it through, open, or as open as I can be, given my own fierce defenses. Some fine, lively women come into my living room saying things like "men are pigs," "lots of women are human beings, only one man in a million makes it," "any woman in the establishment is a pseudo man," "men own the world," "no woman can have a good relationship with a man, it has to be sexist." Years ago I got to a comfortable, intolerant place about people who made ugly generalizations about Kikes and Niggers. I knew it was just fine to tell them to shut up or get out. I never really have, though. Not like that, because the worst tangles have been with people I cared about, like Uncle Walt and Granny, and loving somebody, for me, makes all that good moral intolerance impossible. I don't mean I shut up. I do argue with Uncle Walt. I say, "How can you possibly still be worried about one of them loving your granddaughter when what you should be worried about is seeing your granddaughter murdered in the street? It's such a crazy, gentle fantasy, your fear." And I said to Granny, "Don't you get in the way of my joy, my love, with your silly envy and bigotry. I'm telling you these poems, written by a woman who is a Jew, are good poems, and there's not enough goodness like that for you to spoil it." She's dead now, that fierce, bigoted old woman, whom I loved and fought with. And she'd listen to any man, no matter how blatantly stupid, as if he'd just had a special report on the crops or the next election from God. She always said she didn't reckon to raise any fools, but she was one, along with being a lot else---big, for instance, a survivor, for instance, someone I took all kinds of crazy measures from. I'll never

finally write her out of my system, I don't even want to. So, if I've got it figured out what I do when people make remarks about Kikes and Niggers, and that's never really worked, mostly because of all that tangled love, I'm the more baffled about people who call men pigs. Men may be a statistical minority, just, but unlike Jews and Blacks and, yes, women, they're really big enough to take care of themselves, aren't they? Then I think of the number of boy-kids in this house over the last couple of years, trying to figure out how to get out of going to war. We know six million Jews were put into those ovens. I have no idea how many 19 year olds of whatever color or persuasion or nationality have been slaughtered simply because they were men, and on Remembrance Day their mothers keep getting awards because, of course, the best thing in the world to do to show your loyalty is to kill your kid or get him killed. Even God did it, or so that lousy story goes. "Men are pigs." "Men are goats." Men are sacrificial animals we heave into the world out of our own bodies, and, if they're dead before they're twenty, we get gold stars for them.

Where does that rhetoric come from? I don't have a son. My brother married a woman I was half in love with myself, and she did have a son. That marriage didn't work, and the boy has spent a lot of time with Helen and me. When he was twelve, he got hit in the head with a rock. He was at a friendship camp which specialized in teaching boys cooperation instead of competition. The kids were having a rock fight. I was the one who was there at four in the morning in a Seattle hospital, listening to the surgeon say the brain damage might be permanent. I was the one who sat in the waiting room staring at LIFE and TIME, wondering if he'd live, thinking, "and next it will be football, and after that it will be the bloody war." Angry and frightened and grieving. He's here in Vancouver now, going to the university, dreaming about law school and, yes, owning the world. He gets a lot of women's lib flack around here, of course. He cheerfully calls himself our super-masculine menial as he hauls in the wood or does the heavy gardening or cooks everybody lunch or clears the table. He understands about women loving women. It's part of his very ordinary world. Is he sexist? Sometimes. He's far too fond of the muscles I'm so often grateful he has, and he's too ready with his fists or a knife, would be with a gun, too, I imagine. Things make him angry, like being hassled by cops, like being told what to think by "experts," like being called a jock because he can play football. And he takes up a lot of space, even just sitting in a chair reading the paper, never mind when he and his girl are having a wrestling match on the floor. He has a funny habit of just being around suddenly when I need him. It's always as if it's an accident. He was just in the neighborhood. All the time Helen was in the hospital last Christmas, after emergency surgery for cancer, he came over here to study because the heat in his own house was off, he said. He did study, sprawled out all over the living room.

I had to keep climbing over him to get my cigarettes or a book. Boy as obstacle course, boy as landscape, in this living room, during those dark winter days.

So that's one source of the rhetoric. There are a number of them: Harry, Eddie, Alan, John, and JW Phil, all boys who have lived with Helen and me through their university years, with various sexist hang ups, sure, making some bad, ugly mistakes with us as well as with other women, but more essentially human beings we have lived with and cared about not only through accidents and grief but in high, larky nonsense of snowball fights in the middle of the night, wine making, running the printing press.

I call them boys. I'm aware of that. I don't think it's to put them down. It's a way of protecting them from being in the category of men. But they are men, every one. Slaughter age. I can't think of them as cattle, or pigs, or goats, though the world seems to.

My father, who went to Annapolis and served in the second world war, sends his social security check every month for me to use for feeding draft dodgers. "Tell them when the Viet Cong invade California to come home." My father once thought he ought to own the world, but it just got too expensive, boils on the inside of his mouth, open sores running down his arms and back, not for a couple of months, for years. Job learned something about capitalism in the same way, painfully. It's a lot easier for him to deal with women loving women than with men loving women, when it comes to his daughters anyway. Yeah, he's an old stag, as well as a scarred veteran of the world's games. Probably because he's a big man, good at things, he never thought I shouldn't learn to fish or hunt or climb cliffs. It was harder for him to let me use my head because he thought I might be smarter about people than he was, and how could he go on being my father if he couldn't go on being better at everything? But there was something else about being a father that was more important to him: loving his kids, letting them be, letting them grow. He wasn't always good at it. He still isn't, sometimes, but in the best sense he's at least as good a father as I am a daughter. And he has far less need to be, given his cultural power. A pig? Not a human being?

Those are the easy parts to explore, to feel through, easy to turn into argument, too, but hardly even necessary. These boys, these men, may be somebody else's enemies. They aren't mine. Not one of them shouts dyke at me. Not one of them gets in the way of who I am.

I'm nervous about saying that. It's not quite true. I am not afraid of the person of my father or my nephew or any of the others. And I can rest in their strength without sapping my own. But I have been afraid of the power I have been taught they have, not as persons but as men. My mother could never break up my moods of rebellion. My father could. I let him. I was afraid not to. It took his going away to war to stop that. By the time he came back, three years later, I was too

used to my own space to give it up again. He didn't really often try to take it, but I was always afraid he would, on my guard, ready to fight him if I had to.

I haven't been talking about my brother at all, sixteen months older, six inches taller, the other half of my identity until we were five and six, and school taught him that he had to cut himself free of his smaller other self, that scorned thing, the girl creature. The Christmas after that, we were given a set of telephones that could be set up between our rooms, but Dad burned the instructions with the wrappings, and, though the phones were in our rooms, they didn't work. I had long, long conversations on that phone, telling my brother how it felt to be no longer part of him, or more correctly part of us, how bitter it was for me to discover what being a girl meant, not to me, but to him. I don't suppose he ever had his own conversations, or, if he did, they weren't directed at me. We fought. We made uneasy truces. We ignored each other. He bribed me to stay away. I bribed him to let me tag along. Sometimes he threatened to kill me. Once he tried and might have done it if a porter hadn't come into the train compartment at that moment. I could not understand then why he hated me as he did, why I seemed to threaten his life. I didn't really understand either why I kept risking my own in order to stay in his world. But, of course, school had taught me the same thing it was teaching him: girls are inferior, and only by identifying with him could I keep clear of that damning. He was, as a child, in nature gentler, more cautious, more introspective than I was, and, since those were all designated as feminine traits, he had to cut them out of himself, cut me out of himself to survive. We grew tall together, for him a good thing, for me a shame. We grew bright together, for him a proud weapon, for me something I should hide. It wasn't as simple as that. His height also made him vulnerable, a target for more aggressive boys, and he hated to fight. My height, whatever the social disgrace, gave me a power I wanted. His intelligence was of a sort easily measured in high IQ's, which made people expect more of him than his dreaming nature would produce. Mine was divergent, quirky by which I could build defenses.

At puberty, the warring stopped. I remember it as a specific event at the dinner table. At fourteen he was six feet three, his adam's apple bigger than his biceps. At twelve I was six feet of solid baby fat. "And I wanted to be a football player," he was taunting, "but you got built like the tank." The blood had only a couple of days before begun to leak out of my huge child's body, and instead of the fierce, ugly retort I could usually muster, I found myself leaking tears as well. My father took my brother aside that evening. He has never made a rude remark to me since, except in moments of heavy drinking, and even then it is rare. For all the codes he rejected, fought off, he accepted that one.

"Girls bleed," my father must have said to him, and with awe and final relief for him our overt war was over.

Gradually, over the great gulf of sex which did separate us, we developed some courting games. By the time I was fifteen, our social worlds came back together. Not exactly. Mine interested him. His did not interest me. We were both too proud to be girl crazy, too shy as well, but I think, without our knowing exactly what it was we were up to, we helped as well as covertly competed with each other.

I knew I loved him. I had never got over that. I encouraged the brother-sister game we played, dancing well together, being always agreeable to each other, giving each other some margin of distance, protection from an adolescence which is horrible for everyone. But I knew it was phony, just as I knew all the other courtliness was phony. Strip that agreeable mask off his face and he would be as ready to kill me as he had been in that train compartment years ago. Once he said, amiably, "You can run all your life. I can stand still. I'll always be ahead of you." Sometimes I wondered if his hatred of me was what kept him alive, allowed him to survive our brutal education. He did manage a discharge from the army before he was to be sent to Korea to kill people or be killed. He got out of a marriage before he destroyed his wife or his child or himself. He tried finally to drink and drug himself to death. When that didn't work, he ran into a couple of horses with a jeep somewhere in Mexico, killed them and nearly killed himself. He lives quietly now, with a second wife. He won't have more children. He drinks just enough to manage the day. Sometimes he shoots birds to eat them. And he raises vegetables in his back yard. I see him once every two or three years. We still play the brother-sister act. The phones are still disconnected.

I haven't told a hundredth of it with him. And I feel weary with beginning to tell what it was like for me with male lovers, a crazily inaccurate word for what that experience was for me.

I have a sister, very much younger. Sisterhood doesn't catch in my craw the way brotherhood does. I keep thinking of Cain and Abel. And then I don't want to be melodramatic about it all. We didn't kill each other. We weren't brothers. We were brother and sister. I don't suppose I'll ever write that out of my system either. Actually, I've hardly started, though I've been working on Granny for years.

I don't want to be a man hater. It's a label for me much harder to take than lesbian, though that's what some people mean when they use the word. I don't want to be a hater at all. I don't want to have to endure the same social forces that turned my brother into a person I have been frightened of. I certainly don't want to be a pseudo man.

I do hate the idea "man;" it is associated for me with all that is brutal and stupid, as for some people the word "American" calls up all that is ugly about power. I feel oppressed by the concept, which is real

not only in the Dick and Jane readers but in the Arthur and Jane particulars of my childhood.

Let me go back to that agreeable mask. If I strip it off my father's face, I find my beloved and loving father. If I strip it off my nephew's face, there is the person I love and learn to count on. Off my brother's face? Off my male lover's face? As I was butchered out of that child's heart so that he could survive first grade, as Eve was butchered out of Adam, I expect to be that bleeding piece of inferior flesh, whether to think so is sane or not.

I don't accept that. I never have. But it is still there, whether I accept it or not. The gentlest young man in my fiction class will have to write at least one righteous rape story before the year is over, and some will never write anything else. Women are virgins or whores, mothers or ball crushers; men in relation to them are masters or pimps: really just adult versions of the Dick and Jane readers. I hate the mythology in their heads, but it is there.

Have I no recourse but to hate them as well?

What I have done instead is back off, out of intimate rage. (I meant to write "range.") I've declared truce in a battle I never thought I could win and didn't want to be killed by.

When I hear a woman talk as if heterosexual relationship is not only possible but good, I want to believe it. I haven't any investment in denying it. I was raised by parents who loved each other. I do not think that heterosexual relationship is inately better than lesbian relationship. I suspect, given the present state of our culture, it is usually worse, but the costs are different for different people. That is, I find the social pressure against being a lesbian easier to bear than the social pressure to be an acceptable heterosexual, but that's who I am. Conformity of most sorts never even seemed to me much of a possibility. As I think we have to live materially in a more egalitarian world, I also think we have to figure out equality between the sexes. But I'm certainly not part of what is going to make it happen. I know I can't live in those front lines, or, if I am part of it, my contribution will have to be only my own insistence on equality.

Which, according to some of those lively women, turns me into a white, middle class, pseudo man. Perhaps, in that sense I am, owning my own house, publishing my work internationally, taking professional jobs only at a respectable salary, taking political responsibility within the system, continuing to believe in reason and love even when I can't use either.

I don't "take like a woman," and I don't "ache like a woman," and I sure as hell don't "break like a little girl." Do I have to hate like a woman? Is there no way out of that? I understand. Hating tells a kind of truth about the prison we've grown up in, the defeating mythology. But I desperately want to find another way to get out of it, to make like a woman, to love like a woman, and not to break or be broken at all.

# Against The Season (a review)

by GINA

What I require from a work of fiction:

- 1) characters portrayed with both realism and compassion
- 2) characters who become people and who involve me so much that I can't put the book down unread and I'm sorry when I finish
- 3) people who learn through the course of the book how to live humanly (how can I learn about living from a book unless the author and her characters do?)
- 4) a few good cries.

