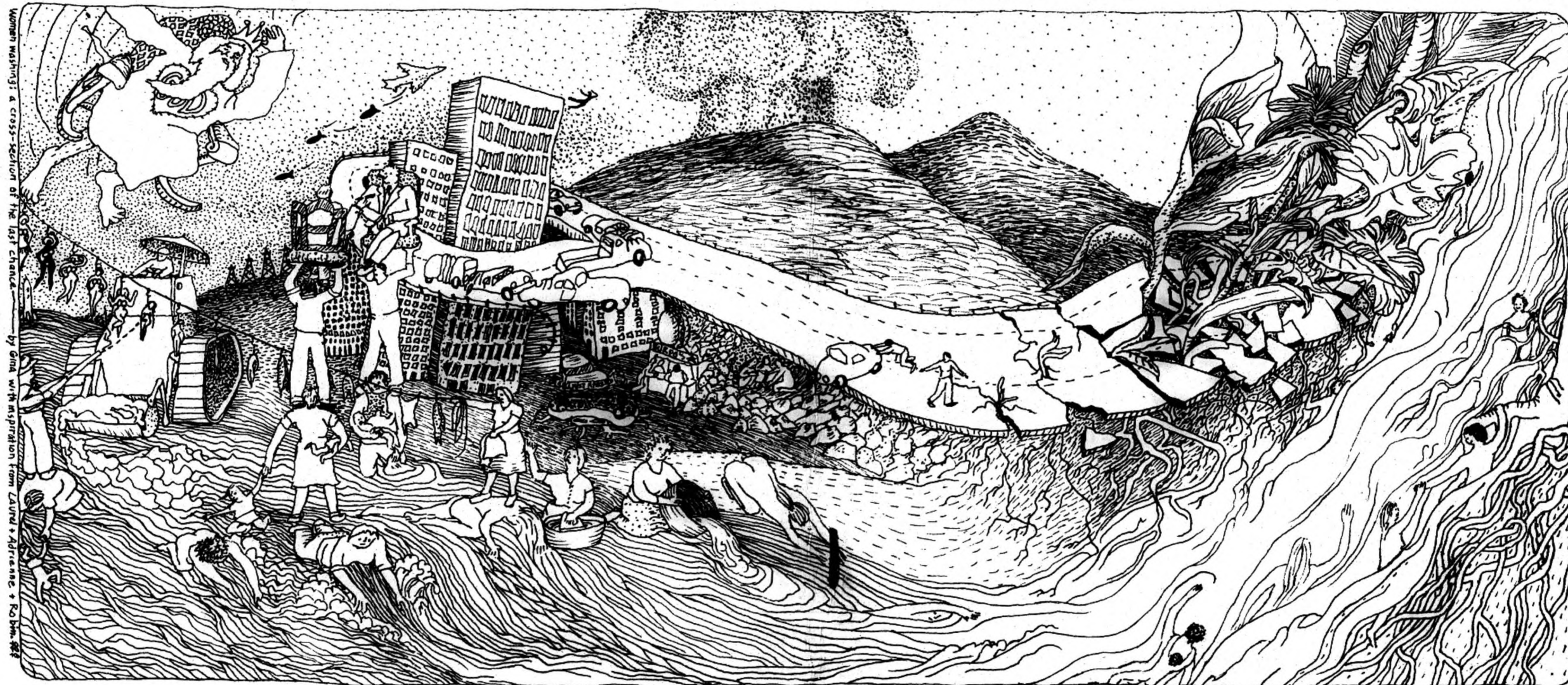


AMAZON QUARTERLY  
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# AMAZON QUARTERLY

Volume 2 Issue 2

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Women washing; a cross-section of the last chance  
by Gina with inspiration from Laurel + Adrienne + Robyn 1987





# AMAZON QUARTERLY

VOLUME TWO ISSUE TWO



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Many thanks to those of you who already have sent extra money with your renewals, and our special thanks to those of you who've offered your time and skills to help AQ. Among these are a woman in Oklahoma who helped with typing this issue, and a woman in the East who is computerizing our subscription files (which by the way will remain completely confidential).

# A WOMAN IS TALKING TO DEATH

by JUDY GRAHN

One

Testimony in trials that never got heard

my lovers teeth are white geese flying above me  
my lovers muscles are rope ladders under my hands

we were driving home slow  
my lover and I, across the long Bay Bridge,  
one February midnight, when midway  
over in the far left lane, I saw a strange scene:

one small young man standing by the rail,  
and in the lane itself, parked straight across  
as if it could stop anything, a large young  
man upon a stalled motorcycle, perfectly  
relaxed as if he'd stopped at a hamburger stand;  
he was wearing a peacoat and levis, and  
he had his head back, roaring, you  
could almost hear the laugh, it  
was so real.

"Look at that fool," I said, "in the  
middle of the bridge like that," a very  
womanly remark.

Then we heard the meaning of the noise  
of metal on a concrete bridge at 50  
miles an hour, and the far left lane  
filled up with a big car that had a  
motorcycle jammed on its front bumper, like  
the whole thing would explode, the friction  
sparks shot up bright orange for many feet  
into the air, and the racket still sets  
my teeth on edge.

When the car stopped we stopped parallel  
and Wendy headed for the callbox while I  
ducked across those 6 lanes like a mouse  
in the bowling alley. "Are you hurt?" I said,  
the middle-aged driver had the greyest black face,  
"I couldn't stop, I couldn't stop, what happened?"

Then I remembered. "Somebody," I said, "was on  
the motorcycle." I ran back,  
one block? two blocks? the space for walking  
on the bridge is maybe 18 inches, whoever  
engineered this arrogance. In the dark  
stiff wind it seemed I would  
be pushed over the rail, would fall down  
screaming onto the hard surface of  
the bay, but I did not, I found the tall young man  
who thought he owned the bridge, now lying on  
his stomach, head cradled in his broken arm.

He had glasses on, but somewhere he had lost  
most of his levis, where were they?  
and his shoes. Two short cuts on his buttocks,  
that was the only mark except his thin white  
seminal tubes were all strung out behind; no  
child left in him; and he looked asleep.

I plucked wildly at his wrist, then put it  
down; there were two long haired women  
holding back the traffic just behind me  
with their bare hands, the machines came  
down like mad bulls, I was scared, much  
more than usual, I felt easily squished  
like the earthworms crawling on a busy  
sidewalk after the rain; I wanted to  
leave. And met the driver, walking back.

"The guy is dead." I gripped his hand,  
the wind was going to blow us off the bridge.

"Oh my God," he said, "haven't I had enough  
trouble in my life?" He raised his head,  
and for a second was enraged and yelling,  
at the top of the bridge--"I was just driving



home!" His head fell down. "My God, and now I've killed somebody."

I looked down at my own peacoat and levis, then over at the dead man's friend, who was bawling and blubbering, what they would call hysteria in a woman. "It isn't possible" he wailed, but it was possible, it was indeed, accomplished and unfeeling, snoring in its peacoat, and without its levis on.

He died laughing: that's a fact.

I had a woman waiting for me, in her car and in the middle of the bridge, I'm frightened, I said. I'm afraid, he said, stay with me, please don't go, stay with me, be my witness--"No," I said, "I'll be your witness--later," and I took his name and number, "but I can't stay with you, I'm too frightened of the bridge, besides I have a woman waiting and no license-- and no tail lights--" So I left-- as I have left so many of my lovers.

we drove home shaking, Wendy's face greyer than any white person's I have ever seen. maybe he beat his wife, maybe he once drove taxi, and raped a lover of mine--how to know these things? we do each other in, that's a fact.

who will be my witness?  
death wastes our time with drunkenness and depression  
death, who keeps us from our lovers.  
he had a woman waiting for him,  
I found out when I called the number days later

"Where is he" she said, "he's disappeared."  
"He'll be all right" I said, "we could have hit the guy as easy as anybody, it wasn't anybody's fault, they'll know that," women so often say dumb things like that, they teach us to be sweet and reassuring, and say ignorant things, because we don't invent the crime, the punishment, the bridges

that same week I looked into the mirror and nobody was there to testify; how clear, an unemployed queer woman makes no witness at all, nobody at all was there for those two questions: what does she do, and who is she married to?

I am the woman who stopped on the bridge and this is the man who was there our lovers teeth are white geese flying above us, but we ourselves are easily squished.

keep the women small and weak and off the street, and off the bridges, that's the way, brother one day I will leave you there, as I have left you there before, working for death.

we found out later what we left him to. Six big policemen answered the call, all white, and no child in them. they put the driver up against his car and beat the hell out of him. What did you kill that poor kid for? you motherfucking nigger. that's a fact.

Death only uses violence when there is any kind of resistance, the rest of the time a slow wear-down will do.

They took him to 4 different hospitals  
til they got a drunk test report to fit their  
case, and held him five days in jail  
without a phone call.  
how many lovers have we left.

there are as many contradictions to the game,  
as there are players.  
a woman is talking to death,  
though talk is cheap, and life takes a long time  
to make  
right. He got a cheesy lawyer  
who had him cop a plea, 15 to 20  
instead of life  
Did I say life?

the arrogant young man who thought he  
owned the bridge, and fell asleep on it  
he died laughing: that's a fact.  
the driver sits out his time  
off the street somewhere,  
does he have the most vacant of  
eyes, will he die laughing?

*Two*

They don't have to lynch the women anymore

death sits on my doorstep  
cleaning his revolver

death cripples my feet and sends me out  
to wait for the bus alone,  
then comes driving by in a taxi.

the woman on our block with 6 young children  
has the most vacant of eyes  
death sits in her bedroom, loading  
his revolver

they don't have to lynch the women  
very often anymore, although  
they used to--the lord and his men

went through the villages at night, beating and  
killing every woman caught  
outdoors.

the European witch trials took away  
the independent people; two different villages  
--after the trials were through that year--  
had left in them, each--  
one living woman:  
one.

What were those other women up to? had they  
run over someone? stopped on the wrong bridge?  
did they have teeth like any kind  
any kind of geese, or children  
in them?

*Three*

This woman is a lesbian be careful

In the military hospital where I worked  
as a nurse's aide, the walls of the halls  
were lined with howling women  
waiting to deliver  
or to have some parts removed.  
One of the big private rooms contained  
the general's wife, who needed  
a wart taken off her nose.  
we were instructed to give her special attention  
not because of her wart or her nose  
but because of her husband, the general.

as many women as men die, and that's a fact.

At work there was one friendly patient, already  
claimed, a young woman burnt apart with X-ray,  
she had long white tubes instead of openings;  
rectum, bladder, vagina--I combed her hair, it  
was my job, but she took care of me as if  
nobody's touch could spoil her.

ho ho death, ho death  
have you seen the twinkle in the dead woman's eye?



when you are a nurse's aide  
someone suddenly notices you  
and yells about the patient's bed,  
and tears the sheets apart so you  
can do it over, and over  
while the patient waits  
doubled over in her pain  
for you to make the bed again  
and no one ever looks at you,  
only at what you do not do

Here, general, hold this soldier's bed pan  
for a moment, hold it for a year--  
then we'll promote you to making his bed.  
we believe you wouldn't make such messes  
if you had to clean up after them.

that's a fantasy.  
this woman is a lesbian, be careful.

When I was arrested and being thrown out  
of the military, the order went out: don't anybody  
speak to this woman, and for those three  
long months, almost nobody did; the dayroom, when  
I entered it, fell silent til I had gone; they  
were afraid, they knew the wind would blow  
them over the rail, the cops would come,  
the water would run into their lungs.  
Everything I touched  
was spoiled. They were my lovers, those  
women, but nobody had taught us to swim.  
I drowned, I took 3 or 4 others down  
when I signed the confession of what we  
had done together.

No one will ever speak to me again.

I read this somewhere; I wasn't there:  
in WW II the US army had invented some floating  
amphibian tanks, and took them over to  
the coast of Europe to unload them,  
the landing ships all drawn up in a fleet,  
and everybody watching. Each tank had a  
crew of 6 and there were 25 tanks.

The first went down the landing planks  
and sank, the second, the third, the  
fourth, the fifth, the sixth went down  
and sank. They weren't supposed  
to sink, the engineers had  
made a mistake. The crews looked around  
wildly for the order to quit,  
but none came, and in the sight of  
thousands of men, each 6 crewmen  
saluted his officers, battened down  
his hatch in turn and drove into the  
sea, and drowned, until all 25 tanks  
were gone. did they have vacant  
eyes, die laughing, or what? what  
did they talk about, those men,  
as the water came in?

was the general their lover?

*Four*

A Mock Interrogation

Have you ever held hands with a woman?

Yes, many times--women about to deliver, women about to have  
breasts removed, wombs removed, miscarriages, women having  
epileptic fits, having asthma, cancer, women having breast  
bone marrow sucked out of them by nervous or indifferent  
interns, women with heart condition, who were vomiting, over-  
dosed, depressed, drunk, lonely to the point of extinction:  
women who had been run over, beaten up. deserted. starved.  
women who had been bitten by rats; and women who were  
happy, who were celebrating, who were dancing with me in  
large circles or alone, women who were climbing mountains  
or up and down walls, or trucks or roofs and needed a boost  
up, or I did; women who simply wanted to hold my hand because  
they liked me, some women who wanted to hold my hand because  
they liked me better than anyone.

These were many women?

Yes. Many.

What about kissing? Have you kissed any women?

I have kissed many women.

When was the first woman you kissed with serious feeling?

The first woman ever I kissed was Josie, who I had loved at such a distance for months. Josie was not only beautiful, she was tough and handsome too. Josie had black hair and white teeth and strong brown muscles. Then she dropped out of school unexplained. When she came back she came back for one day only, to finish the term, and there was a child in her. She was all shame, pain, and defiance. Her eyes were dark as the water under a bridge and no one would talk to her, they laughed and threw things at her. In the afternoon I walked across the front of the class and looked deep into Josie's eyes and I picked up her chin with my hand, because I loved her, because nothing like her trouble would ever happen to me, because I hated it that she was pregnant and unhappy, and an outcast. We were thirteen.

You didn't kiss her?

How does it feel to be thirteen and having a baby?

You didn't actually kiss her?

Not in fact.

You have kissed other women?

Yes, many, some of the finest women I know, I have kissed. women who were lonely, women I didn't know and didn't want to, but kissed because that was a way to say yes we are still alive and loveable, though separate, women who recognized a loneliness in me, women who were hurt, I confess to kissing the top of a 55 year old woman's head in the snow in Boston, who was hurt more deeply than I have ever been hurt, and I wanted her as a very few people have wanted me-- I wanted her and me to own and control and run the city we lived in, to staff the hospital I knew would mistreat her, to drive the transportation system that had betrayed her, to patrol the streets controlling the men who would murder or disfigure or disrupt us, not accidentally with machines, but on purpose, because we are not allowed out on the street alone--

Have you ever committed any indecent acts with women?

Yes, many. I am guilty of allowing suicidal women to die before my eyes or in my ears or under my hands because I thought I could do nothing, I am guilty of leaving a prostitute who held a knife to my friend's throat to keep us from leaving, because we would not sleep with her, we thought she was old and fat and ugly; I am guilty of not loving her who needed me; I regret all the women I have not slept with or comforted, who pulled themselves away from me for lack of something I had not the courage to fight for, for us, our life, our planet, our city, our meat and potatoes, our love. These are indecent acts, lacking courage, lacking a certain fire behind the eyes, which is the symbol, the raised fist, the sharing of resources, the resistance that tells death he will starve for lack of the fat of us, our extra. Yes I have committed acts of indecency with women and most of them were acts of omission. I regret them bitterly.

Five

Bless this day oh cat our house

"I was allowed to go  
3 places, growing up," she said--  
"3 places, no more.

there was a straight line from my house  
to school, a straight line from my house  
to church, a straight line from my house  
to the corner store."

her parents thought something might happen to her.  
but nothing ever did.

my lovers teeth are white geese flying above me  
my lovers muscles are rope ladders under my hands  
we are the river of life and the fat of the land  
death, do you tell me I cannot touch this woman?  
if we use each other up  
on each other  
that's a little bit less for you  
a little bit less for you, ho  
death, ho ho death.



Bless this day oh cat our house  
help me be not such a mouse  
death tells the woman to stay home  
and then breaks in the window.

I read this somewhere, I wasn't there:  
In feudal Europe, if a woman committed adultery  
her husband would sometimes tie her  
down, catch a mouse and trap it  
under a cup on her bare belly, until  
it gnawed itself out, now are you  
afraid of mice?

*Six*

Dressed as I am, a young man once called  
me names in Spanish

a woman who talks to death  
is a dirty traitor

inside a hamburger joint and  
dressed as I am, a young man once called me  
names in Spanish  
then he called me queer and slugged me.  
first I thought the ceiling had fallen down  
but there was the counterman making a ham  
sandwich, and there was I spread out on his  
counter.

For God's sake I said when  
I could talk, this guy is beating me up  
can't you call the police or something,  
can't you stop him? he looked up from  
working on his sandwich, which was my  
sandwich, I had ordered it. He liked  
the way I looked. "There's a pay phone  
right across the street" he said.

I couldn't listen to the Spanish language  
for weeks afterward, without feeling the  
most murderous of urges, the simple  
association of one thing to another,  
so damned simple.

The next day I went to the police station  
to become an outraged citizen  
Six big policemen stood in the hall,  
all white and dressed as they do  
they were well pleased with my story, pleased  
at what had gotten beat out of me, so  
I left them laughing, went home fast  
and locked my door.  
For several nights I fantasized the scene  
again, this time grabbing a chair  
and smashing it over the bastard's head,  
killing him. I called him a spic, and  
killed him. my face healed. his didn't.  
no child in me.

now when I remember I think:  
maybe he was Josie's baby.  
all the chickens come home to roost,  
all of them.

*Seven*

Death and disfiguration

One Christmas eve my lovers and I  
we left the bar, driving home slow  
there was a woman lying in the snow  
by the side of the road. She was wearing  
a bathrobe and no shoes, where were  
her shoes? she had turned the snow  
pink, under her feet. she was an Asian  
woman, didn't speak much English, but  
she said a taxi driver beat her up  
and raped her, throwing her out of his  
car.  
what on earth was she doing there  
on a street she helped to pay for  
but doesn't own?  
doesn't she know to stay home?

I am a pervert, therefore I've learned  
to keep my hands to myself in public

but I was so drunk that night,  
I actually did something loving  
I took her in my arms, this woman,  
until she could breathe right, and  
my friends who are perverts too  
they touched her too  
we all touched her.  
"You're going to be all right"  
we lied. She started to cry  
"I'm 55 years old" she said  
and that said everything.

Six big policemen answered the call  
no child in them.  
they seemed afraid to touch her,  
then grabbed her like a corpse and heaved her  
on their metal stretcher into the van,  
crashing and clumsy.  
She was more frightened than before.  
they were cold and bored.  
'don't leave me' she said.  
'she'll be all right' they said.  
we left, as we have left all of our lovers  
as all lovers leave all lovers  
much too soon to get the real loving done.

*Eight*

a mock interrogation

Why did you get into the cab with him, dressed as you are?

I wanted to go somewhere.

Did you know what the cab driver might do  
if you got into the cab with him?

I just wanted to go somewhere.

How many times did you  
get into the cab with him?

I don't remember.

If you don't remember, how do you know it happened to you?

*Nine*

Hey you death

ho and ho poor death  
our lovers teeth are white geese flying above us  
our lovers muscles are rope ladders under our hands  
even though no women yet go down to the sea in ships  
except in their dreams.

only the arrogant invent a quick and meaningful end  
for themselves, of their own choosing.  
everyone else knows how very slow it happens  
how the woman's existence bleeds out her years,  
how the child shoots up at ten and is arrested and old  
how the man carries a murderous shell within him  
and passes it on.

we are the fat of the land, and  
we all have our list of casualties

to my lovers I bequeath  
the rest of my life

I want nothing left of me for you, ho death  
except some fertilizer  
for the next batch of us  
who do not hold hands with you  
who do not embrace you  
who try not to work for you  
or sacrifice themselves or trust  
or believe you, ho ignorant  
death, how do you know  
we happened to you?

wherever our meat hangs on our own bones  
for our own use  
your pot is so empty  
death, ho death  
you shall be poor



---

# TOWARD A WOMAN VISION

by  
Laurel

## The Male Mirror

In the last decade women have moved further and faster than at any point in history away from the male definitions and institutions which have enslaved us. Many of us are elated with a sense of having broken out of prison--a prison whose walls had been all but invisible to us a few years ago.

But, after the most obvious bars of the patriarchal prison have been filed away, even after we are seemingly *free*, there remains only a patriarchal culture to be *free in*. I hardly know where to begin in describing that "culture" for it is at once the visible reality of the UGLINESS of most everything that is man-made and the extension of that ugliness into the landscape of the mind: philosophy, psychology, literature, visual art, to name a few. Even women who have been so fortunate as to have extracted themselves from their own personal prisons, whether they be the nuclear family, the church, marriage, male economic sanctions, etc., cannot be free except as Sartre would put it, "condemned to be free" in a male-created hell.

I think the volume of feminist analysis which has rolled off the presses in the last decade (and long before that, of course) has obviated

any necessity to list and describe here the institutions of the patriarchy. Rather, I want to concentrate on the subtler results of phallogentrism in male "culture" and to try to extract the male world-view, hold it up and ultimately expose it for the *nothing* that it is. The male sensibility which extends from and beyond their institutions is affecting us far more than we know. I think we'd be safe in saying that the institutions are something like the tip of the proverbial iceberg -- what we can't see so easily is by far the more dangerous element.

I'm not going to argue that it has *more effect* than all of the institutions of the male hierarchy, but that the *reach* of male-dominated "culture" is further. That is, even if we leave the men, never have kids, excommunicate the church, quit our jobs, drop out of school, and inherit enough money so we never have to endure the sight of a man again -- WE ARE STILL STUCK WITH MALE CULTURE UNTIL IT IS EXORCISED AND WE CREATE OUR OWN.