Of course I read many more novels that don't fill these needs than ones that do. In fact Jane Rule's latest, *Against the Season* (McCall Publishing Co.), is the only one in years. (Some public libraries have it -- I urge you to demand.)

I've thought of describing her characters -- but they are so many and varied that I'll just say that -- many and varied and all presented with compassion. And the plot -- but there is no simple "plot" -- rather as many plots as there are intricate relationships between people, as many different ways as these very different people find to cope with their lives, to change and learn and love.

But for those of you who aren't excited by generalizations -- The setting: a small and dwindling coastal town (New England? British Columbia?). A few plots: an old crippled woman learning to face her coming death in the company of an unmarried pregnant girl waiting for her baby and an uncertain twenty year old boy waiting for directions in how to live -- all of them learning unlikely lessons from each other; a painfully anxious and delicately balanced lesbian relationship; the hopeful courtship of a couple in their seventies; an awkward friendship/affair between a refreshingly prudish middle-aged man and woman.

I mention these characters to point out that they are people of every age and background, with great differences in life style, perspectives, worries -- and here they are learning from each other, communicating with an openness and understanding I have yet to see in "real" life.

This is the greatest value of *Against the Season*. I read intensely through a whole winter night watching intimate connections come about very naturally between an old and innocent small-town woman and a woman one fourth her age but already pregnant and jaded. Or between a Greek lesbian saving her virginity for a never-to-be marriage, and a middle-aged professional woman caught in upper class reserve.

Unlikely intimacies. But every one of them is constructed with such simplicity and empathy that I must believe. The range of possibilities, here, in my life, is opened up by my exposure to Jane Rule's fictional world. Expose yourself.

by Les B. Friends

.....  
SWEET BETSY THE DYKE (a song to the tune of Sweet Betsy From Pike)

Oh do you remember Sweet Betsy the Dyke  
Who came from New Jersey on her motorbike  
And riding beside her was her lover Anne,  
A sister, a friend, and a far out woman.  
(Chorus) Singing "Dykes come together, we can change this land!"  
Singing "Dykes come together, we CAN change this land!"

They rode across the country Sweet Betsy and Anne  
And said to all women, "YOU KNOW THAT YOU CAN!  
So leave all your men folk and come on with us.  
If you don't have a cycle, we'll charter a bus."  
(chorus)

First it was one bus and then it was eight.  
Before they were finished they had their own state.  
They built their own houses and fixed their own bikes  
Fulfilling our dream of a nation of dykes.  
(chorus)

Oh do you recall how Sweet Betsy met Anne?  
She was driving through Texas in an old Chevy van.  
She picked her up hitching on the Rio Grande  
And she knew from the start by the cigar in her hand.  
(chorus)

Sweet Betsy was forward and Anne was polite  
But they got it together the very first night.  
With hugging and kissing and a bit too much noise  
They really were tired when they hit Illinois.  
(chorus)

They kept it a secret for many a night  
'Til Annie said "Betsy this just isn't right.  
There are so many women who are so alone,  
Let's get them together and build us a home."  
(chorus)

So that is the story of Betsy the Dyke  
Who came from New Jersey on her motorbike  
And riding beside her was her lover Anne,  
A sister, a friend, and a first rate woman,  
SINGING "DYKES COME TOGETHER, WE WILL CHANGE THIS LAND!!  
SINGING "DYKES COME TOGETHER, WE WILL CHANGE THIS LAND!!!"  
.....

by LAUREL

## Distinctions: The Circle Game

Distinctions is a new variant of that old game "Lifter Than Thou" in which the players compete to become part of the circle of the elite which they must constantly declare to one another that they abhor. It is an old game really, one that has been played in every social movement, revolutionary or conservative, since time began. The unexpressed purpose of the game is for each player to show that he or she is different, and not only different, but better.

We all seem to want to feel different on some basis, beyond our inherent differences of sex, age, color, etc. In order to define who we are we usually define who we are not. We set up distinctions for this job. We decide what we like and what we don't, or in more current jargon, what we can "relate to" and what we cannot.

Everyone makes these distinctions. . . at any one time in our lives we have a set of them from which to act. Given a situation where any choice is required we consult our distinctions just as the Greeks consulted the Sibyl. To not have these "grids" through which to perceive the external reality would be to float hopelessly in chaos unable to act at all. They are helpful and necessary, but there is a danger of their rigidifying and imprisoning us. I see this as a very real and prominent danger to individual women now and to "the women's movement" as a whole.

### THE FEMINIST DISTINCTION

Women, so long dependent on men for their self-images, mirroring their selves in the eyes of men, at first (whether as a child, or as a result of the women's movement, or whatever) could feel singular and very special when they began to reject Daddy's, or the Boss's, or the Lover's, the Husband's, etc. picture of them. At first, (say even three years ago) for many women to be a "feminist" was a sufficiently different reality from the herd to be a satisfying identity -- and it provided a whole new set of "distinctions" on which to base ones' behavior.

Naturally though, many of us quickly saw through this as too simplistic -- that hanging our identity on any one peg, whether it be "feminist," "socialist," "anarchist," etc. is not enough. It doesn't help us make

all our life choices to know that we are "feminists." We need further distinctions to act intelligently. (Unfortunately, some women did not see this and are still trying to run their lives solely through their identity as "professional feminists.")

And then too, there seemed a need for further distinctions because the herd was constantly on our heels. The media rapidly made being a "feminist" almost as acceptable and innocuous as being a member of the League of Women Voters. The final bastions of fluff and femininity, the women's magazines, finally gave over and now there is something feminist in nearly every issue of *McCalls*, *The Ladies Home Journal*, *Redbook*, etc. TV, radio, the movies -- even advertising -- is catching onto the trend toward the "woman-identified-woman."

### THE LESBIAN DISTINCTION

So meanwhile, many women, whatever their reasons, made a further distinction. They will relate only to women and some, even more specifically, have decided that their sexual relations (if any) will be only with other women.

Now that's far enough to hold out against the herd for a while. . . although lesbianism broke into TV this year and *Redbook*. Still it's safe to say that only a small percentage of women have chosen this as "their" distinction.

But within the subculture of which these "new lesbians" became a part, where women had been loving women for years, "gay pride," "gay identity," etc. must have looked like the rather simple-minded new convert's enthusiasm. New distinctions became necessary -- not only externally -- how to act in this new subculture of deviants? -- but how to define oneself as different from this new herd?

The array of possible distinctions seems to have been somewhat similar around the country. The new lesbian (especially those who did not find a lover for some time) had a number of possible sub-group deviants to identify with -- the lesbian hip crowd still soft and flowing and into dope, the monogamous couples, the anti-monogamy forces, the "socialist lesbians," the anarchists, the bar lesbians, the straight DOB set, the extreme man-hater dykes, the black lesbians, the white lesbians, the green lesbians -- whatever. There would have to be another choice and this choice it seemed necessitated drawing ones' circle tighter around oneself.

### VERBOTINS

The first verbotin (commonly shared distinction in this subculture) that the new lesbians originated was that women must not relate to men. And next of course, that women should not relate to men's women --

i.e. straight women. Since I more or less share these distinctions I'd like to pause here for a minute to examine them. First of all, for me, they are not hard and fast. And I think they are based on some degree of reason . . . or experience. In the first case, there aren't many men I come across who I feel have much to offer me -- at least not until they've broken through their barriers of sex-role conditioning and the crippling results of being a male (successful or unsuccessful) in this culture.

The decision (really not so hard and fast as that word implies) not to relate to straight women evolved slowly, painfully, as I sat through countless evenings with straight women in small groups listening to them talking about their hopeless lives with their men only to see that the evening recharged them enough to go live with them (endure them) for another week. My energy, my time, my sisterly love was indirectly useful to the male for keeping his woman content. And secondly, I decided not to relate to straight women because they already had made a choice which did not include me -- that is all of me.

They had chosen to relate to my "mental" self, possibly my "emotional" self, but not my sexual self. The best conversations, the warmest interchanges between me and them, were destined to end on the non-physical plane. They were saving their bodies for their men.

I question this distinction constantly. My experiences are always calling it into question, but generally it is proving "useful," conserving of time and energy, and releasing me to grow, to expand, to learn more than I would have without it.

The problem is though that once a woman gets into the "distinction game" it becomes all too easy, especially if she is somewhat insecure and is not "into" anything of her own, to gather distinctions around her and to create a completely externally defined personality. Instead of being helped to act by her distinctions, she begins to be ruled by them. She cannot, will not, let new experience in if her whole personality depends on maintaining her distinctions. They become as necessary as crutches and she becomes defensive about anyone who would knock them out from under her. She must have distinctions (as many as possible) to support her, and a peer group who share them. Any threat to her distinctions is a threat to "her." Friends, potential lovers, everyone, must meet her test -- match her distinctions or you're out.

#### THE CLASS DISTINCTION

One of the currently in vogue distinctions among the new lesbian community which I am highly suspicious of is the "class distinction." First of all I question how deciding that one is a "working class" lesbian aids growth. Class is not an inherent, irremediable differ-

ence. Feminism, it seems to me, is all about freeing oneself from conditioning -- sex-role conditioning, conditioning of any kind deleterious to women. If we think we are doomed to act out the patterns of whatever class we were born to, it seems to me we are denying the very well-springs of the women's movement. Being working or lower class is either (depending on how you look at it) conditioning (background) or present economic status and either one can change. Freeing ourselves of class hangups (lower, middle, or upper) should be at least as easy as freeing ourselves of female stereotypes.

Here in the Bay Area and apparently in Washington D.C., Boston, and Chicago (where all else I don't know) working class lesbians have organized themselves into separate collectives which relate, if at all, very suspiciously to any lesbian outside their "class." *The Furies* (a lesbian-feminist newspaper from Washington D.C.) epitomized this kind of distinction almost to the point of the ridiculous. (See the skit in the August, 1972 issue entitled Garbage, Trash, etc.)

As if we couldn't find enough purely personal things to disagree over, as if we weren't already constantly embroiled in one struggle after another, this distinction rears its ugly head to separate us even further. Of course it's worth examining why one can't as well as can relate to new distinctions. I am/was lower working class. That is, my father was a barber who only finished seventh grade, my mother all her life a "housewife," and both of them raised in the cultural depravity of the South as was I. My conditioning, my values, then it would seem would be lower class. However, I revolted against almost everything my parents, teachers, etc. ever tried to ram down my throat and against all odds went to college and finished graduate school. I feel as little related to "working class values" as I do to "upper or middle class values." I have my values (constantly in flux) and that's it!

What point would it serve for me to cloister myself off with lesbians of any class?

The primary charge of the "working class lesbians" who are still speaking to us-of-indeterminate-origins is that we oppress them by being more "articulate," and by being unaware of our financial and status privileges. According to *The Furies*, if we are to make recompense we must limit our vocabularies and agree to endow (for any purpose whatsoever) any lesbian with less money in her pocket than we have. I partially agree with the latter -- yes, indeed, share the wealth -- but what wealth? Who do I know who isn't unemployed, on food-stamps, and barely making it? Well -- a few -- the secretaries in-the-closet, a few women eeking it out in the trades doing odd-job carpentry, housecleaning, etc., and a few -- precious few -- holding somewhat "professional" jobs.

The irony of all this class name-calling is that it makes upward mobility a dirty word. "Moving into the middle class" is considered



treachery worse perhaps than getting married to a man. Women (myself included) who struggled up from working class backgrounds and the heaviest sex-role penalization which goes with it and managed to attain some degree of "articulacy," education, and self-reliance are chastised and excluded now for having "made it." We're treated like the Sammy Davis Jrs. of the lesbian world . . . whatever our politics, however willing, open, etc. we are.

This is, in short, a distinction I'd like to see reexamined; one I think which hinders rather than aids our growth as individuals and as a lesbian community.

#### THE DYKE DISTINCTION

It used to be enough to hide your dresses at the back of the closet with your heels and your nylons on the off-chance that you'd be starved into being a secretary again someday, to carry yourself a bit more self-assuredly, to look people straight in the eye, and to associate only with women to win the coveted distinction of lesbian.

That was maybe only a year or so ago. Now there is a whole New-Lesbian-Chain-of-Being. At the very bottom of this totemic structure is the "Gay woman."

Unaware of this nouveau-distinction I put up an ad at the local woman's bookstore asking for a gay woman to share a house with me and others. Next time I saw it the "gay woman" was crossed out and "Dyke" written above it in an angry purple scrawl.