Even if we could dismiss the constant visual, aural, and olfactory assault of the patriarchal machine (not to mention the *real* physical exponents like rape and murder) we could not avoid the mental and spiritual pollution of a patriarchal culture. Even if we could tune out the plastic, neon, concrete environment, not notice the smog, not hear the constant drone of the freeways and the jets, not see the dead fishes and birds on the beaches, not hurt for the bent backs and pained faces of the ones on the bottom who are supporting those on the top, not hear the news of constant war, political, economic and ecological havoc, not read the labels on our food telling us the choice of poisons we have available to us, not see the demeaned position of women and racial minorities reflected everywhere--even if our eyes had a Midas touch to make all that men have created more tolerable; our ears programmed with sweet music to drown out the cock rock, the jackhammers, the gunshots in the night; and our nostrils filled with perfume to cover the scent of pollution -- WE STILL COULD NOT BE FREE OF PATRIARCHAL CULTURE.

Even if we never spoke to another man for the rest of our lives. Even if every male took a vow of silence and became invisible. There is enough of patriarchal culture to last until doomsday unless we expose it piece by piece, idea by idea, and replace it with our own.

The "culture" is bigger than men themselves. It is the centuries old accumulation of male misperception packaged as "human knowledge" in art, literature, philosophy, etc. which unfortunately is not all out there, institutionalized, and easy-to-see and conquer with legislation and child care centers. "Equal pay for equal work" has got to be the weakest battle cry ever heard in a war with such stakes as ours. That we should even think for a minute that this is a significant and all-encompassing goal is clear indication of the way the patriarchy is not out

there, but is instead the foggy spectacles through which we are viewing the world. Our sisters asked for the vote--we ask for equal pay, a bigger hunk of the American pie. So we can consume more of the shit men are turning off the assembly lines? So we can jet around for a ringside seat to watch the rape of our sister earth from coast to coast? From continent to continent? So we can save and assure our survival buying land for country retreats, communes, little getaway islands in the sun. And we laughed at our parents who freaked out and built fallout shelters in the back yard when everyone knew when IT came no little hole in the ground was going to make a bit of difference.

Just as with THE BOMB where nothing short of a complete solution, the dismantling of the entire international "defense" machine, is enough to insure that even one person will be alive tomorrow, so with the patriarchy we cannot just tackle the most visible institutions and "equalize" them. We cannot stop short of a thorough knowledge of the extensions of the patriarchy, how and why it works, and ultimately a dismantling of the entire machine. I think we have for too long dwelled solely on the visible institutions of the patriarchy to the exclusion of exploring its less visible extensions, the *Weltanschauung* which they have produced. We have neglected a thorough examination of Man's values (and lack of them) which he documents in literature, philosophy and the arts and we have been sucked into thinking that the "Human Condition" described therein is equally ours. It is time we take a closer look.

Oddly enough, Sartre, one of the loudest doomcriers of Culture, had this to say about it:

*Culture ... it's a product of man: he projects himself into it, he recognizes himself in it; that critical mirror alone offers him his image.*<sup>1</sup>

Djuna Barnes put essentially the same message in the form of a very pointed metaphor:

*No one will be much or little except in someone else's mind, so be careful of the minds you get into, and remember Lady Macbeth who had her mind in her hand. We can't all be as safe as that.*<sup>2</sup>

The point I'm making here is that the *interpretation* of all our experience is dependent on our cultural mirror. Anais Nin holds the writer ultimately responsible:

*The writer acts upon his environment by his selection of the material he wishes to highlight. He is, ultimately, responsible for our image of the world, and our relation to others.*<sup>3</sup>

Just as a woman looking in a mirror might find her undulant belly and ample ass embarrassingly ugly today, only a short hundred years ago she may have prided herself on matching up to the standard of beauty reflected in the art of the times. How we interpret our bodies, our experience--the very quality of our lives--depends on what is valued in the culture. In our case, the cultural mirror has been created largely by males. That males have controlled the definitions of art and philosophy--the touchstones of human values--cannot fail to effect women long after they have fought (and perhaps slipped out from under) the institutional pillars of the patriarchy unless we consciously exorcise them and replace them with our own developing VISION.

What is reflected in our cultural mirror? What are the touchstones of our age in philosophy and the arts? If a 22nd Century woman were able to visit our world via time machine, how would she describe the spirit of the age? What would be her overall impression?

If we may assume that experimental art and literature act as early warning signs, as prophetic mirrors of the culture at large--what would she make of, say, tomato soup can sculpture in the museums, concerts played by "Moog synthesizers" and composed by computers, or of a rock concert where the performance is capped off by the lead guitarist smashing his guitar as he jerks off into the audience?

If our lady visited the capitals of culture in this country in order to find the new, the experimental, she would find the museums overflowing with garbage can sculpture, blank canvases, and rotting fruit. The avant garde theatre might offer her some black comedy as the "actors" insult and/or assault her to raise her "involvement." At the movies she might find the bestseller of the season to be *Deep Throat*.

Should she tire of public amusements and settle in with the "best" books she would find that the age is very much under the sway still of the Despair and Absurdity *Zeitgeist* which is now almost a century old. She could not help noticing that the "Great Artists" (MEN) are describing a very unendearing world. In poetry, in literature, in philosophy she will be led to expect a life of frustration, meaninglessness, despair--NOTHINGNESS. Where there is not violence and degrading sex, there is a bleak absence--waiting for Godot, or the BOMB, for the fall of the government, or simply one's own death.

The list of those male writers and artists in this century with an essentially negative world view reads like a list of who's who in arts and letters. It would include the "Great" (male) prose writers like Joyce, Dreiser, Fitzgerald, Sartre, Camus, Genet, Henry Miller, Hemingway (some later works mitigate this), Mailer, Faulkner, Graham Greene (with some exceptions), Burroughs, Albee, Styron, Malamud, Salinger, Joseph Heller, John Hawkes, John Barth, Donald Barthelme, Alain Robbe-Grillet, Stanley Elkin, Thomas Pynchon, etc.



Anais Nin in *The Novel of the Future* explored the effects of a writer's negative vision:

Callousness in a writer creates the equivalent of cataracts in the eyes. It not only clouds or deforms his vision but may end in total blindness. Callousness is not operable. It breeds callousness.<sup>4</sup>

What makes us human is empathy, sympathy. The novels born of revulsion, repulsion, hatred are those I consider war novels. They encourage war among human beings, and, consequently, universal war.<sup>5</sup>

The cult of ugliness is distinct from the acceptance that there is ugliness, just as taking pleasure in cruelty is distinct from the acceptance that there is cruelty in the world. But an obsession with ugliness lies ultimately in the writer's vision of the world, and when the writer loses his perspective and balance, he adds to the ugliness.<sup>6</sup>

In poetry the negativity is even more pervasive as evidenced by the works of Eliot, Pound, Auden, Kenneth Patchen, John Berryman, Robert Creeley (with some mitigating exceptions), W.S. Merwin, Phillip Levine, James Wright, etc. Your average modern poetry anthology reads like a Doomsday Book.

Kenneth Patchen strikes me as one of the most defiantly and violently negative. This from *The Journal of Albion Moonlight*:

I am  
sick  
as a buggered pig  
with all this  
mess. I can't  
go on with the  
farce. "Quality"--  
I hope some  
smart fool tears  
this book apart  
and throws it  
in the toilet and  
then does his little  
function even as  
you and I<sup>7</sup>

Here the outward negativity has turned in on him ... but it is really the same thing. Inner and outer loathing are as inextricably united as a moebius strip. Another good example of the writer caught up in his own negative cultural mirror:

Man's heart is the rotten yolk of a black snake egg  
Corroding, as it is just born, in a pile of dead  
Horse dung.

I have no use for the human creature.

He subtly extracts pain awake in his own kind.

I am born one, out of an accidental lump of chemistry

I have no use<sup>8</sup>

James Wright

Ugly as this is, it doesn't even have the virtue of shock appeal since the Dadaists had already gone as far in this direction as it is possible to go. James Wright still, apparently, sees some worth in writing his poems--at least he is still publishing them. The Dadaists sought to destroy everything: the establishment, their audience, art, even Dada itself. As Louis Aragon put it in a manifesto read at the second Dada manifestation in 1920:

No more painters, no more writers, no more musicians, no more sculptors, no more religions, no more republicans, no more royalists, no more imperialists, no more anarchists, no more socialists, no more Bolsheviks, no more politicians, no more proletarians, no more democrats, no more armies, no more police, no more nations, no more of these idiocies, no more, no more, NOTHING, NOTHING, NOTHING.<sup>9</sup>

"All writing is garbage" proclaimed Artaud, the playwright.<sup>10</sup>

Jacques Vache was one of several Dadaists who acted on these nihilistic convictions. He had begun to view all life as black humor so that nothing had any more value than anything else. Violence, death, torture -- a great cosmic joke. This passage about Vache from *The Savage God* by A. Alvarez comes close to describing the ultimate possible male piggery perpetrated in the name of art:

"I object to being killed in the war," he had written from the front [in World War I], "...I shall die when I want to die, and then I shall die with somebody else. To die alone is boring; I should prefer to die with one of my best friends." He did precisely that. In 1919, when he was twenty-three years old, he took an overdose of opium; at the same time, he administered the same lethal dose to two friends who had come along merely for the trip and had no suicidal intentions. It was the supreme Dada gesture, the ultimate psychopathic joke: suicide and double murder.<sup>11</sup>

The tangible results of Dada were almost nil. In 1917, Marcel Duchamp presented as his sole work at the Exhibition of Independent Painters in



New York a signed urinal. If a Dadaist actually made something he took great pains to destroy it--or more cleverly yet, many of the sculptures of this time were designed so they would self-destruct.

We could, with tongue in cheek, at least credit them with humility. Humility has been one of the most notoriously lacking elements, it seems to me, in visual art since then. Following his masculine territorial imperative, the avant-garde male in sculpture and painting has in the last century had one thing in common: whatever his ugly contribution it is BIG. One can't avoid the towering, sprawling mass of it.

Tony Smith's junk metal monstrosities are a case in point and his work since the Twenties has been widely imitated. That these fellows actually sell these hulks of corroding iron and sheet metal is testimony to the whole Emperor's new clothes syndrome where anything if touted loudly enough as GREAT ART is accepted as such.

And of course in painting, there's the action painters like Jackson Pollock whose metaphor of spurting all over the canvas could not be clearer. That the resulting product could have been created by any itinerant ape is beside the point -- and that it is UGLY we are told is beside the point. The point is never to ask what the point is.

Then there's the whole pop-op phenomena with Warhol selling his tomato soup cans for as much as \$17,000, gigantic sexist cartoon murals, whole bowling alleys and service stations reproduced in the museums, etc. to truly insure that we never, not even in the art museums, get away from the perversity of the American supermarket culture. True, the boys are satirizing--but how many years of one's life must one spend proving that advertising and tomato soup cans are ugly?

The sad fact is that pop art is much more of a testament to the passivity of its creators than effective social criticism as Anais Nin has said:

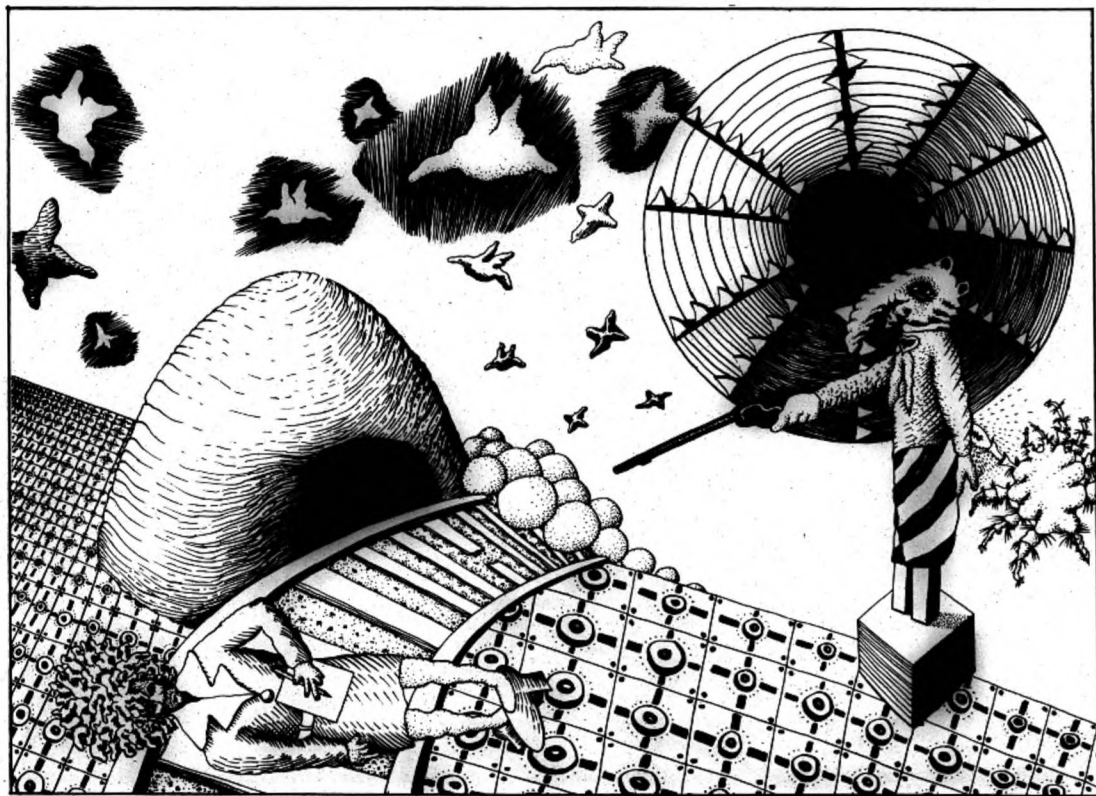
*When we decided to believe only what was visible, we lost the faculty for apprehending what might be. Out of such a distorted view of what is came the monstrosities of pop art. Accepting what is (a complete service station in a museum, Campbell's soup cartons and billboards in our living rooms) is an act of passivity, an act of resignation, of impotence, lack of invention and transformation, also an inability to discard what is and create what might be.... The artist has surrendered. The mad-man who went about tearing down the billboards for their ugliness was closer to being a hero than the pop artist. He might have become the hero-artist if he had redesigned them.<sup>12</sup>*

More recently, the galleries are filling up with the giant canvases of neo-realism with its concentration on tract houses, cars, ugly city-scapes, service stations, etc. Satire? No, they tell us that this is a serious



Wild Boars and Company

by Suzanne Freedman



Don't Let Him Get You Down

by Suzanne Freedman

exploration of things-as-they-are and for accuracy's sake many of them paint from a slide projected onto the canvas.

All this seems mild compared to the newest in male art. Last year Lucas Samaras took over a gallery and built a solid platform three or four feet above the floor. When the crowds came and strolled up the ramp into the empty room they would hear moanings and groanings underneath them as Samaras crawled about jerking off under their feet. This was dubbed "body art" and there are sure to be plenty of followers.

And there's Christo, the curtain-hanger who, in one of the grossest assertions of the phallic territorial imperative and alienation from nature ever, encased a canyon in a curtain of plastic which cost \$750,000 to hang. He spent 3/4 of a million dollars on this one project alone, and he's done quite a few others.

The ultimate male art hype is called *earth works*. Dennis Oppenheimer and a score of others have actually talked millionaires out of tons of money in order to tear up the desert. They hire bulldozers, make a few wiggly ditches, and then the millionaire can fly over the area in his private plane to look at his very own "work of art." There's a whole magazine called *Avalanche* devoted to such as this.

As long ago as 1967, Valerie Solanas had this to say about "Great Art":

*...the male "artist", being totally sexual, unable to relate to anything beyond his own physical sensations, having nothing to express beyond the insight that for the male life is meaningless and absurd, cannot be an artist. How can he who is not capable of life tell us what life is all about? A "male artist" is a contradiction in terms. A degenerate can only produce degenerate "art." The true artist is every self-confident, healthy female, and in a female society the only ART, the only Culture, will be conceited, kookie, funkies females grooving on each other and on everything else in the universe.*<sup>13</sup>

*Ugliness: Being totally sexual, incapable of cerebral or aesthetic responses, totally materialistic and greedy, the male, besides inflicting on the world "Great Art", has decorated his unlandscaped cities with ugly buildings (both inside and out), ugly decors, billboards, highways, cars, garbage trucks and, most notably, his own putrid self.*<sup>14</sup>

If our sister visiting with the time machine tried to sum it all up to her sisters in the 22nd Century upon her return, I think she could safely say that the touchstones of literature, art, and philosophy proclaim that this is the Age of Absurdity and Despair (which many, many historians and critics have already declared). With the perspective her time machine would afford her, she might see the turning point into this age along about



the end of the French Revolution or about the time of Whitman's death in America, or the end of the Age of Romanticism. It was about then that the cockiness over man's discovery that there was no God (or ordained social order) began to wear off. Man was free. Free to do what? The old sense of universal order had vanished and he had to make up the rules and the goals as he went along. If there was no god, no god-ordained social order, then he must look elsewhere.

At first there was a "cocky" kind of joy in the new god-defiance with the roustabout antics of the Fin d'Siecle boys and the Surrealists (in art and literature) which wound down eventually into a frantic quest for Meaning. Some tried to fuck their way into it, some sought it by joining up with THE CAUSE of whatever persuasion, and some simply stared at their own navels. But whenever the men really stopped for reflection (and of course few did) they were faced with the EMPTINESS. Man felt his "contingency." Cut off from the supreme license that the belief in the patriarchal god had once afforded him to act in His image in superiority over all nature's creatures, Man cast about here and there trying to justify his own paltry existence. And he felt ABSURD. Out of relation. Cut off.

Sartre wrote a cartload of books about it, but in this passage from his autobiography he lays out his own life as example:

*My retrospective illusions are all in pieces. Martyrdom, salvation, immortality: all are crumbling; the building is falling in ruins. I have caught the Holy Ghost in the cellars and flung him out of them. Atheism is a cruel, long-term business: I believe I have gone through it to the end. I see clearly, I am free from illusions ... for about ten years, I have been a man who is waking up, cured of a long, bitter-sweet madness, who cannot recall his old ways without laughing, and who no longer has any idea what to do with his life. I have become once again the traveller without a ticket ... 15*

Valerie Solanas with chilling accuracy put it this way:

*Most men, utterly cowardly, project their inherent weaknesses onto women, label them female weaknesses and believe themselves to have female strengths; most philosophers, not quite so cowardly, face the fact that male lacks exist in men, but still can't face the fact that they exist in men only. So they label the male condition the Human Condition, pose their nothingness problem, which horrifies them, as a philosophical dilemma, thereby giving stature to their animalism, grandiloquently label their nothingness their "Identity Problem", and proceed to prattle on pompously about the "Crisis of the Individual", the "Essence of Being", "Existence preceding Essence," "Existential Modes of Being", etc., etc. 16*

*... The male's inability to relate to anybody or anything makes his life pointless and meaningless (the ultimate male insight is that life is absurd) ... 17*

Though it is certainly true that Man can look out on the state of affairs he has created in the world and rightly proclaim it absurd, and although when he looks inward he may indeed be truthful in reporting Nothingness, the lie is in the acceptance that it must always be so. It would be possible to write of Ugliness and Despair in a way that would not perpetuate them, but the caricature that men resorted to (from a lack of connection with their own emotions, each other, and nature) has accelerated the plunge into meaninglessness. Caricature with its own logic destroys itself and those who create it.

Were this male vision of himself and the world not the prevailing one in our culture we could attempt to dismiss it. Unfortunately none of us are objectively outside its bounds. In the next section I want to show what I think has been the effect of this negative vision on a few women writers who have struggled with their reflection in the cultural mirror, and finally, in the last section, women's success in creating our own culture and a vision of hope and promise.

#### WOMEN WRITERS AND THE MALE MIRROR

All of the "culture" I've described so far has been male-created-- what about women, haven't we added to it, shouldn't we admit our share of the responsibility?

The truth thus far, as Anais Nin has said is that "men write about alienation and women about relationships." Our part in creating, or even polishing, the male mirror has been negligible. In "Great Art" women have been almost nonexistent. Not one female was among the ranks of the Dadaists and only a handful of women out of several hundred men were ever included as a Surrealist. Odds are you can't think of a female pop artist or "earth worker" either.

Of course, I think our nonparticipation (whether conscious or not) is highly commendable, and it means that we need not be impeded in the development of our own culture by the solipsistic nihilistic dregs of a dying cultural tradition.

There are, however, a few women writers who early on became free enough of certain patriarchal institutions so that they could write of more than (or with a more "objective" view of) relationships, marriage, nuclear family, etc. This *privilege* afforded them only the right to explore the impossibilities of the male value system and a speedy ticket to despair. Three cases which immediately come to mind are Susan Sontag,



Joan Didion, and Doris Lessing (though she is very different from the first two).

Susan Sontag moved into the ranks of seriously regarded art critics and philosophers when she was in her late twenties. In 1963 and 1967 she published *The Benefactor* and *Death Kit*, both of which had strong veins of feminism running through them, but more to the point, they were long testimonies to the resilience of the male mirror. The nightmare vision of amorality and gratuitous violence in Susan Sontag's two books was not mitigated by an alternate vision, not transposed. What we have is an addition to the UGLINESS, not a hope of changing it. Both of these novels really tucked in very cozily beside all the male documents of the Age of Despair and Anxiety.