There is, all be it ridiculous, a new meaning to the old term "dyke" -- the usual meaning being the opposite of "femme." The new dyke dresses different, talks different, and associates with different people than your common ordinary lesbian or gay woman. As it has since been explained to me, a "gay woman" just digs women for sex, a "lesbian" is a woman-identified-woman with feminist consciousness who loves women, and a "dyke" -- well, that's not so easily defined. It's a mystique that defies categories. Perhaps a composite description of the "dykes" I know:

Working from the outside in, the first thing I notice about them is their clothes. The usual bellbottoms (but only slightly) for some, but most of them choose their bottoms very carefully from the local thrift store collection of fancy threads from the Forties and Fifties -- pin-stripes and baggy grey flannels being the inmost of all. And then the tops -- usually a button-down cuffed and collared shirt topped off with a vest -- the kind preferably that used to go under some guy's tuxedo. The ultimate touch is the tie -- worn only by "dykes" to be sure and then the hat -- hopefully a kind of mafia fedora or an offhand beret to get the continental look over their well-cropped hair. In short, the

new dykes are visually almost indistinguishable from the "old dykes" who used to haunt the bars before feminism made it clear that a woman who wants a "man" wants a "man" and that roles are definitely not good. So there must, of course, be further than visual distinctions.

#### THE PROPER POLITICS -- MAN-HATING, CASTRATING, AND KILLING

As of this writing it is no longer enough to be feminist, lower class, and funkily male dressed -- in order to be a "dyke" it is necessary to hate men with a passion beyond any other and to want above all else to kill them.

The devoted new dykes are buying guns -- to protect women from harassment they say. And they are taking on the accompanying paranoias. Their phones are tapped, people follow them, they don't sleep well for fear of "the man" climbing in their bedroom window.

I came face to face with the seriousness of all this the other night at the local bar. It was women's night -- Tuesday of each week lesbians seek refuge in what is ordinarily a gay men's bar to dance and of course play pool. Since I'm not one of the pool playing set, I was there to dance. Not immodestly I hope, I assessed the people dancing (not too coherently as I was a bit drunk I admit) and just seemed to end up dancing with the person who was moving most imaginatively. As it turns out this person was a gay man -- a black gay man. The music was good, for once in my life I was really enjoying letting my body go completely to a jazz beat and picking up some of my partner's cues about new movements and ways to interpret the music -- when suddenly I was surrounded by five angry women ("dykes") who drug me off the floor, put me in the middle of a football huddle scene, and proceeded to tell me that this was war at this bar and I a traitor to the lesbian cause. "Any woman who would dance with a man. . . blah,blah,blah." Their faces looked like maybe I'd just kicked them in the belly. I laughed. The man in question laughed. And friends, I haven't heard the end of that for weeks. The nerve -- laughing at a "dyke." I am now reduced I suppose to the leprous state of being a "gay woman" -- or god -- perhaps even a "bi."

And apparently this is not an isolated incident. The phenomena is spreading and in some places man-killing dykes are organizing. In Chicago, for example, there is a new women's paper entitled *The Killer Dyke*, put out by the "Killer Dykes" in care of "The Flippies."

As ridiculous as it all sounds, and as little as I want to lend any seriousness at all to it, I do think we should be aware of the dangers these women are courting, dangers both to themselves and other women.

First, as Naomi Weisstein so cleverly put it, "It's dangerous to pretend to be a Marine when you haven't got the training."\* Unless women

\*From a phone conversation January, 1973.

have thoroughly educated themselves in self-defense they will be ill-prepared when somebody calls their bluff. And second, as Naomi went on to point out, the killer dyke phenomena is politically dangerous because it can't work. It assumes that the feminist revolution has already been accomplished. . . that a broader swagger and a gun are all it takes.

There's no denying that violence (a sex war) may at some time be the only means of ending sexism. But women must prepare for it, patiently strengthening their bodies and thier ties with one another.

As Phyllis Chesler says in *Women and Madness*, karate isn't even much against the A bomb, germ warfare, napalm. . . A pistol is going to look a bit outdated when what we're ultimately confronting is "defense" technology financed in this country by 75 billion dollars a year.

We simply aren't "there" yet. . . and hopefully (although history disputes this) it won't take violence to end sexism. But in any case, women as a force are nowhere near being ready for armed struggle. Looking back on the last decade and checking out Nixonia now, it should be clear that SDSers, and Weathermen/women, and Black Separatists were bluffing -- "the people" they all claimed to speak for were in their own heads. It's going to take study, thought and hard work, and women who can look clearly at this problem of drawing distinctions before we can go about the business of "seizing the means of production and reproduction" which Phyllis Chesler says will be the necessary precursor to female equality.

Killing men, even by the hundreds or by the thousands, simply will not work. And worse, while accomplishing next to nothing it may bring on a backlash that will get a lot of innocent women killed. What if men take the killer dyke seriously? What if they use just one millionth of their technology to put her down?

#### THE MALE-IDENTIFIED MAN-HATING, MAN-KILLING "DYKE"

I'm beginning to see these new dyke distinctions as a circle game -- that is, if you go far enough you end up where you began -- and isolated to boot. Man-hating as a full time activity seems to me no more admirable than man-loving as a full time activity. A woman defining herself in terms of how much she hates and wants to kill men is no more "liberated" to me than one talking about how much she wants to love and fuck them.

This "new dyke" is drawing a circle around herself that is precious small. Her distinctions may be very comforting for now -- she is the inmost of the in -- but she might eventually find it pretty lonely toting her gun and screaming for Dyke Revolution when even women expose her bluff.

#### A LITTLE PERSPECTIVE

Distinctions have a way of becoming outmoded. Man-hating may look as ridiculous with the perspective of a few years as our sisters' insistence on prohibition during the suffragist movement does to us. And one can't help but think there won't be much comfort in it as the old "new dykes" go out to pasture. Can you imagine them fifty years from now sitting around the old folks home in their rocking chairs counting off the men they killed?

If they live that long. If there are by then feminist, lesbian, dyke old folks homes. If. . .

We are a house of 3 dyke feminist separatists who would like to enlarge our living collective with more lesbians of the same feelings/politics. We are committed to living in the East Bay area for at least a few years -- and are looking for other lesbians who are struggling and working toward developing strong dyke/matriarchal, class and race consciousness to form a healthy and supportive lesbian community. We want to explore with fact and imagination our dyke/amazon culture of the past, before there were parasitic male mutants, and work toward our dyke/amazon culture of the future, when only XX's exist. Our backgrounds vary, but we are trying to relate in such a way as to reduce and eliminate inequality, oppression, and power positions between each other and eventually between other lesbians in our community. The isolation, alienation, and powerlessness that pervades our intangible lesbian "community" is incredible. If you want to get together with us, form a workshop, or live with us -- call -----

Facsimile of a note found on a women's bookstore bulletin board January, 1973.

by Jennie Orvino

HOW TO MAKE LOVE TO A WOMAN IF YOU'RE A WOMAN

Think of yourself  
and what you like  
then do that.

Ask her  
what she wants  
then please her.

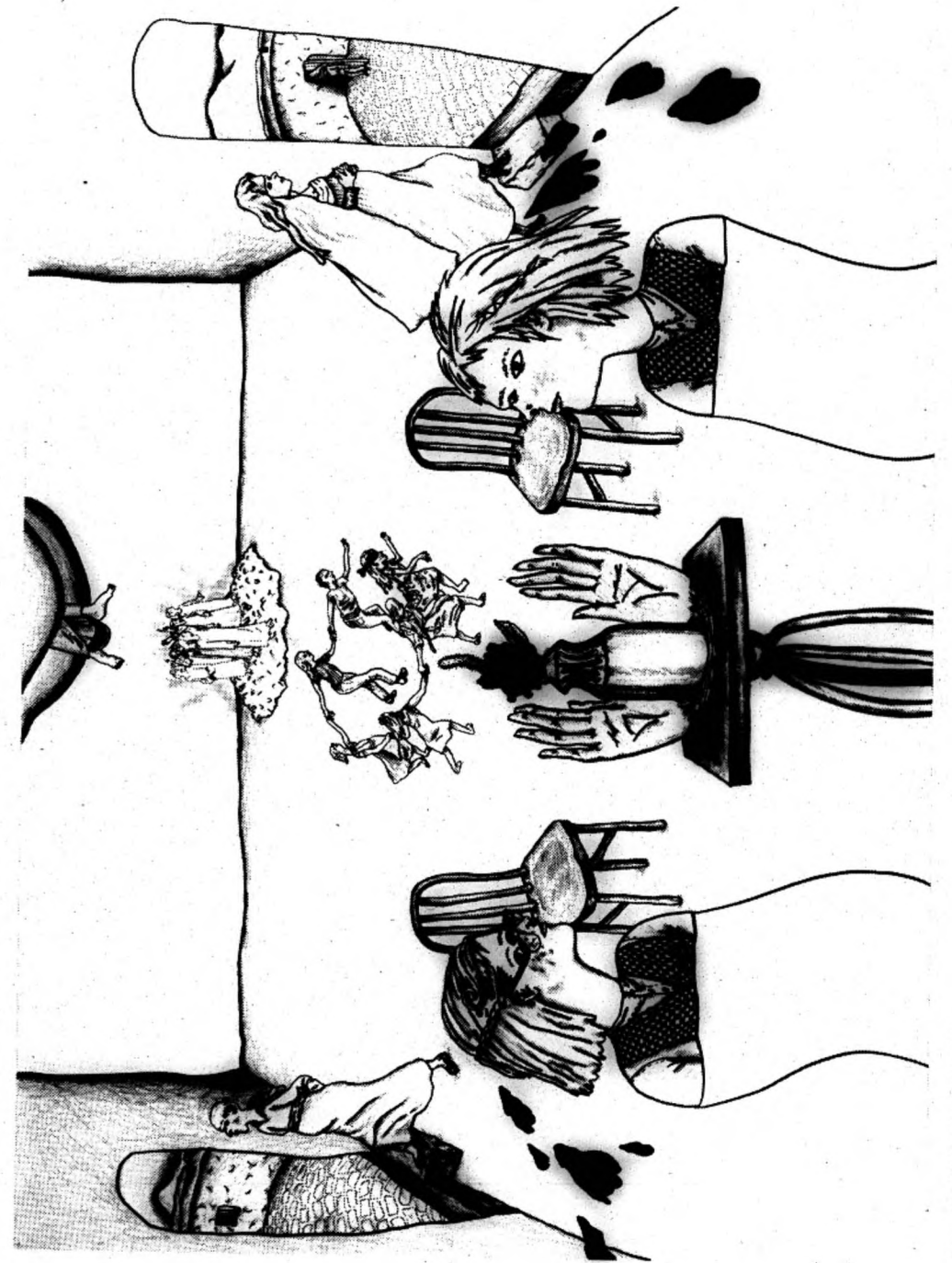
Imagine the most delicate  
caress you have ever known  
and give it to her  
everywhere, slowly.

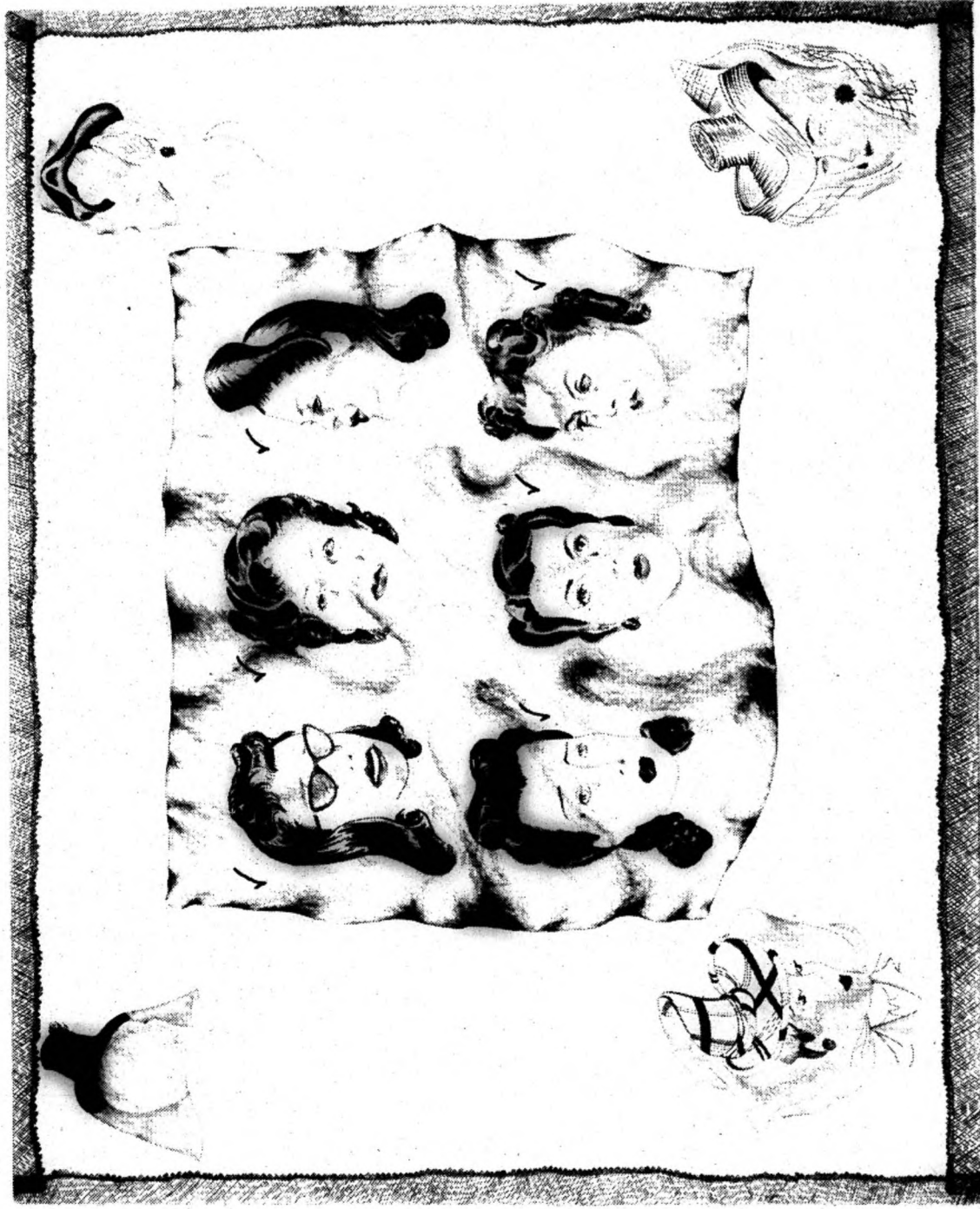
Speak her name  
into the openings  
of her body  
and listen  
to her answer.

Remember  
the fierceness and power  
of all our great grandmothers  
who rode horses  
and plowed fields  
and bore children  
in anguish

and share that with her.

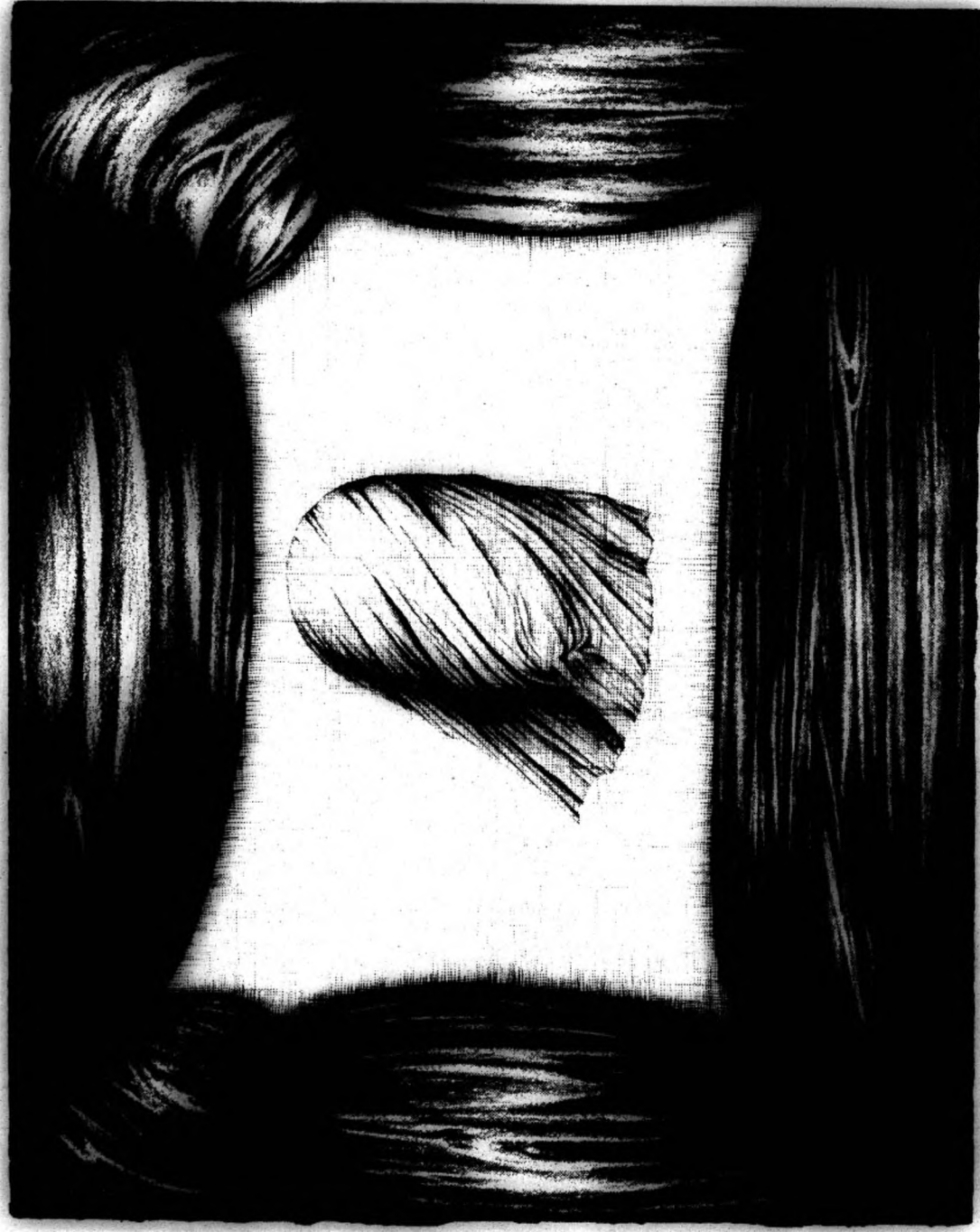
Love her in daylight.  
Treasure what you learn.





by DONELLE PAINT

1973



by DONELLE PAINT

1973



by DONELLE PAINT

1971

# Nelly Ptaschkina

The *Diary of Nelly Ptaschkina* is a phenomenal book, far better than any of the well-known adolescent diaries. In it, Nelly records the events of her times (she lived during the Russian Revolution), but mostly she used her diary to explore her own feelings.

Nelly wrote almost nightly from the time she was ten. Parts of the diary were lost as she and her family fled the Bolsheviks, but several copy books which covered her fourteenth and fifteenth years were saved by her mother and published in Nelly's memory.

On October 20, 1918 Nelly wrote of having a presentiment of her death. She pictured herself falling over a precipice "plunging headlong into the chasm." July 2, 1920 Nelly fell from an enormous height on Mont Blanc into a rushing torrent. Later her body washed ashore downstream and she was buried in Paris.

January 23, 1918

...What is my diary? It is a record of my thoughts and feelings. It was the wish to write them down that gave me the idea of this diary; and this same wish came to me under the influence of Marie

Baschkirtsev and Raya (a friend). It is curious to note that generally speaking they are young people who write diaries, because their inability to concentrate on themselves, the strength of their sensations, their confidence in the beliefs, which they have not yet lost, make them seek an outlet for their emotions. The old, although they may receive vivid impressions, probably regard them in a colder way than we young people, who are only entering upon life. Youth does not know how to concentrate, and, on the other hand, does not want to confide in others. Hence the diary. The old work out everything in themselves.

January 25

...The situation is really terrible! The decisive days for Russia are at hand, "to be or not to be." My vision is too restricted to be able to picture the whole situation clearly. My home life shelters me and I see reality as something very, very distant

...I am mentally short-sighted because, after all, I am but a child: this is the first and more important reason, if not the only one. All the same, at odd moments I clearly realize the full horror of the position in which our

country is placed.

February 18

. . . A passionate joy comes over me when I look into the distance; there, beyond all the houses, the towns, the people, all is radiant, all is full of sunshine. . . . Then it dawns upon me that my life will be different from that of the others . . . bright, interesting. . . .

Then I see young girls, such as I shall become in three or four years' time. They live, like every one else from day to day, waiting for something. They live drab, dull lives. . . . Probably they too had visions of a bright, happy future, and gazed into the golden distance. . . . But now . . . where is that golden distance? Did they not reach it? Can one ever reach it? Does it exist really, or only in our dreams?

For, surely, I am not the only dreamer. Are they not dreamers too? Shall I live on as they do, following the pattern woven by routine on the canvas of life? Waiting for some one?

There will be nothing. . . . No, no, not that! I am frightened. Give me my golden horizon. Let me live a full life, with all the strength of my soul.

February 23

How much I wanted to write yesterday! How I longed for my diary! But I could not write. Today there is no one at home and therefore I

can put my time to good use. When I am excited or sad nothing soothes me like my diary. If I am very happy my joy calms down, subsides whilst I write. My diary has become indispensable to me.

March 3

. . . Sometimes my inner peace again gives place to the customary tension and then I want to cry. To cry because I feel that I am lonely: that I want Mummie. . . . but in reality because my light-heartedness is leaving me. . . . Yes, life ages, breaks one. . . . Take Raya (a friend) for instance, she is light-hearted, she lives normally but I am cut adrift. The times have too great a hold upon me, my own life is broken on the wheel. . . .

At such moments I yearn to live as I used to do at home. I want to live as I lived formerly: I want to be free and careless: not to feel this everlasting strain. I am only fourteen! I have the right to be still a child for a little while, to be careless, happy, untroubled. . . .

How strange it is that in the huge machine of life, past, present, and future, there should be a fourteen-year-old girl who is sitting and writing all kinds of stupid things about her small soul, which to her seems something immense, and that she occupies herself so seriously with something which is really so small and of no consequence. . . . But to her it seems all important and

she wholly surrenders herself to it. How strange is this abstraction; how strange the isolation of my little life in comparison with that other which is so immeasurably big.

March 5,

. . . I have decided to fight against this feeling of apathy, which takes possession of me at such moments of depression. I do not want to allow them. But in order to attain this result, I must not permit my private life to be affected by general conditions.

How shall I do this? I shall drive away my thoughts as soon as they touch upon dangerous ground. I . . . I shall deceive myself. Yes, one must confess that in the end it will be only self-deception. But what matter. It will hurt no one, and for me it will be better, it will do me good.

One must tell oneself that things are not so bad as they seem. This is what I want to do and I hope that I shall be able to accomplish it. I shall not surrender to this inner voice which faint-heartedly whispers to me that our life is inextricably tied up with this epoch, and moreover united in such a way that it can never be adjusted; that therefore everything is at an end and that nothing will come out of it. No, I do not want this. I shall obstinately tell myself that -- how can I say it most tenderly? -- that with Mummie's arrival all will be well. I shall not allow myself to be

influenced by the newspapers, which bring sad news. I shall not brood over the fact that news is worse again, and that in consequence our position is all the more deplorable. In four or five years, all must settle down -- and I will leave it at that.

March 11

. . . The world has existed so far; it will outlive this catastrophe, after having outlived so many others. . . . Time will pass. . . . just the same. . . . Everything will pass, peace will reign again, till there comes a new eruption. . . . And for this reason, -- and the words are not mine, but it is impossible to find anything that fits the case better -- the question does not lie with what will happen in the future, but how we OURSELVES are to outlive this nightmare, hampered with such narrow vision as is ours. . . . If only we could hold out! But the world will survive. . . . We do not know what the future contains, but we can say with certainty that there will be "Something." But maybe we shall never know, for we may die before this sanguinary epic has run its course.

October 1.

. . . In my dreams, however strange it may sound, I dream at the same time of children and of an independent life, which should be both comfortable and beautiful. The question of woman's fate interests me tremendously. This interest

lives in me somehow fundamentally; it is called forth neither by writing nor conversation, but has taken root in me of its own accord.

Is it necessary to add that I believe with all my heart and mind that women have absolutely equal rights with men, because I consider them in no wise their intellectual inferior?

This year I have added to the books on social subjects, some that are concerned with the feminist question, and I shall read them with great enjoyment.

Of course, comparatively speaking, women have not asserted themselves up to now as capable individuals. There are many empty coquettes as well as spiritual nonentities among them, but, all the same, it is of note that now in all professions women appear who work on a level with men.

Are there also no empty-headed men? Oh, many! Do not men themselves encourage the defects of women by considering them only as amusing playthings? I speak, of course, in general. There are exceptions but, taken on an average, they are in the minority.

Does the education of woman prepare her for the serious tasks of life? The evil of this education is rooted far back in the centuries. Give women scope and opportunity, and they will be no worse than men.

I notice that these thoughts remind me of a book I once read, but all the same it seems to me that they come straight out of my soul.

Well! The one does no harm to the other.

Yes, woman must have all the rights, and in time she can earn them fully. At present we have still many women who are satisfied with their empty lives, but if we raise the standard, and improve the social conditions of life, which are connected with her, woman will also rise. Even now there are many among them who would be capable of leading a conscious existence successfully. Give them that possibility. When people criticise a woman in my presence, I never feel at ease, and I realize that they are wrong, but I have not the courage to dispute with them: I lack arguments and only mentally say to myself, "Wait!"

October 14

. . . I shall arrange it, so as not to depend on love, let alone wait for it as so many girls do. I shall live. If love comes I shall take it; and if not, I shall regret it, wildly regret it, but I shall live all the same.

I see in my imagination a small flat, furnished with exquisite comfort. . . . Beauty everywhere, softness, cosiness. And I am the mistress of it -- a woman and a personality at the same time. I live an interesting life: writers, artists, painters forgather at my house, a really interesting circle, a close friendly community. I know no picture more attractive than this. I am free, independent.

In these surroundings, in which

there is even no place for it, I shall not regret love. Life is full without it. It is only the dawn of love which I should miss. . . . There is something else that is strange. I see children in my imagination and think with joy about them. The husband is a figure that has never appeared in my fancies, quite a stranger in fact; I have never once thought about him.