In the last five years Susan Sontag has reexplored her terrain in the new light of the international women's movement and she has reassessed the values (or lack of them) she once had. She has become a very dynamic and articulate theoretician of women's culture and politics. (See her article in *The Partisan Review* Volume XL, Number 2)

Joan Didion has not made this transition, and even though she writes about women who are perfect examples of the need for feminist understanding, the major thrust of her work is once again the depiction of an amoral, meaningless existence. Really, of course, we'd be hard put to find an argument with her view of the man-made world as a wreck. It is only that she can't see anything else. In *Slouching Toward Bethlehem*, a book of essays so named for the Yeats poem describing the dissolution of all values that he foresaw, Joan Didion tells us that she has been unable to write for long stretches of time because of the "conviction that writing was an irrelevant act."<sup>18</sup>

Joan Didion does not seem aware of her repetition of the Dadaist sentiment, but somehow seems to think that this nightmare vision of modern life in Los Angeles is peculiarly her own. She primarily talks about amorality and the effect of a loss of values:

*There has always been an amoral vacuum out there just beyond the eye's range, and making promises matter against that vacuum has never been easy for anyone. Making anything at all matter has never been easy.*

*I have trouble maintaining the basic notion that keeping promises matters in a world where everything I was taught seems beside the point. The point itself seems increasingly obscure....<sup>19</sup>*

The vocabulary of Joan Didion's work is an old saw retuned. The grand finale of *Play It As It Lays*, the quintessential enlightenment following the sturm and drang of failed relationship and suicide is

this:

*One thing in my defense, not that it matters: I know something Carter never knew, or Helene or maybe you. I know what "nothing" means, and keep on playing.*

*Why, BZ would say.*

*Why not, I say.<sup>20</sup>*

Joan Didion has lost (or never had) faith in anyone it seems -- not in others, not in herself, and she is careful to warn us away from misplacing our faith in her: "One last thing to remember: writers are always selling somebody out," she tells us in her introduction to *Slouching Toward Bethlehem*. Her much discussed article on "what's wrong with the women's movement" in the *New York Times Review of Books* seems comical in light of this statement.

Margaret Atwood, like Joan Didion, is loathe to make an official connection between the women's movement and her work, but she has very definitely profited from it as an alternate vision to the bleak alienation and despair which is what her main character in *Surfacing* must surface from. Near the end of the novel the main character-narrator sums up the illumination of the book:

*The word games, the winning and losing games are finished; at the moment there are no others but they will have to be invented, withdrawing is no longer possible and the alternative is death.<sup>21</sup>*

That new ways will have to be invented and that this is possible is, after all, the moving force behind the women's movement. Feminists are not blind to the seemingly hopeless mess men have made of things -- we are not saccharine-hearted easy-answer optimists, but most of us believe that change is possible and that, in fact, without the demolition of the patriarchal non-values and culture it may just be the end of life on this planet. So what have we got to lose?

(As F. Scott Fitzgerald said, in an unusual moment of revelatory power during a nervous breakdown, the test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time. As his example he noted the capacity "to see that things are hopeless and yet be determined to make them otherwise."<sup>22</sup>)

Doris Lessing has always been one of the writers most important to me and probably the most read contemporary woman writer in the world. Many of us have looked to her almost as a sibyl who can foresee the course of women. Doris Lessing, however, does not believe that women have the power to change what 3000 years of patriarchy have wrought. In the introduction to her new English edition of *The Golden Notebook* she says that she "of course" supports the women's movement but:

I don't think Women's Liberation will change much -- not because there is anything wrong with their [sic] aims, but because it is already clear that the whole world is being shaken into a new pattern by the cataclysms we are living through: probably by the time we get through, if we get through at all, the aims of Women's Liberation will look very small and quaint. 23

Is it possible that she, too, will be overwhelmed by the male mirror and stand horror-struck before it unable to do more than confirm and perpetuate its images? Is it possible that Doris Lessing, the woman who in fiction, at least, has drawn probably the fullest portraits ever of the inner life of Woman, does not see that women's liberation may be the only way through?

This kind of millennial sky-is-falling talk is not a scare tactic to increase feminists' sense of mission. Even Buckminster Fuller suggested on a tv show in 1968 that the last hope for mankind [sic] might be in "restoring women to their age-old leadership and leaving men to their gadgetry and games."24 As Elizabeth Gould Davis goes on to say in *The First Sex*:

*The ages of masculism are now drawing to a close. Their dying days are lit up by a final flare of universal violence and despair such as the world has seldom before seen....Any and all social reforms superimposed upon our sick civilization can be no more effective than a bandage on a gaping and putrefying wound....Only the overthrow of the three-thousand-year-old beast of masculist materialism will save the race.* 25

Doris Lessing's sense of urgency is no less than this . . . and it may be this excruciating sense of urgency which in the final analysis undermines her faith in the human power to change. She has come closer, I think, than any woman writer to fully understanding what must be changed, only to retreat. Lessing's characters in all of her recent fiction have exemplified her essential lack of hope. Anna in *The Golden Notebook*, Charles Watkins in *Briefing for a Descent into Hell*, Martha in *The Four-Gated City*, and Kate Brown in *The Summer Before the Dark* all depart radically from societal norms and values in a search for themselves which takes every one of them to the brink of total madness -- and then they return to take up their lives where they left off. The message seems to be that these flights into freedom and increased consciousness are doomed from the start. Society being what it is, a truly sentient being can, at best, take only temporary leave.

I think Doris Lessing has missed one crucial element -- the necessity of support. Each of her characters essentially goes it alone (with the exception of Martha and Linda). Without confirmation of their perceptions

with anyone else who shares them, it's no wonder that her characters are driven back into the fold. What if Linda and Martha and Anna and Kate had all spent some time together? What if they were a consciousness raising group? Wouldn't the odds have been better that Kate wouldn't have gone creeping back into a stifling marriage, or that Martha wouldn't have had to take a completely ridiculous job as a marriage counselor? What if Lessing had provided a lesbian alternative to the oppressive sexual relationships with men?

And too, of course, another problem is that Doris Lessing's analysis stops short of a real picture of the phallogocentric value system. In many ways she has bought the "human nature" label without inspecting to see who is meant. The male mirror, once again, is taken to be the "objective" truth.

Although, in fact, the world is in a very sorry state, we can no longer withdraw as Margaret Atwood says, "new ways must be invented, the alternative is death." Smashing the male mirror, inventing these new ways and creating a womanvision of our own is not just possible -- it is essential. The earth will not continue to be pillaged and raped by men. Her statement is clear, as clear as our statement to men -- NO MORE! It is no coincidence that acute ecological concern and the push for women's liberation developed simultaneously in the last decade -- they are inextricably connected. The earth's revenge may very well be one of our strongest weapons in smashing the institutions of the patriarchy, for when there is no oil, no gas, to run the monolith and no secretary to run the office; when the minerals which the U.S. has been using at the rate of 30% of total world usage each year run out--and the housewife at home runs out too-- things are going to come unglued! Watergate will look like upset the fruit basket by comparison! In short, there is hope of rapid change, and many women are awakening to this.

In the next section I'll move on to discussing this awakening and the creation of a female vision and culture.

## SURFACING

The last decade has marked a turning point in the history of women and of our sister, the earth -- perhaps the point of no return. There is no more time for waiting, withdrawing, remaining underground. With agreement far beyond coincidence, women writers are spinning out the vision of our resurrection like latter-day sibyls. In this section we'll hear from just three of them: Robin Morgan, Mary Daly and Adrienne Rich. Each, in her own way, is writing out of a vision-- a womanvision-- they and many women share -- of the awakening of women



and the salvaging of the earth. Rather than trying to skip across all that women-identified-women are doing to create our own VISION in visual arts, history, philosophy, medicine, performing arts, science, psychology, music, etc. and doing justice to none, I'm going to focus on these three writers in hopes that they will convey the spirit of all our awakenings. All three have come to female consciousness in the course of their creative work, so their journeys from underground read like maps of the labyrinthian course of any woman who would arise.

In the passages which follow, all echo the theme NO MORE:

*I suddenly see the world  
as no longer viable: 26*

*A man's world. But finished.  
They themselves have sold it to the machines.  
I walk the unconscious forest,  
a woman dressed in old army fatigues  
that have shrunk to fit her, I am lost  
at moments, I feel dazed  
by the sun pawing between the trees,  
cold in the bog and lichen of the thicket  
Nothing will save this. I am alone,  
kicking the last rotting logs  
with their strange smell of life, not death,  
wondering what on earth it all might have become.<sup>27</sup>*

Adrienne Rich

*... all of us are underground.  
Each sister wearing masks of Revlonclairplaytex  
to survive.  
Each sister faking orgasm under the System's very concrete bulk  
at night  
to survive.*

*Our smiles and glances,  
the ways we walk, sit, laugh, the games we must play  
with men and even oh my Ancient Mother God the games  
we must play among ourselves--these are the ways we pass  
unnoticed, by the Conquerors. <sup>28</sup>*

*... thousands of years in hiding, and only now  
beginning to surface. Ready.*

*...Our sabotage has ranged from witches' research*

*into herbal poisons to secretaries' spilling coffee on the files  
to housewives' passive resistance  
in front of their soap opera screens  
to housemaids' accidentally breaking china  
to mothers' teaching their children to love them  
a little bit better than their fathers. And more.  
Our rebellions, like the Turkish harem revolts,  
have been (as was Nat Turner's) frequent, brave,  
isolated one from the other, bloody--and buried,  
both in reality and in the history books.  
Each time we went into the exile of our women's lives again,  
changed our faces and bodies and voices (that's called Fashion),  
and passed.  
Each time we went back to whispering and waiting.  
Each time social change broke across men, we called out,  
only to get back each time a reply*

*rape, beatings, murder, desertion, ridicule, or loving concern*

*that, in essence, women should be seen and not heard.  
At last, when the man has all but destroyed Our species,  
Our sister earth, Our children that we made  
in our own holy bodies,  
at last we are beginning to be shrill as banshees  
and to act.*

*To be heard and not seen?  
There is an ancient Chinese proverb, long long before  
Mao's Quotations, that says*

*A man should be careful not to arouse the anger of a woman,  
for he has to sleep sometime--and with both eyes closed. 29*

Robin Morgan

*As aliens in a man's world who are now rising up to name--that is, to  
create--our own world, women are beginning to recognize that the value  
system that has been thrust upon us by the various cultural institu-  
tions of patriarchy has amounted to a kind of gang rape of minds as  
well as bodies. 30*

*This Great Refusal of rapism clearly means refusal to rape earth, air,  
fire, water, that is refusal to objectify and abuse their power. 31*

*...the cosmic covenant of sisterhood has the potential to transform  
the extraordinary relation of the poet to nature into ordinary and  
"normal" relation, changing our environment from a culture of rapism*



to a culture of reciprocity with the beauty of the earth, the other planets, the stars. 32  
Mary Daly

## COURAGE

"Excuses for not moving are myriad" Robin Morgan warns in *Monster*. Even when we've begun to awaken, when we can no longer deny the urgency of acting, it still calls for a leap of faith to leave all that we have known and plunge into an uncreated future. We must expect to be continually tested: some of us will become disheartened and withdraw, some of us will fall victim to tokenism, some will settle too early and jump on some human liberation bandwagon or try once again for that evasive individual solution in "personal growth," and some will mistakenly turn our rage against each other. And as men realize the import of our secession, we must expect repression to increase on every front -- both in the visible and the invisible institutions of the patriarchy. What is called for is a degree of courage few of us ever thought we had and are only now discovering in the course of creating and acting as Mary Daly says in *Beyond God the Father*:

...the ethic emerging in the women's movement is...one whose dominant theme is existential courage. This is the courage to see and to be in the face of the nameless anxieties that surface when a woman begins to see through the masks of sexist society and to confront the horrifying fact of her own alienation from her authentic self. 33

Those who are alienated from their own deepest identity do receive a kind of security in return for accepting very limited and undifferentiated identities. The woman who single-mindedly accepts the role of "housewife," for example, may to some extent avoid the experience of nothingness but she also avoids a fuller participation in being, which would be her only real security and source of community. Submerged in such a role, she cannot achieve a breakthrough to creativity. Many strong women are worn out in the struggle to break out of these limits before reaching the higher levels of intellectual discovery or of creativity.