On one side I see my little home -- on the other I think with delight of my children.

October 20

. . . I love to stand at the edge of an abyss, at the very edge, so that a single movement, and. . . today, stepping close to the brink of a precipice, although not so deep as I should have wished, the thought came into my mind that some day I should die thus, crashing headlong into the chasm. . . .

My walk today has evoked this premonition. . . . But I feel it more now, after the walk, than during it. . . .

October 25

. . . Marriage is slavery, it prevents one from surrendering oneself to that supreme happiness which the initiated call love -- and so I think it is. Human personality must develop quite freely. Marriage impedes this development; even more than that, it often drives one to "moral crimes," not only because forbidden fruit is sweet, but because the new love, which could be perfectly legiti-

mate, becomes a crime. Would man and woman be less happy if they lived together without being married, simply as lovers? -- possibly not even in the same house, but meeting every day; in short, leading the life of a regularly married couple. If they love one another, what can hinder them from settling down together? I should like to talk this over with Aunt Aniouta. . . . I must think about it.

November 5

. . . Sometimes I reflect with horror that when I am grown up I shall be just an ordinary young girl, with a simple, grey little life, so that in the end there won't be any difference between me and other people: that all my dreams and feelings are only the ferment of youth. Deep pain comes over me and something tightens in my heart. "Am I really but one of the crowd?" I ask myself despairing. "Just that" is the sad answer. No, I do not want that, it must not be.

. . . I consider myself a Socialist, and hope that when I grow up, I shall really become one. In the meantime. . . of what does my Socialism consist? In my views on the form of government, on the situation of the working classes, on the question of political equality. Yes, of course, the Socialists are in the right. There is no doubt in my mind as regards this.

There must not be the abyss which exists at present between

the rich and the poor. All must possess sufficient material independence to be able to have their share of higher spiritual pleasures. Is the poverty of the workers, the starvation of their children and the revolting dependence of one class upon the other not horrible, when all have received from nature an equal right to existence and the enjoyment of the gifts of life?

December 27

. . . In Saratoff I received letters addressed to "Nelly Ptashkina"; Mummie never opened them: she did not insist on reading them and if she had asked me and I had refused, she would have been grieved, but would have understood this and not lost her temper; each of us has in one's heart a secret recess, where nobody else is admitted. Father does not recognize my rights as an individual. He is my father; perhaps for him I am still a child, but in any case he considers his full right to deal with my correspondence and my "private copy-books." I don't know whether it will be the same thing later when I am grown up. . . . If so, the struggle which is ahead will be more serious than it is today.

January 4, 1919

. . . I have already written somewhere of the Beauty that is attendant upon wealth and would be abolished by Socialism. Today I have been to the cinema: the picture was presented in a marvel-

lous setting and while admiring the sumptuous drawing-rooms and the beautiful parks, I had to think of poor tenement-houses with their pitiful miserable inmates. Can one hesitate in choosing between them? Not a single moment. It is the same in life. . . .

A few days ago I behaved horribly, disgracefully. . . . I bought sweets for a hundred roubles! How many children could have been fed on that money at Christmas!

January 9

. . . Is sexual attraction natural, or must it be suppressed? A most interesting question for study.

. . . What is physical attraction? I know that the majority, if not all, will say: "It is natural." Tolstoy will remain alone in his opinion. But for me this is no proof that he is wrong.

I see life without sexual love. I do not know whether this can be, but I should incline to think that it is possible. It is simpler and more comprehensible; however, not knowing where truth is, I dare not affirm this, but want to think that it is the truth.

The feeling exists. And at present it expresses itself in uncouth and misshapen forms. New ones must take their place. That is what I think.

May 22

. . . The farther we go the stronger we feel the influence of our epoch in more senses than one. It

is very positive: it has made me reflect on many important questions, like Socialism and others; it has shown me the real object of life and has widened my horizon; it has made me more "practical," more "positive," for everyday life, and has prepared me better for its different emergencies.

Between the former "Miss Nelly" and the present pupil of the carpenter Ivan Ivanitch there is a great difference, especially spiritually.

All this is good, and I am grateful to time for the way it has helped my development. But it has also done something else: all that belonged to the azure realm of dreams and visions, the world of poetry -- and there was a great deal of it -- has hidden itself in the depths of my soul.

July 9

. . . I should like to weave stories, many stories, about what I see around me: and to tell them in such a way that people who read them would see everything vividly before their eyes; tell them in such a way that the consonance of dead words should come to life from under my pen.

Oh how I want to create, to possess that precious gift of writing. . . . I must have talent for this. I have a few gifts in this direction. . . only they are but matter without the spirit. . . .

Talent, talent, that is what I want!

August 30

. . . About six I took some books and went into the Botanical Gardens opposite. It was pleasant to sit there. No one near. The sun, which was already sinking in the west, gave out a gentle warmth through the green foliage, carelessly and timidly as in autumn. Here and there red-brown leaves made splotches of colour. The breath of golden autumn lay over everything, and the life of nature continued undisturbed at the time when history was bringing something new to man. . . .

The thunder of guns and the reverberation of their echo came to my ears in a shrill dissonance; and it was something great that to the boom of the guns of one revolution, I should be reading the history of another that was past. I had Theirs in my hands. The book was living. . . .

Suddenly a roar . . . a whizzing. I fall down. . . probably from the concussion, and remembering from instinct that one must lie prone to save oneself from the shells I try to make myself as small as I can, to gather myself into a ball, and with a faint "Mummie" wait for its bursting over my head and then. . . all will be over. I was on a hillock. Holding my book with one hand, and still waiting for death, I rolled downwards. . . .

When I reached the footpath below, I realized that death -- whether it had been impending or not -- had spared me.



# NEW INK

by GINA

## ROOT OF BITTERNESS

*Documents of the Social History of American Women*  
Edited, and with an introduction, by Nancy F. Cott  
E.P.Dutton and Co. (paperback), \$4.95

Unlike some similar anthologies published during the last year, *Root of Bitterness* is well researched; much of the information included (especially of the earlier historical periods) is virtually unobtainable elsewhere. The study moves from colonial America through the early twentieth century, using songs, transcripts from witch trials, letters, diaries, legal documents, and sometimes published articles and stories. Includes an excellent introductory essay by Ms. Cott, and an extensive list for further reading.

## AMERICAN WOMEN IN SPORTS

by Phyllis Hollander  
Grosset and Dunlap (hardcover), \$4.95

Written especially for adolescent girls to provide models of strong and spirited women, this short survey outlines the careers of 52 past and present heroines of the American sports scene. Special emphasis is given to discrimination against women in athletics.

## THE DAY WE WERE MOSTLY BUTTERFLIES and

## THE VELOCIPED HANDICAP

by Louise W. King  
both from Curtis Books (paperback), \$.75

Those of you who have searched the libraries in vain for these lesbian novels, as I have, will be glad to hear they are now available in paperback. Good 75¢ entertainments.

## MARGARET SANGER

### *An Autobiography*

Dover Publications (paperback), \$3.95

First published in 1938, this voluminous account (504 pages) by the champion of birth control (she even invented the term) is still a rich and lively document. Interesting glimpses of a strong woman who worked all her life to make it possible for women to gain control over the means of reproduction.

## ELLA PRICE'S JOURNAL

by Dorothy Bryant  
J.B.Lippincott Co., (hardcover), \$5.95

Definitely the best of the fed-up-wife fiction thus far to emerge from the women's liberation movement. Ella Price is a conservative working-class housewife taking courses at the local junior college now that her daughter is a teenager. The story is very believably told as a journal assignment for Ella's English class. Unlike the protagonists of every other novel of this genre, Ella learns that she won't find her identity through any man. As the book ends, Ella, with the help of a female friend, is beginning to create her own life. I strongly recommend this one -- if you can't get the book, a shortened version appeared in the September 1972 issue of *Redbook* magazine.

## THE HOUSE ON HENRY STREET

by Lillian D. Wald  
Dover Publications (paperback), \$3.50

Lillian Wald's account of the founding and early life of the Henry Street Settlement House, a pioneering venture in community-based social work in New York City's Lower East Side. Ms. Wald served as director of the settlement from 1893 to 1933. The book is reprinted (with a new introduction by Helen Hall, current director) from the 1915 edition.

## THE FEMININE FIX-IT HANDBOOK

by Kay B. Ward  
Grosset and Dunlap (hardcover), \$5.95

Despite its humorously patronizing tone ("Yes, this is for you, you helpless feminine bit of fluff") and its emphasis on home decorating, this book should be useful to women and men who want to keep their homes in good repair without really learning the carpentry trade or otherwise bothering much about it. The author (a woman) includes charts about paints, lumber sizes, adhesives, etc., as well as hundreds of excellent line drawings.

## THE MANIPULATED MAN

by Esther Vilar  
Farrar, Strauss and Giroux (hardcover), \$5.95

The most radically illogical and hateful of the recent books published as anti-feminist backlash (a backlash that seems to exist only in the hopeful dollar-signs of publishers' imaginations). What can be said of a woman who still uses the tactic of expressing hatred for women in order to gain success? (With a straight face Vilar describes women as "lumps of stuffed human skin pretending to be thinking human beings.") What can be said for a publisher who would print an entire book of such anti-human, not to mention sexist, garbage? And yes it's a best-seller, in Europe as well as America.

## Eat Rice

eat rice have faith in women  
what I don't know now  
I can still learn  
if I am alone now  
I will be with them later  
if I am weak now  
I can become strong  
slowly slowly  
if I learn I can teach others  
if others learn first  
I must believe  
they will come back and teach me  
they will not go away  
to the country with their knowledge  
and send me a letter sometime  
we must study all our lives  
women coming from women going to women  
trying to do all we can with words  
then trying to work with tools  
or with our bodies  
trying to stand the time it takes  
reading books when there are no teachers  
or they are too far away  
teaching ourselves  
imagining others struggling  
I must believe we will be together  
and build enough concern  
so when I have to fight alone  
there will be sisters who  
would help if they knew  
sisters who will come  
to support me later  
  
women demanding loyalty  
each with our needs

our whole lives torn by  
the old society  
never given the love or work  
or strength or safety or information  
we could use  
never helped by the institutions  
that imprison us  
so when we need medical care  
we are butchered  
when we need police  
we are insulted ignored  
when we need parents  
we find robots  
trained to keep us in our places  
when we need work we are told  
to become part of  
the system that destroys us  
when we need friends  
other women tell us  
I have to be selfish  
you'll have to forgive me  
but there's only so much time  
energy money concern  
to go around  
I have to think of myself  
because who else will...  
I have to save things for myself  
because I'm not sure you could save me  
if our places were reversed  
because I suspect  
you won't even be around  
to save me when I need you  
I'm alone on the streets  
at 5 in the morning  
I'm alone cooking my rice

## Have Faith In Women

I see you getting knowledge  
and having friends I don't have  
I see you already stronger than me  
and I don't see you coming back  
to help me  
I imagine myself getting old  
I imagine I will have to go away  
when I'm too old to fight my way  
down the streets  
my friends getting younger and younger  
women my age hidden in corners  
in the establishment  
or curled up with a few friends  
isolated at home  
or in the madhouse  
getting their last shot of  
motivation to compete  
or grinding out position papers  
in the movement  
like old commies  
waiting to be swept away  
by the revolution  
or in a hospital  
dying of complications  
nurse or nun  
lesbian in clean clothes  
reach out a hand to me  
scientists have found  
touching is necessary  
and the drive to speak our needs  
is basic as breath  
but there isn't time  
none of my needs has been met  
and although I'm often comfortable  
this situation is painful

slowly we begin  
giving back what was taken away  
our right to the control of our bodies  
knowledge of how to fight and build  
food that nourishes  
medicine that heals  
songs that remind us of ourselves  
and make us want to keep on with  
what matters to us  
lets come out again  
joining women coming out  
for the first time  
knowing this love makes a  
a good difference in us  
affirming a continuing life with women  
we must be lovers doctors soldiers  
artists mechanics farmers  
all our lives  
waves of women  
trembling with love and anger

singing we must rage  
kissing, turn and  
break the old society  
without becoming the names it praises  
the minds it pays

eat rice have faith in women  
what I don't know now  
I can still learn  
slowly slowly  
if I learn I can teach others  
if others learn first  
I must believe  
they will come back and teach me

# MARGARET ANDERSON

by LAUREL

This issue I want to try to convey the spirit behind Margaret Anderson's second book, *The Fiery Fountains. My Thirty Years War* which I dealt with last issue was a very different kind of book -- much easier to excerpt because it was the story of Margaret's youth and full of exciting adventures, her contagious ambition, cockiness, and achievement.

*The Fiery Fountains* is a world and time removed from all this. It is the story of Margaret's more spiritual existence after she had quit *The Little Review* and become lovers with Georgette Leblanc. It is essentially about two sides of the spiritual: perfect love as she experienced it for over twenty years with Georgette and perfect understanding as Margaret and Georgette experienced it with Gurdjieff. I am choosing the first of these understandings to explore here -- the story of a great love.

The book opens with Georgette and Margaret and their devoted friend Monique living in a lighthouse in Normandy, France where:

*. . . we spent our eternal summers. . . in a kind of incredulous delight,  
loving France above all other countries and loving each other above all  
others.*

Margaret had come from the very busy existence of being a magazine editor in America and Georgette from a marriage with Maeterlinck and years of singing in concerts all over the world (all of which she describes in her book, *Souvenirs*), but the connections between the women in love with France and each other and their pasts is never really made. Although we know that Margaret and Georgette met in America, we aren't really told how Georgette and Margaret became lovers, how they made their way to the lighthouse, etc. Perhaps this would have detracted from what Margaret set out to do -- to describe, to evoke, to celebrate the quality of her relationship to Georgette. Margaret doesn't include many events in this book, it is after all a much quieter life away from the bustle of America, a life of the spirit set in the beautiful countryside of southern France. *My Thirty Years War* was anecdotal -- amusing events told by a woman with a contagious vanity and an assurance that nothing she had ever done could be uninteresting to anyone. This book runs deeper, more introspective. She is still the same fiery Margaret, in love and loving herself immensely, but more patient, content at times to listen to birdsong and watch the trees for hours at a time. Essentially, a large part of her overwhelming ambition had already been realized. She had created and nourished for years "the best literary magazine in America" and as she put it:

*I was tired of New York; I was tired of the The Little Review which with  
Ulysses, had reached the highwater mark for our generation; I wanted a*

*period of calm and quiet, time to look over my life and see what it was about.*  
To do this she and Georgette created their own world. A world within a world:

*Our lighthouse was no ivory tower -- it had a more attractive isolation than that. We were in a balloon, in space, looking down at the life on earth as we floated by, but finding our own the most perfect kingdom. And for some reason I always thought of myself as the happiest person in the world. . .*

*We accomplished the great interdiction -- that of ignoring the world for our world -- with full consciousness of what we were doing and much confidence that we were not merely producing a lovely disaster. France allowed us to live our secret formulas. It is an impersonal country where everyone is free to establish his personal heaven on earth.*

It wasn't all birdsong and kisses though. There were times when Georgette and Margaret unable to find fifty francs for the rent on their lighthouse "speculated that suicide would be our best solution." Still Margaret held onto her "confidence in universal protection" and all her life considered herself one of the happiest of humans.

*. . . I have never been able to move about the planet with freedom, as I should love to do; I have never perfected any natural gift, I have never acquired knowledge I should love to have; I have never become what I would wish to be. But the impression persisted: 'I am so happy, I have always been so desperately happy.'*

Her happiness, her sure-footedness despite her poverty was due in part to a conviction that nothing "happened" to her that she could not alter:

*As I look at the human story I see two stories. They run parallel and never meet. One is of people who live, as they can or must, the events that arrive; the other is of people who live, as they intend, the events they create. The first category would have been impossible for me.*

She had the capacity always "to make something out of nothing," "to have her cake and eat it too," and a beautiful, enduring "entente" with Georgette:

*. . . My basic happiness was founded on this fact -- this unmatchable fact: that one sometimes finds a human being with whom one can have a true and limitless human communication. The words for this blessing are 'love,' or 'understanding,' or the exact word the French have for it -- an 'entente.'*

*This is the first of the two real events I spoke of: finding some one about whom I felt at once--as if a prophecy were being made to me--'There is something perfect in her soul.'*

*For twenty-one years I never saw Georgette Leblanc do anything, never heard her say anything, that did not spring from this perfection. It is a quality, I think, that arises in the creative mind. Putting my trust in this quality, I felt that whatever I might be, the best of me (or even the worst) would never be misunderstood by Georgette. It never was. She always made me feel that there was something perfect in me. I could never be grateful enough for this distinction. Since she believed it, it must be so. As long as she lived, I felt that I was always smiling. . . .*

*This was the entente in which I lived and breathed; this was the harmonic scale in which I felt that all things of life and art and mind were*

understood. Take everything else from me, I used to say, but leave me this one communion and I will have a total life. I always wanted it more than anything else, I found it, I never found a flaw in it, I never stopped being grateful for it.

Margaret and Georgette scarcely noticed that this perfect love would not have been thought so by many:

Another thing I easily forgot is that there are people who divide love into categories, who respect certain categories and condemn others. Of course, when I remember to remember, I realize that such people exist somewhere, but my separation from them is geographical; they can't exist in my climate and landscape. I used to know all kinds of people with all kinds of ideas. I fought with them, but that was long ago. Now I know only serious people. I can't imagine any of them commenting on romantic love except to say 'Ah?'

Perhaps this accounts for Margaret's complete lack of self-consciousness in describing the most intimate details of her life with Georgette. So powerful and moving was her account of their life together that I was carried completely into their world almost as though I were reading a novel, the close of which brought a flood of tears.

In 1939 their "exemption" from the world outside suddenly ended. Georgette began her long war with cancer and France entered the war with Hitler. Margaret and Monique took Georgette to every doctor who could possibly help, and all the while they constantly had to be on the move to escape the Germans.

Georgette finally had to be operated on. Margaret and Monique braved the constant threat of bombing, air raid signals screaming through the night, and a total blackout to take Georgette to the hospital in Paris.

The operation was performed but the wound did not heal; the cancer came back and Margaret was told Georgette's days were numbered. As she adjusted herself to the thought of Georgette's death she began to write this book as a testament of their love and a source of courage to face life without her.

She patiently tried to analyze the sources of their happiness, the "benediction" that had been upon them for twenty years:

...It is different, I said, from any other life I have ever seen. The basis of it is freedom from talk, talk, talk; freedom from the greeds, groans and gesticulations of the human animal; freedom from posings and posturings; freedom from comment on what you are doing, saying, feeling; freedom from words-that-must-be-retracted and scenes-that-must-be-forgiven and forgotten; freedom from what Georgette calls the 'dog-to-dog of humanity.' ...It is as if Georgette had lived a picture of life--a formalization. With her you can sit in a room as if no one else were there. Why can you never do this with other people? Because they are in the habit of saying something at all times. You too fall into the habit; you begin to say words in order not to appear strange, you make the expected smiles, false smiles that become grimaces, smiling at nothing like a fool--horrible--you can't stop, words come out of you as exclamations, empty as the voice that speaks them. This is communal life--it is terrifying; you can never let yourself drop into quietness, you can never hear the hum of silence that sometimes fills the world. You can never count on a sustained state for more than a minute at a time. Even an hour at a time is not enough--

it must be a state that can be entered at any time. But to be interrupted, frittered, dispersed, shattered--this is considered normal. To ask for release from it is considered selfish, demanding, ivory-tower, escapist. Why? No one ever knows how many important emotions he will forget, or never have, if he lives this dispersion. I consider it vulgar for people to clamor at me, wearing me down, eating me alive. Why don't they just remain silent in my silences? Why are they always sneaking up on my vibrations? Why don't they just 'sit down in a chair and exist'? I never get any rest except with Georgette. She 'exists' alone; this allows me to exist alone. Her life begins where all conventional life ends. It is based on extremes: real talk or absence of talk; interest in all that you do, or oblivion to all that you do--as you prefer, you have only to ask. What am I saying? You need never ask, it is always known. Her ways are the ways of wisdom and they produce the solace of freedom of mind.

Georgette, too, wrote about the perfect "benediction" she had found with Margaret:

*L'Entente (The Art of Communication)*

Understanding is not the product of dreams. It does not accompany young love with its roses, its frailty, its empty spaces, its ends and its end. My search for it was long and tireless...Later I saw why it is not easy to come upon. I had hoped to match myself with another's existence when I, myself, did not yet exist.

At twenty I confused understanding with love. . .But the understanding that comes from being in love is only a chemical understanding. When it ends, it leaves behind it only sweetness or pain.

Understanding is a sort of love that does not end, because it desires the existence of the loved one as much as its own. I believe it is the only human bond that is not content simply to feed upon its own emotion. It rejects all that can be accepted only if ones' eyes are closed, and all that is 'impure.' In understanding, to lie would be senseless; there are no permissions to be accorded, no commandments to be imposed. Understanding is above tolerance and tests. It is a bond which would not be if it were not perfect.

One cannot have understanding without a double knowledge--one must know oneself and the other person. . .I know, for example, that I will never be understood by the 'material-world' category. I have nothing in common with those solid friendships which maintain themselves on the every-day plane I abhor. They have something a little concierge about them. Such friends become like two business associates--their strength is doubled but they are not concerned with the quality of their relationship. Of what value is a friendship which does not help you to understand more of yourself, of the other, and of all others? . . .

I can name any number of tendencies which preclude a relationship of understanding. A vice can prevent it--especially a vice like avarice or indelicacy; a too-spherical egoism, a slackening of elan, an aging of the cells, a lack of good faith, a lack of distinction, or a lack of that serious lightness which is so rewarding in human relationships. Heavy human vibrations can prevent it; an empty agitated mind; a ponderous frivolity; people who splash on entering a room as if they were diving; people of sonorous authority whose words clatter like hail against a window, intelligent people whose vibrations are impressive but who never speak a word of truth--they approach

everything so indirectly that one wonders how they manage to get through a doorway; talkers with impetuous emanations who push aside everything in their path to make way for their monologues; people who have no presence at all--their emanations have been clipped off close to their bodies, like shorn sheep; the chronometer people who regulate everything and everyone; and those who strike, who bite, who scratch, who sting, who lie, who eject their venom wherever their anger falls, while their emanations claw and their mouths are pulled into a bitter twist. . .

When I was very young I wrote in my diary: 'Great ideas are treated like objets d'art, they are not used. I shall use them.' I have kept my word. The great concept contained in 'understanding' is what I have always sought, what I have tried to be worthy of, what I have finally found--in the benediction of a true communication with another human being. Ah, if we could only continue to live it for a thousand years!

At the end of October, 1940, Georgette moved from the benediction of life to that of death. By degrees, she departed into herself, absorbed in "finding the core of her being." Margaret and Monique attended her, quiet, reserved -- realizing the importance of the spiritual journey Georgette had begun.

. . .She had always shown us how to live; now she was showing us how to die. This was all I could think about in those last days. And I knew I would never stop thinking about it.

Long before, Georgette had said to Margaret:

. . .La jour de ma mort, il ne faut pas être triste, car ce sera un jour de fête pour mon âme. [The day of my death, you needn't be sad, for it will be the birthday of my soul.]

The final pages of the book bring me to tears every time I read them:

. . .We reached her bed and held her to us. Her eyes were closing, she could not see. Her breathing was so soft and untroubled that we could scarcely hear it, but we knew at last that she was dying. Then, with no perceptible sign or sound or movement, she was dead. It was like a flower dying, or a leaf--as she wrote in her farewell to the Muette: 'in a slow spiral, returning gently to the earth.'

. . .It was half past eight and Georgette was dead.

I sat beside her until dawn. I held her right hand. I hadn't known whether death would be natural or terrifying. It was natural. I thought: I have never known anything that is strong until now; nothing that I can do will ever make Georgette smile again. Dawn came. I thought: thank you for your existence.

The book is an intensely emotional experience -- a spiritual journey hard to convey in these few pages. Next issue I'll go on to Margaret's last volume of autobiography, *The Strange Necessity*.

"I propose a toast, to all the eight year  
old ballerinas who are diligently  
becoming twenty,  
and to their instructresses.  
The community  
is served  
(the effects are outstanding, truly)  
as the young ladies advance  
into their lives, feet  
arched and stiff,  
necks disciplined,  
walking with trust and beauty  
toward their future.  
I think that we  
who are here to receive them  
should rise and make  
ourselves visible."

by EVA NICOLAIT

"You know, I wonder if they're headed in the same direction as us."

"God, yeah, wouldn't that be something."

"They're probably on exactly the same trip. Because look at the way they're turning out shit. And more and more, man, the shit is getting really good. Here we just make trash, but over there, man, it's really good shit."

"I wonder if they can take the thing we're doing, you know, and do that but do it right."

"It's very, very possible, man. I mean, they're really together over there. It's not like here at all. There's the same idea, you know, but the people here aren't united like they are over there. Over there everybody is really tight, even the family is together, and everybody is working toward the same goal. They know what they're doing. They're just going to keep on going quietly along, you know, unobtrusive, and one day they're going to be miles ahead of everybody else. One day everybody is going to turn around and say, 'Look at that.'"

"Too much."

"But, of course they could always blow it too."

"Yeah, they could still end up like us."

"Oh well, it doesn't matter anyway."

"I know."

.....  
**WOMEN &  
MADNESS**  
**::a review::**

by LAUREL

I struggled for days to get a grasp on just what I wanted to say about *Women and Madness*. Was I thick-headed? Over my head as consequence of being out of my field? Why couldn't I find on second reading of the book, the exciting ideas which on first reading had seemed to make this book the apotheosis of feminist literature? Why couldn't I find the passages, the facts and figures which had kindled such a fire in me that I recommended to everyone I knew that without fail they should find the \$9.00 (sell their blood if they must) to buy this book?

It occurs to me now that initially I devoured Phyllis Chesler's book, absolutely starved for new lesbian-feminist theory. I was terribly impressed by the charts, graphs, the innumerable footnotes and references. And I was exhilarated by what seemed to be the thesis of the book -- become a lesbian and "gain control of the means of production and reproduction" in order to return to our former happy state prior to patriarchy -- the glorious, heroic, (although technologically underdeveloped) state of our mythic Amazon mothers.