The beginning of a breakthrough means a realization that there is an existential conflict between the self and structures that have given such crippling security. This requires confronting the shock of nonbeing with the courage to be. It means facing the nameless anxieties of fate, which become concretized in loss of jobs, friends, social approval, health, and even life itself. Also involved is anxiety

of guilt over refusing to do what society demands, a guilt which can hold one in its grip long after it has been recognized as false. Finally, there is the anxiety of meaninglessness, which can be overwhelming at times when the old simple meanings, role definitions, and life expectations have been rooted out and rejected openly and one emerges into a world without models.

This confrontation with the anxiety of nonbeing is revelatory, making possible the relativization of structures that are seen as human products, and therefore not absolute and ultimate. It drives consciousness beyond fixation upon "things as they are." Courage to be is the key to the revelatory power of the feminist revolution. 34

...Excuses for moving, on the other hand, are singular:  
it is fear phoenix in paranoia;  
it is despair sharpening itself toward boredom;  
it is activity in the process of discovering energy. 35  
Robin Morgan

Nothing can be done  
but by inches. I write out my life  
hour by hour, word by word  
gazing into the anger of old women on the bus  
numbering the striations  
of air inside the ice cube  
imagining the existence  
of something uncreated  
this poem  
our lives 36  
Adrienne Rich

...yet never have we been closer to the truth  
of the lies we were living, listen to me:  
the faithfulness I can imagine would be a weed  
flowering in tar, a blue energy piercing  
the massed atoms of a bedrock disbelief. 37  
Adrienne Rich

We may become confused, lonely, despairing, or mad, but we cannot really "forget." This is because our revolution means life against death. It is not "losing oneself" for a cause, but living for oneself and therefore also living a cause. 38  
Mary Daly

The first time I met Robin Morgan, I asked her how she could be both a poet and a revolutionary feminist activist. How could the woman who wrote the poems in *Monster* be the same woman who travels from coast to coast spreading the revolution. She smiled. "It's the same thing," she said.

In many ways, I think the overcoming of the dichotomies they taught us in English class (Man vs. Nature, Man vs. Society, Man vs. God, Man vs. Himself) and further, realizing the unity between art and life, individual freedom and social interaction, has been and is one of the most revolutionary outcomes of the women's movement. We have not imitated the structure of any group in history who has banded together for "a cause": rather we have talked in small groups, come to consensus agreements, and discouraged any action for "the cause" which does not come from personal experience and conviction. Our scrupulous attention to means, not ends, our continual awareness of process not product, and our rejection of the objectification of each other, children, classes, races, and the earth is developing into a most sensitive ethic -- one characterized by synergy.

By this I mean our understanding that women need not be encouraged to fit some ideal of WOMAN or REVOLUTIONARY FEMINIST but rather come to consciousness about where they are and act from their center and the women's movement cannot help but grow. Our faith is that the combined actions of women who are really in touch with themselves and each other cannot help but contribute to the welfare of their sisters. We who have depended on small groups (and their larger organic outgrowths) for the growth of the women's movement have evidenced an immense unspoken faith in the underground springs of feminist consciousness. This faith and our ability to hold in our minds what we've always been taught as opposites and see them as the same thing-- taken together, this is the start of a revolutionary new value system -- not a female mirror, but a female process ethic.

It is not without its pitfalls like any other. Along the way to the feminist revolution women will be tempted by tokenism, by the security of the old order, by the urge to escape confrontation, etc. My belief, however, is that no matter how many side roads a woman takes, once she has tapped her own female consciousness, she cannot turn back -- "the alternative is death."

For the first time in recorded history a mass movement demands no diminishment of self for the good of the mass. As Mary Daly says:

*I am suggesting that the vision of human becoming as a process of integration and transformation, as this vision is emerging in the women's revolution, potentially includes both the individualistic ontological dimension of depth and revolutionary participation in*

*history. It does this precisely because it strikes at the externalized structures and internalized images of patriarchy that have cut us off from realizing psychic wholeness in ourselves and consequently have cut down our capacity for genuine participation in history.*

*I suggest that such courage makes creative, communal, revolutionary hope possible to the extent that the courage is expressed in confrontation with earthly powers and principalities that embody non-being in our patriarchal culture. It is this dimension of confrontation that makes courage give rise to creative hope. 39*

## HOPE

That women in the last decade have replaced a number of previously patriarchal institutions with our own cannot be denied. Focusing first on a life support system, women have created an incredible national network of communication, education, health care, child care, rape assistance, legal assistance, etc. See *The New Woman's Survival Catalogue* (reviewed on p. 49, this issue) for the overwhelming picture of the alternate system we have created already (or look back at the resource directory from the last issue of *Amazon Quarterly*).

That we are also, concurrently, creating a female VISION, a new and ever-expanding value system, to replace the nonvalues of the phallogocentric culture is the dream we are all helping to come true. Not that we will replace the male mirror with a female one, but that we are developing an ethic of organic process and change. It is a vision some of us are willing to die for -- that some of us will die for. In order to bring it into being the back of the patriarchy must be broken, an old order must crumble, and we must leap out from all that we have known as secure and "reasonable" into the uncreated future of the species. It will be an ongoing struggle in each of us to birth this vision. We will doubt, lose hope, despair, yet we cannot turn back.

In the Sixties we almost always spoke of youth and culture in one breath -- the youth-culture-- but we will see that the developing woman-culture's visionary challenge to the dominant culture will be far more extensive, as Mary Daly says:

*...The becoming of women in sisterhood is the countercultural phenomenon par excellence which can indicate the future course of human spiritual evolution... Women are not merely "rethinking" philosophy and theology but are participating in new creation. The process implies beautiful, self-actualizing anger, love, and hope. 40*



The creation of female culture is as pervasive a process as we can imagine, for it is participation in a VISION which is continually unfolding anew in everything from our talks with friends, to meat boycotts, to taking over storefronts for child care centers, to making love with a sister. It is revelatory, undefinable, except as a process of change. Women's culture is all of us exorcising, naming, creating toward the vision of harmony with ourselves, each other, and our sister earth. In the last ten years our having come faster and closer than ever before in the history of the patriarchy to overturning its power and creating our own is cause for exhilarant hope -- wild, contagious, unconquerable, crazy HOPE! -- a hope that grows larger every day -- a hope that so far overshadows male snivelling about Alienation and Despair and Nothingness as to allow us the virtue once we have power over our own lives and environment, of taking pity and stopping short of demolishing the poor creatures completely. I have some hope that someday we can and will drag men kicking and screaming into consciousness as Robin Morgan says:

*I hate not men but what it is men do in this culture, or how the system of sexism, power dominance, and competition is the enemy--not people, but how men, still, created that system and preserve it and reap concrete benefits from it. Words and rhetoric that merely gush from my arteries when grazed by the razoredge of humanistic love. Enough. I will say, however, that you, men, will have to be freed, as well, though we women may have to kick and kill you into freedom since most of you will embrace death quite gladly rather than give up your power to hold power.*<sup>41</sup>

When the phallogocentric system has been undermined, when the male mirror lies buried in mounds like the shards of a long lost civilization, then in full humanhood we will be able to reach out to brothers too. For now my vision is a womanvision, my art and action women culture, my love for women alone.

And when I need it, I think of that weed that Adrienne describes in her poem (which I'll quote again in closing). In the course of writing all this, I heard Judy Grahn read aloud one night, "A Woman is Talking to Death," the extraordinary poem we've opened this issue of *Amazon Quarterly* with, and I saw a small blue flower not long after that growing up through the very freeway she describes. The hope, the winning of life over death, despair and meaninglessness is everywhere I look now -- like talismen of the faith in WOMANVISION:

*...never have we been closer to the truth of the lies we were living, listen to me: the faithfulness I can imagine would be a weed flowering in tar, a blue energy piercing the massed atoms of a bedrock disbelief.* 42

#### NOTES

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6. *Ibid.*, p. 165.
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12. Anais Nin, *op. cit.*, p. 174.
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30. Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), p. 9.
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35. Robin Morgan, "Excuses for Not Moving," *op. cit.*, p. 80.
36. Adrienne Rich, "Incipience," *op. cit.*, p. 11.
37. Adrienne Rich, "When We Dead Awaken," *op. cit.*, p. 6.
38. Mary Daly, *op. cit.*, p. 144.
39. *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
41. Robin Morgan, "Monster," *op. cit.*, p. 83.
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 include your old address, and note whether your sub. is a plain wrapper one).

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from "Japanese Notebooks"

Ellen Bass

Barbara came to Japan with her husband Bill and their child, Lance, to learn macrobiotic cooking. Two years later, she's waiting for a ticket home to Minnesota.

In between she gave birth to two babies. Bill read several books before the first and insisted he knew how. But the baby died. Now, the children have bronchitis; she has asthma; Bill studies Akido and says her cooking's still not right.

When Beverly and I arrive with a watermelon and a yellow gladiola, Barbara hands the flower back, saying, "You arrange it. You're good at that."

I'm sick of all you Japanese women,  
 obeying your husbands,  
 indulging your sons.  
 You're a lousy example.  
 I'm sick of all you American women,  
 trying to be like them,  
 feminine and yin,  
 You're making a mistake.  
 Macrobiotics, you're a no-good teacher.  
 Women, do you know  
 what the qualities of yin really are?

Japan's a nice place and all that,  
 but it's not for us.  
 You're an oaf if you laugh open-mouth.  
 You're a dyke if you take big steps.  
 You're a very bad girl, if you're not Japanese.

Go home Barbara,  
 leave the raw fish and the Tokyo smog,  
 the hot water heater that's not paid off,  
 your husband, his Akido, astrology, and acupuncture.

Go back to Minnesota and toast an English muffin,  
 drive a cab, eat in restaurants,  
 do the turkey trot;  
 dig for sand crabs with your babies,  
 kiss your mother, run for mayor.

You arrange it.

---

# *the Cook and the Carpenter*

A TASTE FROM THE NOVEL BY THE CARPENTER

(turn page for review)

At five o'clock the carpenter found the cook on the back porch. Na was playing a game of chess with a child named Nicky, a skinny child with eyes so bright they looked wet and a pointed face like an elf--the cook's second child, the one na had called a son of a bitch.