Of course, outrageous harpies

have said this before, but Phyllis Chesler, Ph.D., Professor of psychology, documented her case. Or did she?

As I reread the book I noticed that the heavy documentation, the actual new information that Phyllis has to offer is not about lesbians or Amazons, but rather about women who have had sex with their (male) therapists. Where the opening chapters seem to prepare us for an up-to-the-minute report and new logistics for the struggle to end patriarchy the real fact-work of the book is in documenting the percentage of women who are fucked over (literally) in therapy and mental institutions. The thrust of the book is in showing that psychotherapy is the institution second only to marriage which most oppresses women. And Phyllis makes this point extremely well.

But what we are offered in her chapter on lesbianism are some whitewashed (carefully selected) quotes from Charlotte Wolff's book, *Love Between Women*, and a handful of lesbians talking about how their therapists had misunderstood and mistreated them.

The key to the problem with this chapter lies in Chesler's one sentence statement after quoting extensively from *Love Between Women*:

*I have no more basic theory to offer.*

Now that's a shame. Not only does Phyllis Chesler not have any new theory about lesbians, she has no new facts. She rather lamely says "There are probably more male homosexuals than there are lesbians" on the basis of the Kinsey

Report done twenty years ago. Certainly if Phyllis had wanted to seriously deal with lesbianism she should have done some sampling of the current lesbian population.

With nothing more than Charlotte Woolf's study of 108 extremely repressed lesbians in England to go on, (and it had taken Dr. Woolf three years to "gather" this many even though she assured them total anonymity) I think Phyllis undercuts her own case. Charlotte Woolf's lesbians are an ocean and a time removed. They might fit into a 1950 DOB meeting, but they certainly aren't representative of the lesbians I know.

The chapter is, then, a patchwork of Charlotte Woolf and a few (how chosen?) lesbians telling about how they got fucked over by psychiatrists. It is definitely the weakest chapter in the book--and it should have been the best. Phyllis's whole theory leads up to her final loaded questions:

*. . . given our conditioning as women can we ever become feminist revolutionaries (or human beings) without becoming lesbians? As women, can we wage any sort of revolution if we are psychosexually bound to men or marriage or full-time child care?*

The answer she continually poses throughout the book is no, women must turn to each other for nurturance and "seize the means of production and reproduction." Why then doesn't she offer a few examples of women who already are on this path? Why do we only hear

from women who have had a tremendous problem "accepting" their lesbianism? And why are we still dependent on the Kinsey Report on female sexuality which has fucked women's minds about their own bodies for twenty years? It seems to me that Phyllis published her book too soon -- she documents and makes her case in the first half of the book -- but she definitely slips up in her handling of lesbians. We need more than to know that "there are probably more male homosexuals than lesbians."

And not unrelated, Phyllis intimates throughout her book that no one in her right mind could possibly not be a lesbian, she tells us she had affairs with girls in elementary school subsequent to her love affair with her mother, but she doesn't really come out. Now there would have been a source of information about lesbianism I would have been interested in -- her own personal experience and her observations of the lesbian community she is a part of.

I have zeroed in, perhaps unmercifully, on this chapter and probably left the impression that the book is not worth buying. Not so! Despite its flaws (and there are more than I've mentioned) it is still the meatiest new book around and the only book so far to boldly insist that women must be open to loving each other sexually. It is a big step above the other sensational sellers of the season, *Descent of Woman* and *The First Sex*, and well worth talking your librarian into buying.

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**PLEASE HELP US KEEP AMAZON QUARTERLY ALIVE.**

by JEANNE GALLICK

## PHALLIC TECHNOLOGY AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF WOMEN

Technology is a way of making things that did not exist before. To create something new, however, requires some sort of model that guides the form of the new product. This article is about western technology and the model that lies at the origin of our way of making.

To discover the origins of technology we must go far beyond the 18th century back to ancient history. For it was then, just at the beginnings of western civilization, that the Father replaced the Mother as the primary model of creation. This historical defeat of the Mother is reflected in the early myths that depict the creation of woman by the Father gods. Analysis of the (re)making of woman will reveal the patriarchal model of technological production that has continued through to the modern era.

As phallic technology destroys our relationship to the earth, so man's first technological act was the overthrow of the Earth Goddess herself. This overthrow of the Mother and her recreation into the submissive wife was the primal technological act that set the model of making that has guided the progress of our civilization.

Before the Father gods Zeus and Jehovah took over, fertility goddesses were worshipped in Greece and throughout the Mediterranean. Each small district was under the care of its own goddess, who was worshipped under the many names of Demeter, Astarte, Eve, Artemis, Cybele, Pandora, Athena, Isis and so on. The Mother was experienced as the source of all blessings on earth, of fertility, nourishment and birth. Besides the gifts of the earth, she was the changing phases of the growing and dying moon; thus she measured out and governed the times of planting and harvesting, the religious festivals, and finally the times of birth and death. Men, jealous of the woman's and the goddesses' womb and her measured power of creation, defeated her, disarmed her and remade her according to the patriarch's conception of woman as submissive and evil.

### PHALLIC TECHNOLOGY CONSTRUCTS EVE AND PANDORA

Eve, who is called Mother and whose name literally means life, was technologically reconstructed and made over into patriarchal woman. The Father took Adam's rib, that primordial tool, and made Eve. As the Father overthrew the law of the Mother by insisting upon the supremacy of his phallus over her womb, so too Eve was created out of Adam's rib, a *displaced phallus*. Man's technological constructions, which are based on the denial of the earth and the Earth Mother, are, however, ultimately destructive of man as well. No longer the Mother, the giver of gifts, the blooming and fertile trees of life and death and of all knowledge, Eve now brings forth evil and death. Herself paradise, Eve is now in the eyes of man responsible for their expulsion from paradise. Man's phallic reconstruction of Eve makes of her the source of evil rather than of good. Earth now becomes a giver of fruits only by way of painful labor.

The story of Pandora's creation is even more revealing. Like Eve, Pandora was originally the Earth Mother. Her name, meaning 'all gifts' or 'all giving,' refers to the Mother as the source of the blessings of life. Pandora was the creator of life, until, in the hands of the Olympian gods, she became the source of all evil. The transformation of Pandora from giver of blessings to the gift of evil was the punishment for man's desire to master the earth and subject it to his control. Pandora is Zeus's revenge on man for Prometheus' theft of fire. (Likewise, Eve as the source of evil is connected to man's desire to eat of the tree of knowledge.)

Hesiod, the author of the Olympian *Theogony* (the birth of the Greek gods) describes\* how Father Zeus gave his family instructions for the construction of Pandora. All the Olympian gods have their technical specialties. Zeus orders Hephaistos, the divine blacksmith and craftsman, to plaster earth with water and make a woman with a human voice, a face like a goddess and the features of a girl. Zeus instructs Athena to teach Pandora her skills, especially weaving, and he orders Aphrodite to give her cruel desire. But Hermes, the god of tricks and deceit, was ordered to put in Pandora the mind of a hussy, a treacherous nature, lies and wheedling words.

The Greek patriarchal gods constructed Pandora like Eve was constructed, to be submissive to man and ultimately destructive of his happiness. Hermes presents Pandora to Epimetheus, the first husband. When Epimetheus consummates the prototypic marriage he releases all the evils contained in Pandora into the world. The technological reconstruction of Pandora from Mother to Wife destroys happiness on earth and makes the source of goodness into evil. Her reconstruction created the primal

\*Hesiod, *Works and Days*, lines 6-100.



hierarchy of exploitation. The male elevated himself over the woman by denying her her own creativity.

#### PSYCHOLOGICAL TECHNIQUES: REPRESSION AND THE DREAM OF FEMININITY

A look into the psychological technique of the phallic construction of woman is necessary. This technique, called repression by Freud, begins with denial, in this case, the denial of woman. Woman as creative M(other) was denied because man was envious and afraid of her powers and her knowledge. (Christian man projected this envy onto Eve.) In order to assert his masculinity as the technological-phallic power to mold and control life, man had to deny woman's power. Once denied her ancient identity, woman had to be reconstructed. She became man's first artificial product, the first matter (from *mater* or mother) that could be technologically reconstructed in his image, according to his dream.

Man created woman his Mother into his Wife. He made her "feminine" with features of a girl goddess, golden tresses and necklaces, but with the mind of a hussy, one who lies and uses deceit to get what she wants. He created her along the lines of his infant dream, a wife who like the perfect mother would serve him like a slave, who would care for his every need and bear his children. However, like all neurotic symptoms that are grounded in denial, the "feminine" woman is aimed at man's destruction. Eve and Pandora, or, more generally, patriarchal femininity, is the very prototype of a neurotic symptom. Femininity is man's nightmare, his dream-girl become a bitch.

#### PATRIARCHY AND PHALLIC WORSHIP

The Mother's recreating body reflects the swelling and dying phases of the moon and the cyclic seasons of the earth. The Father, by denying the body its wisdom, had to develop a biological theory to support him - and a new religion, the phallic worship of his paternal ancestor-gods. Underlying the patriarchal worship of the male as creator is the Father's assertion that the phallus, not the womb, is the primal source of life. This logic of male creation is founded in a negation, the denial of the Mother. Aeschylus puts the magic bio-religious formula in the mouth of Apollo, the Greek god of rationality and light. Apollo says:

*The mother is no parent of that which is called her child, but only nurse of the new-planted seed that grows. The parent is he who mounts. (Eumenides, line 660)*

Apollo justifies Orestes' murder of his mother Clytemnestra by saying that Orestes' responsibility for his life goes to his father, not to his mother. Orestes' murder of his mother thus justified lays the ground for the new justice, the patriarchal justice of father-right, which is

founded on the death of the mother. Consequently, the Furies, previously mother goddesses of fertility, scream that "the hard hands of the gods and their teachers have taken my old rights away." (Eumenides, line 880)

Freud, the patriarch two thousand years later, received and helped create/cure myriads of uprooted, upper-class women. His words ring back two milleneum to the origins of patriarchal supremacy. He also expresses most explicitly the dis-ease at the heart of the patriarchal terror of women. Women, Freud says, suffer from lack of a penis. Since the little girl instantly recognizes her "organic inferiority" as a state of "castration," in Freud's eyes she directs her sexuality into a bleak and threatening envy of the male's "superior organ." Because of this predominance of envy in their lives, according to Freud, women are less moral, more prone to resentment, less able to sublimate.\* Like Eve. Like Pandora. In order to become truly "feminine," that is, a submissive mother, Freud, like Zeus before him, carefully instructs women to give up their desire to become a male (i.e. to assert themselves at all) and compensate for their frustration by giving birth to a son. For Freud, the son then becomes the mother's substitute penis. Pity the son, the phallic compensation for his mother's empty life. Woman became the source of evil for man when man denied her her own life, her own sexuality, her own wisdom. All male neurosis is traceable, says Freud, to castration anxiety. Female neurosis (femininity) is traceable to her "castrated" state.

#### PATRIARCHAL WOMAN AS THE MODEL OF MACHINES AND SLAVES

These biological and psychological techniques (that the phallus is the creator-god and that woman is a castrated man) consist of the denial and the reconstruction of woman as a tool-extension of man. They formulate woman as the primal machine. She is reconstructed an empty vessel in need of activation, at which time an "automatic" process begins which results in birth. Passive reproduction, machine production, is her defining function in life, which she neither initiates nor controls. Like all machines she is conceived as an extension of man's powers. As his wife and domestic (his *familus*, which is Latin for slave) and as the womb for his children, woman is the prototype of alienated labor, the reduction of one human being to a means of the other.

Even man's oppression of other men is modeled after his oppression of woman, who is the primordial Other. The worst thing one man can do to another is treat him like a woman, that is, require him to work as his menial (from *menses*). To treat a man like a woman means to refuse him his rights to his own life and his own work.

\*See the chapter on femininity in Freud's *New Introductory Lectures*

Just as men oppress other men by reducing them to "women," to a mere means of (re)production, so too man has tried to conquer the earth itself by reducing it to a means of producing those things he most desires. But first he had to free himself of natural necessity, which is essentially symbolized by his birth from the Mother. In the process of this ancient liberation western man developed a way of understanding and making, rationality, which he has used to harness the other, whether it be woman, other men, or the earth, to his needs.

#### NEW LIGHT ON THE THEORY OF PHALLIC CAUSALITY

By rational thought man liberated himself from his natural birth and death. He conceived, rationally, an immortal soul that originated necessarily in spirit, that is, in his Father, and not in the body of his Mother the Earth. The rational logic of the dominance of man over woman, of the superiority of soul over body, of spiritual control over the functioning of the earth, required first that thinking abstract itself from the immediacy of natural phenomena and hunt for their cause. Only a rational theory about the cause of this or that or even of all phenomena, based upon the denial of earthly things, could give man the power to control the things of the earth and the earth itself according to his own needs and his will.

Consequently in philosophy as later in science, causality, motivated by denial of the earth and the will to control, has long been the critical category of thinking. Man understands things by disconnecting them from the immediacy of their earthly context and reconnecting them together by means of (phallic) cause and effect. Knowledge of causality, of how things operate, gives man the power of manipulation that is limited only by his own destruction. In order for man to recreate the earth, woman and his own body, he had to deny these "things" their own inner motions, rhythms and motivations. Deprived of its own inner being, the woman-earth-body triad was reduced to mere matter, atoms, passive flesh that existed only to receive its form and meaning from the rational male creator god.

The abstraction of man from the earth by way of his knowledge of causality is like all things grounded in his personal life, in his relationship to his own body, and, deeper yet, in his relationship to women. A discussion of the paradigm of creation, procreation, will give us a hold on the technique of man's abstraction from woman, on the way in which she was deprived of her own motivations and reduced to a means of her husband's productivity.

In the beginning there was not, as Freud fantasized, a primal horde led by a jealous and authoritarian Father. There was, rather, as the many early goddesses of fertility demonstrate, a "matriarchy" in which the

Earth Mother was worshipped as the source and measure of life. The divine over-emphasis on the phallus, the assertion that only the male semen and not the female womb was the holy source of creation, was the result of the prototypic (pattern-setting) act of abstraction. Man separated himself from the natural necessity of the Mother, from the immediacy of female birth, by thinking back in time to the event of sexual intercourse. This remembering connected semen with pregnancy and birth. Memory became causal-phallic logic when man denied the woman her due and posited the male seed as the sole divine cause of birth and all creation. This method of abstract thinking laid the ground of spirit, for the phallic seed was conceived of as the spiritual essence of human life, while the mother, reduced to mere body herself, simply clothed the soul in flesh. Men shall give their bodies, evil and woven of female flesh, back to earth, but the Father, who gave them their souls - and their names - will receive their spirits in eternity, if that is, like good boys, they led rational lives.

Rational-phallic thinking consists of the following phases: a) denial of woman as creator, b) abstraction from the wisdom of her birth and her death, c) recollection of the "only true" spiritual cause, the immortal semen, and d) the assertion that everything female and of the earth is false, evil and forever changing. This phallic way of understanding allowed man to deify himself as the creator god and to manipulate and exploit the other to satisfy his own particular needs. Man's dream was to give birth out of his head to a new earth, denied and reconstructed according to his desires and his will to power. His basic technological tool of reconstruction as well as of reproduction is his phallic rationality.

#### INDUSTRIALIZATION AND THE ARTIFICIAL WOMAN

The Industrial Revolution in the 18th and 19th centuries merely extended to everybody and everything a way of making and thinking that originated in the ancient defeat of the Mother Goddess. Aristocratic women had been defined as Pandora-Eve since ancient times. Their "true" femininity was symbolized by their uselessness, their vanity and their deceitfulness; and they were defined as a means of their husbands' reproduction and immortality. Industrialization, by accelerating the destruction of agricultural life, extended to all women this ancient technological definition of femininity.

While man appropriated and subjected the outer world with his rationality, woman, finally emptied of her life-sustaining activities by industrialization, reached the apex of her femininity as man's model product. If ancient technology (phallic rationality) lay the groundwork for her patriarchal body as machine-womb, American technology is now completing the work of remaking woman, of making the artificial woman. In order to sell

(to be made saleable in) our consumer economy, her body is now almost totally reconstructed by technology. Made-up, false haired, false eye-lashed, deodorized everywhere, girdled, nyloned, barely able to walk or breathe, she is the rational extension of Pandora, man's dream girl. Thus the Olympians, Zeus and his specialized children, find their final expression in the consumer executive and his technical specialists.

Patriarchal woman is man's model product; thus technological products as they are developed and utilized in a patriarchal society are "feminine." Women used to wash clothes by rubbing them against rocks in the creek. Now a machine does that. However, the private washer-dryer functions in our society to "liberate" woman to her true "femininity," which is absolute uselessness. In our patriarchal society the machine washes clothes in the same way that a woman gives birth: the male is essential and the woman useless except to care for his needs.

The machine most symbolic of our bodies, the car, is useless in another sense. Such considerations as transportation, efficiency, safety, durability are insignificant or totally eclipsed by the essential phallic emphasis placed on status, power-potency and size. The car is thus a substitute womb. Woman is remade into the sexy shape of the car, with its purring motor and its leather seats. This intercourse between phallic technology and its feminine machines gives birth to clogged arteries, unnecessary deaths, an asphalt earth and yellowish skies. Pandora and Eve are indeed evil, but only because man made them that way.

#### THE TECHNOLOGY OF THE MALE BODY

The female body was denied and recreated to serve man's needs; now we must ask what happened to the male body. The essence of patriarchal woman's construction of man is externalization. His basic features are strength, coldness, hardness. He has no emotions, except aggression and frustration and perhaps the joys of dominance. At the most he may clench his jaw to let us know he is feeling anything. How does this technological construction of man take place?

One clue lies in the etymology of technology itself. Besides deriving from the Greek *tekton*, a builder, technology is derived from the Latin *texere*, to weave. Athena, it will be remembered, is the only Olympian to give Pandora useful skills; in particular, Hesiod mentions that she taught Pandora to weave. But Pandora remade is the source of evil.. Her weaving skill enables her to weave the flesh of man, his outer coverings, (technology also comes from the Latin *tegere*, to cover) to make him into an outer covering.

Akin to *texere*, to weave and *textus*, something woven, is the Latin *testa*, an earthen vessel of baked clay, hence a shell. Besides weaving, women also invented the skill of pottery. Woman may have taken revenge on man for depriving her of her source by solidifying the woven garments, his

flesh, into baked clay. He became a shell of a man. Hard, superhuman, unable to feel anything or show emotion. From *testa* comes *test*, a hard outer shell and *testum*, a skull. Man became a clay vessel, a shell, an immortal skull. But he still had testes, related to *testaceus*, literally made of baked earth. The revenge of denied Earth.

#### WOMAN-IDENTIFIED WOMAN AND THE OVERTHROW OF THE MADE-UP WOMAN

A revolution in the essential relationship between the sexes would touch everybody at their point of innermost identity. The sexist categorization of women as Mothers, as wombs there to serve their men, and of men as Fathers, as phalli there to dominate and control everything and everyone, goes deeper in our society than skin color, earning power or heritage. If a fundamental liberation from sexual stereotypes were to occur, western technology as the phallic way of making things at the expense of the other, would also change. Phallic technology could no longer remake the other into a passive slave-womb, whether the other be women, blacks or the lower classes. A change in our concepts of sexual identity could serve as a beginning point for the non-sexist construction of a new society.

The stranglehold of the Patriarchal Father and Mother on our sexuality must first be broken. The Father identifies his masculinity as master and controller, while the Mother finds her femininity in her role as slave and martyr to her husband and children. These two heterosexual definitions of the maker and his object lie at the very base of our exploitative technology, our way of making our world, our children and our selves.

One path towards liberation from the Father and the Mother is to identify ourselves as women in relationship to our love of other women. Patriarchal woman in her entire technological make-up is the product of male fears and desires. If we reject this identity by way of loving-identifying with other women, we will develop a totally new concept of womanhood, as well as new ways of living together, raising children and working together. Most important, women who are defining their womanhood in love of other women are *making* a new world based on a new mode of (non-phallic) intercourse with the earth.

WE THANK THE FOLLOWING PUBLICATIONS FOR PRINTING OUR ANNOUNCEMENTS OF

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## CONTRIBUTORS

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It seems for the first time my work is becoming a reflection of my character.

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An artist working in Oakland, California.

### EVA NICOLAIT

I'm a painter and photographer and writer, living in Santa Barbara [California].

### FRAN WINANT

My book of poems *Looking At Women* is available for \$1.00 from Violet Press, P.O.Box 398, New York City 10009. I also write and perform gay feminist songs.

### GINA

I'm dreaming bigger dreams and learning to believe in them.

### JANE RULE

Author of *Desert of the Heart, This is Not for You, Against the Season*. She lives in Vancouver and teaches at the University of British Columbia.

### JEANNE GALLICK

I am trying to make a body and a space for myself where I can breathe deeply and enjoy myself and work some.

### LAUREL

I'm in love with Miss Q. and working hard to make her beautiful.

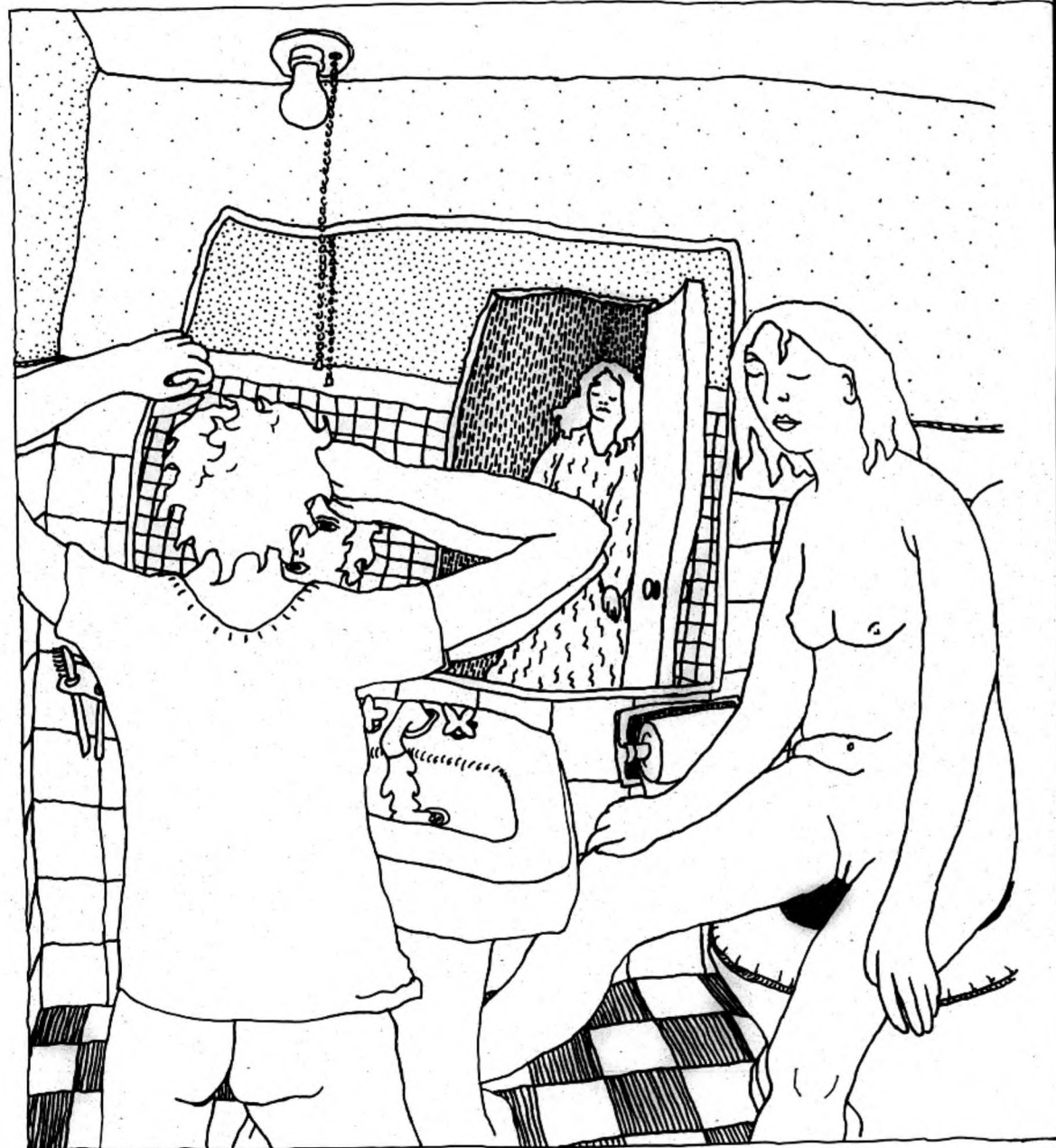
### LES B. FRIENDS

Les B. Friends is a group of Thespian Lesbians affiliated with the C.I.A. (Consciousness In Action), living, surviving and thriving in the armpit of the nation -- Binghamton, New York. We don't have a lot of sun here, but a heck of a lot of daughters.

### RITA MAE BROWN

Rita Mae is remembered for her part in "liberating" New York City's N.O.W. She published a book of poetry in 1972, *The Hand That Cradles The Rock*, and another will be released soon. Look for *Ruby Fruit Jungle* to come out in about a year.

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*NAKED, IN T-SHIRTS, IN LONG SOFT GOWNS*

*I love the way they look  
in the morning, these women  
my friends.*

*Their eyes are puffy, their  
curls are wild and knotted, their  
cowlicks are up. They smell of  
blankets, their mouths taste of  
sleep. They are slow  
in kitchens in bathrooms  
waking up, rubbing their skin  
like animals.*

*Her, waiting for water to boil,  
or her, lying still in bed, with no  
meetings or children to pull at her,  
on her side in her brass bed, like  
smooth rolling grey hills  
in that nightgown.*



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THE EDITORS