Nicky looked up and grinned at the carpenter. "I always win," na said.

The carpenter's own children, now almost grown, had been raised mostly by others. "Are you that good?"

"I'm the best!"

The carpenter waited until the game was over.

"I won, I won!" Nicky threw the words at the carpenter's face like the peas of yesterday. "I told you I always win!" Na ran into the yard to tell the other children.

"Does na always win?" The carpenter tried to remove the disapproval from nan voice.

"Na can't bear to lose," the cook explained to the disapproval nevertheless. "I know because once I won and na cried and screamed for an hour."

"Shouldn't na learn that na can't always win?"

"I don't know. I learned that the price of my winning was to deal with a tantrum for an hour."

"But the older children--do they treat na like that?"

"Well, at first they beat na, they would win of course. But then when na cried they didn't do it again. They learned not to."

"So Nicky is learning to cry to get nan own way."

"Na is learning that if something upsets you so much that you have to cry and you let your friend know that, the friend will be able to understand and comfort you. Na is learning to communicate."

The carpenter was polarized into silence and felt one-directional and simple as an adult; the cook was child, knew child, created naself the

---

mind which the child did not know it had.

Two years ago na had seen the cook at a school fair in New York City and that first impression, like a footprint on the mind, remained over the carpenter's eyes as a frame through which all subsequent encounters with the cook were seen.

At the fair was a "night club"--the science room decorated with an astronaut motif and adult alcohol--and the carpenter had retreated there to recover from the dual torment of being a parent and social conversation. The group at the table next to na dominated the room--their laughter defined laughter and rendered tin the noise and vague touchings at other tables. Dominating the table itself, carrying its rhythm, was the cook.

At first the carpenter saw only wild dark hair and the kind of arresting face rarely seen except on a baby animal, which unlike the baby animal's moved and shifted through so many circles of joy that the carpenter felt kaleidoscopically hypnotized. Na sat and stared, cold and blond as if na wore the armor of the northern church.

Suddenly the cook stood up and began moving to the tame music of the science room as if na were on a mountain. The rest of the parents turned to watch and the hired combo--three father-like figures--limped their instruments, watched and picked up then with a new rhythm being conducted by the dancer.

It was a dance of the body in moonlight, awkward sweeping into a leap of grace, heaviness failing to soar turning into a spin of air and back to earth: a dance that said, I the dancer deny that I am dancing do not laugh my body is struggling to evaporate. The carpenter's mind detached itself and broke free to be swayed and tossed as it floated over the dancer.

Flushed and abruptly finished, the cook sat down and looked suddenly like a forty-year-old inhabitant of New York, cynic repudiating the gypsy.

The image that remained in the carpenter's mind, although fixed in detail, was principally one of motion as if the skin itself were fluid and the whole so unstable that the eye had to catch it like the pattern of a cloud. The carpenter's own face--chiselled, patrician, frozen in middle-age--stared back from any mirror like a fact.

Suddenly now under the wide outgoing Texas sky at the immense hour of five-fifteen, the carpenter felt something rustle and threaten to explode inside na; it was the urge to throw naself, the fact, into the maelstrom of the cook's heaving ocean and bob there, in the most extended position possible for a fact, until na was shredded loose.

Na reached for the cook and hugged, holding gently as a delicately-balanced beach ball, holding the need to touch, dizzy and barely breathing with nan eyes closed into that dark spray of hair. Na felt the cook's hand press against the back of nan head. The carpenter said, at last, after two years, "I love you."

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# NEW INK

REVIEWS BY ANN AND GINA

Amazon Quarterly wishes to congratulate Daughters, Inc., publishers of books by women, on their first crop. Their books (all reviewed here) can be ordered directly from: Daughters, Inc., Plainfield, VT 05667. Please add 35¢ per title (up to \$1.) for postage and handling.

Feminist Press books may be ordered directly from them: The Feminist Press, 10920 Battersea Ln., Columbia, MD 21044. Please include 40¢ extra for first two books, and 10¢ for each additional book.

All the books reviewed in AQ, and any other books by women, can be ordered from FIRST THINGS FIRST, fe-mail order house. Send the titles (and author, publisher, and price info.) you want, along with your check (or cash or money order) to First Things First, 23 Seventh St. SE, Washington, DC 20003. Please add postage and handling fee of 10% of the total price (minimum 35¢ and maximum 75¢ fee per mailing). Free catalog available too.

## THE COOK AND THE CARPENTER

a novel by the carpenter

Daughters, Inc., Plainfield, VT 05667 (paper) \$3. 180 pp.

I hope the carpenter won't mind my giving away nan secret of neuter pronouns and ambiguous (or is it) gender--but I must say that here for the first time is a lesbian feminist novel that delves into every vital issue of the women's movement on all levels from political theory to bed partners to personal growth (and the delving is done with empathy for all viewpoints, with rich imagination, and above all with a finely tuned sense of *humour*)--AND the novel emerges from all this delving as *more than* an exploration of the women's movement (worthy objective though that may be)--it emerges as a fine work of art, art being that irrational creative process whereby 1+1=3.

Many of you will find *The Cook and the Carpenter* difficult reading at first (I assume this because it was so for me) because of the carpenter's use of a neuter pronoun. A prefatory statement says "Since the differences between men and women are so obvious to all, so impossible to confuse whether we are speaking of learned behavior or inherent characteristics,

ordinary conversation or furious passion, work or intimate relationships, the author understands that it is no longer necessary to distinguish between men and women in this novel. I have therefore used one pronoun for both, trusting the reader to know which is which." This may sound gimmicky. It may even seem to be the main point of the novel, if you stop reading after the first few pages. I urge you to read on--the "na" is an obvious device, but it does make a valuable point, and in any case the book by no means depends on it for its strength.

*The Cook and the Carpenter's* plot involves a commune in Texas, newly settled by Eastern city-dwellers intent on changing old patterns in their lives. Exploration of those changes--in family structures, children's roles, race relations, attitudes about class differences, sexuality, political tactics and many more issues too subtle or complicated to classify--makes the substance of the book, all spun in rich and surprising language.

My one grievance is that the story slithers away instead of ending in a fashion I'm used to. Even though I realize that real stories *don't* really end, there's an emotional satisfaction in a well-planned ending that I miss in this book.

Faults considered, *The Cook and the Carpenter* is for me the most encouraging sign to appear in a long while that a distinct female sensibility (or women's culture--this amorphous process has many names) is emerging from the slowly crumbling rubble of male "culture"--a sensibility that moves rather than names, that includes all experience and makes relationship rather than isolation the mode for understanding the world.

## EARLY LOSSES

Pat Burch

Daughters, Inc. (paper) \$3. 211 pp.

This novel follows Freda Zax, a working-class Philadelphia teenager, and her mother, also named Freda, through adolescent and college years as young Freda loses weight, religion, virginity, unquestioning belief in her mother, etc. As historical or biographical information it all comes across as true and valuable--the language throughout the book, though, is so simple and one-directional that I found it hard to keep plodding through. I wouldn't recommend *Early Losses* as art or as any but the simplest entertainment.

## THE TREASURE

Selma Lagerlof

Daughters, Inc. (paper) \$3. 159 pp.

This is a reprint of the very formal, very feminist fable that won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1909 and has been out of print ever since.



### RUBYFRUIT JUNGLE

Rita Mae Brown

Daughters, Inc. (paper) \$3. 217 pp.

Many of you have been eager to pounce on this book ever since reading excerpts in AQ (Vol.1 #2)--I'm glad to be able to say Here 'tis. Rita Mae has managed to create from the events of her life a biting and funny tale of growing up lesbian and poor in the South. *Rubyfruit Jungle* is an important step in the transition from traditional "fiction" (where the myth of impersonal storytelling operates in the same way as the myth of "objectivity" in the sciences) to a literature that validates the experiences of our lives. The hazard in this process that weakens the impact of *Rubyfruit Jungle* is that as the events get closer to Rita Mae's present, more unresolved conflicts appear in her life and of course in the book. Rita Mae manages very well the difficult task of finishing the book with few loose dilemmas and a satisfying conclusion; what she doesn't manage as well is keeping her humorous tone when the events get closer to the present and therefore more emotionally charged.

### NERVES

Blanche M. Boyd

Daughters, Inc. (paper) \$3. 169 pp.

This novel tells two distinct stories, which though woven together and dependent on each other, reach very different conclusions. One is a painfully classic story of middle-class women in their disintegrating marriages, women desperately trying to make themselves into whole people, and in the end failing. Along the way to inevitable failure Blanche Boyd gives the clearest account I've read of how women come to experience pain as pleasure in heterosexual relationships. The other story in *Nerves* revolves around the teen-age daughter of one unhappy wife--and it is her intensity and naive vision that bring the book into focus and give it a hope and positive purpose rarely found in this "fed-up-housewife" genre of fiction.

### THESE DAYS

Lee Lally

Some of Us Press, 4110 Emery Pl. N.W., Washington, DC 20016 (paper) \$1.  
Poems that begin from a lesbian feminist perspective--very uneven quality but some sincere and moving illuminations here and there.

### WE ARE ALL LESBIANS -- a Poetry Anthology

Violet Press, Box 398, New York, NY 10009 (paper) \$2.

Good, mediocre (and worse) poetry confused by a sloppy format and aesthetically crude drawings. The efforts of so many women deserve a more careful presentation.

### THE WOMAN'S EYE

Edited and with an introduction by Anne Tucker

Alfred A. Knopf (paper) \$6.95 170 pp.

Selected photographs from the work of ten 20th century American women: Gertrude Kasebier, Frances Benjamin Johnston, Margaret Bourke-White, Dorothea Lange, Berenice Abbott, Barbara Morgan, Diane Arbus, Alisa Wells, Judy Dater, Bea Nettles. Anne Tucker has written an excellent biography of each photographer, as well as a rambly introduction exploring each one's imagery in relation to questions about female sensibility. The ten examples of each woman's work printed here are often not enough to give much feeling of each one's work as a whole, but the book is an interesting introduction.

### GETTING CLEAR--- Body Work for Women

Anne Kent Rush

Random House--Book Works (paper) \$4.95 290 pp.

Anne Kent Rush interviewed a dozen Bay Area women working in different areas of the "Growth Movement" (as these prolific California offshoots of psychology are called), added her own experiences and her knowledge of massage, and put together (she designed the book too) a useful resource for women, especially for groups of women. *Getting Clear* provides a lively hodgepodge of tools, from Breath Awareness to Gestalt techniques to Food to Belly Dancing--specific exercises are suggested in each area, along with the interviews, personal examples from Anne, and fine photographs. I especially recommend this book for consciousness-raising groups and for women who are just beginning to explore the possible extent of their feelings for other women.

### THE NEW WOMAN'S SURVIVAL CATALOG

Edited by Kirsten Grimstad and Susan Rennie

Coward, McCann and Geoghegan, Inc./Berkley Publishing Corp.  
(paper) \$5. 223 pp.

This "Whole Earth Catalog" style book is the most complete directory of the women's movement yet assembled. I urge you to look through it if you're near an amenable bookstore just for the sense of community it offers. Susan and Kirsten travelled the 12,000 mile continental loop collecting information and then assembled it in record time--all the listings are current as of July 1973. The catalog concentrates on the U.S. but has some information for Canada, and it has lots of photos of women and their projects. My only reservation is the thought of profits from this vital sort of information going to a male-controlled, undoubtedly sexist company--may the catalog help increase our communication and numbers so that by next year there will be a women's press large enough to print a sequel.

### THE YELLOW WALLPAPER

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, with an afterward by Elaine R. Hedges  
The Feminist Press, (paper) \$1.25

Known mainly as a feminist lecturer and as the author of *Women and Economics*, Charlotte Perkins Gilman offered another side in this powerful story--an intensely personal view of a woman's descent into madness as the only escape from a patronizing husband (and world). A beautifully written (in 1892), horrifying and illuminating tale.

### APPROACHING SIMONE

A Play by Megan Terry, with an introduction by Phyllis Jane Wagner  
The Feminist Press, Box 334, Old Westbury, NY 11568 (paper) \$1.50

This play, based on the life of Simone Weil, is meant to present to women a hero to emulate--an objective I find both tiresome and dangerous, since Weil (in the play at least) is yet another woman who responds to oppressive conditions by suffering passively (eventually to the point of deliberately starving to death).

### KNOWING WOMAN

Irene Claremont de Castillejo  
G. P. Putman's Sons (for the C. G. Jung Foundation of Analytical Psychology) (hardcover)

Reviewed by Ann Stokes:

I have met my first juiceless Jungian orange. While reading the concise placement of words and ideas, the short paragraphs injected with moral insights, I came to the loud and clear conclusion that books written for the edification of the layman and the laywoman are to be burned braised banned boraxed and banished. Oh anti-literature, anti-flow, anti-life! How infinitely more one knows and loves because Mrs. Dalloway existed, than the abstract woman of Irene C. de C. How exciting and painful are Doris Lessing's and M. C. Richard's experiences in comparison to the theoretical insights of Ms. C. de C. These women are not writing for us, they are sharing their personal lives with us.

*Knowing Woman* is written by a Jungian analyst (who is no longer alive). She is trying to make C. G. Jung understandable to women, essentially. Possibly another writer could do that, but after reading this book, I would suggest heading for the source itself.

Her material includes a grand sprinkling of important matters: the bringing of the unconscious into consciousness, the misuse of power, the relation of woman to man, dreams, love, the failings of society, etc. etc. The chapter entitled "Animus--friend or foe?" is her strongest, for she remains focused on the subject matter long enough to make clear her ideas of where Man and Woman basically differ, or should I say inherently differ. To give one example: men find it natural to focus, to make visible, to

take action upon that focus. Women find it natural to be in touch with the source, the motivating energy, the invisible strength (which makes the focus possible). This does not mean that men are all focus, women inspiration: both elements are possible and workable in both sexes. The point is that men have to work harder at accepting the emotional invisible forces, and women spend more energy and effort learning to focus.

Interwoven among these inherent differences are tools and beliefs as to how women can work through emotional chaos. Ms. C. de C.'s writing stayed tight in this chapter also, and I sensed she had done a great deal of personal searching in these two overlapping areas.

My tenderness for the author, dormant throughout the book, was suddenly released, sending pangs of guilt and remorse through me as I read her final two paragraphs. I will end with them:

"This paper, inadequate as it must inevitably be, is my first attempt to get this distressed feminine figure out into the light of day where she can be acknowledged and accepted. I cannot possibly succeed alone.

My paper, more than anything else, is an appeal to all those of you who feel the task worthwhile, to help lift this figure, which I believe to be the image of the feminine soul of woman, right up into the sunshine and lay her upon the green, growing grass of conscious reality."

WICCE: a lesbian feminist newspaper

Box 15833, Philadelphia, PA 19103

\$3.50/year (\$1 extra for plain wrapper) 35¢/single issue

*Wicce's* first issue is out and it's a fine and promising start. Included are an article on *Wicce* (wise women) by Judith Faulkner; an inspiring article/interview (by Rachel Rubin) with Jan Welch, lesbian president of Philadelphia N.O.W.; an interview with the editors of *AQ*; "Horizontal Hostility" by Rose Weber (about divisions within the women's movement); an analysis of Billie Jean King's much-publicized victory, by Laurel Marshfield; articles on Philadelphia-area projects--the Lesbian Hotline and Women Organized Against Rape; book reviews; a practical guide to floor-sanding; a few bits of news from Philadelphia and other parts of the East. News coverage is the one area where this first issue falls short--understandably since the paper is new and unknown. The *Wicce* staff will welcome news from all over of events, new projects, etc. of interest to women.

*Wicce's* over-all tone seems to be one of inclusion, encouragement of diversity, and positive support-- a tone reflected in each article as well as in the range of material covered this issue. You won't find stale rhetoric or more-radical-than-thou political line-ism in *Wicce*--just attempts at real communication between women and useful information-giving, and a feeling of celebration about our slow process of creating a life-affirming women's culture.



BEYOND GOD THE FATHER -- Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation

Mary Daly

Beacon Press (hardcover) \$8.95 225 pp.

Mary Daly's new book stretches your mind and, for sure, your vocabulary. It is a very hopeful exploration of a feminist philosophical/psychological perspective which has evolved in the women's movement. It is also a labored debunking of patriarchal religion--which, unless you've been heavily hung up on Christianity, you may find boring and beside the point. *The Second Wave* (Vol.3 #1) has just published a fine selection from the book which covers the main points. (Also see quotes in this AQ in "Toward a Womanvision.") By all means get your library to order this... \$9 for a slim 200 pages is too much to encourage individual purchase.

ISSUES IN RADICAL THERAPY

Box 23544, Oakland, CA 94623

\$4/year (4 issues), \$5/year overseas, \$10/year institutions, \$1/sample

A little over a year old now, *Issues in Radical Therapy*, is an excellent newspaper with continual coverage of women's and particularly lesbian issues from the personal/political perspective of radical therapy. Hogie Wyckoff has written a number of relevant pieces: "In Behalf of Bisexuality," "Amazon Power," "Equalizing Power in Problem-Solving Groups," etc. The newspaper as a whole is a much-needed anecdote to traditional psychology and its oppressive role in maintaining the patriarchy.

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT

Eleanor Flexner

Penguin (paper) \$2.50

A slightly tedious but thorough and well-documented biography of the pioneering 18th century feminist.

*ELYSIAN FIELDS, BOOKSELLERS* offers a large selection of hard-to-find and out-of-print books by, for, and about lesbians. Send them your requests and they will make a search or order a catalog from them at: 81-13 Broadway, Elmhurst, NY 11373.

HOME MOVIE a review/testimonial by the Women's film Co-op

To have seen a film fifteen or twenty times and to feel joy at the prospect of seeing it another twenty is hard to believe, but is a reality in the case of HOME MOVIE, a short by Jan Oxenberg.

In twelve minutes, Ms. Oxenberg presents a combined personal and political statement about growing up gay in America. Scenes of a Gay-in, Christopher St. West March, lesbians playing football, and old home movie footage of the filmmaker as a child mimicking her mother's roles are balanced perfectly, both in terms of craft and content. The narration is a personal history with which most lesbians can identify -- a remarkable feat in and of itself. The music by Debora Quinn is terrific (we wish there were a recording available separately) -- the lyrics go "We are together, we have each other, we aren't waiting to be free."

All our audience response confirms our feelings about this film. Very infrequently a heterosexual woman will express her distance from the women/woman the film portrays - but even so will add that she was glad to get a chance to hear how 'they' live. Recently, at a film festival, we paired HOME MOVIE with THE CHILDREN'S HOUR (one of those features that show the lesbian hanging herself in the end - but the best of its genre - a feature film about lesbians loving themselves has yet to be made). We found that showing HOME MOVIE provided the perspective to look at THE CHILDREN'S HOUR, and the history of repression and tragedy it represents, with hope. Hope that it's changing, hope that women are taking over the image making business inch by inch, hope that by getting this film into every high school in America women will begin to make contact with other women in primary ways.

Yeah, we could see it twenty more times. Which makes one painfully aware that positive role models for Lesbians are not very frequent and that what is all around us still denies the validity of our thoughts, feelings and relationships. In rediscovering and creating a women's culture, the validation and exploration of women who love women is essential.

AN INTERVIEW WITH JAN OXENBERG by Alice Bloch

Alice: Tell me something about how you first got into film.

Jan: Well, I started out writing, and then it turned into a comic book.

Alice: Tell me something about how you first got into film.

Jan: Well, I started out writing, and then it turned into a comic book. But I was very frustrated because I can't draw and I couldn't find anyone to draw the comic book the way I wanted it, so I tried film.

A: What relationship do you see between your getting into film and your developing lesbian consciousness?



J: I see the two as being connected. I mean, I see myself as a lesbian filmmaker. I think "Home Movie" is really successful because of its subject matter, and if I had made a film about donuts or something, well, I just don't have as much feeling about donuts as I do about my lesbianism. Of course, I could make lesbian movies for the rest of my life and never catch up to one year's output from MGM. That's an interesting thing about being a lesbian filmmaker. People feel that if you're a filmmaker, you should make films about everything, and that somehow you're not really a filmmaker if you keep on making these lesbian movies.

A: You mean in the heads of the Establishment filmmakers?

J: Yeah, or even in the heads of a lot of lesbians... even in my head sometimes. It's a hard thing. It's analogous to the whole issue of being male-identified, the issue of wanting to make it in the "real world," the real world being the male world. Part of me does want my films to be shown at Film-Ex or the New York Film Festival, to win awards. But the direction I'm going in is different from that. Like the comedy I'm working on now: it's low-budget, about \$500, and it's called "A Comedy in Five Unnatural Acts." Now, this film is not an educational film. It's not for the general public. It's really entertainment for the lesbian community. As far as I'm concerned, it's not being made for other people to see. It's not being made to enter in film festivals or to show when I apply for a job... The "Comedy in Five Unnatural Acts" should be finished in February. It's going to be very short, five little vignettes on the theme of various types of lesbians. It's sort of a loving, satirical look at the stereotypes. I think it's pretty funny. People can start ordering it from me around March.

A: What are you planning after that?

J: My next film will be a full-length documentary. The form is what I call a personal documentary, which means that I as the filmmaker am a member of the community I'm documenting, the lesbian community. Most people make documentaries by trying to be as objective as they can. Well, I'm not trying to be objective about the lesbian community, but I feel that this film will be very true. The truth of the film will come from love of the community, not from objectivity.

A: Could you say more about the content of the personal documentary?

J: It'll have two themes running through it. One theme will be lesbian identity. I'm going to do a lot about what it was like to be a lesbian before there was any kind of movement, before there was any public support. The majority of my own life has been lived under those conditions, and I'm only 23, and I know that women who are older lived a lot more years like that. I feel a real commitment to expressing that experience, not only in terms of the pain involved, the ostracism, but also in terms of what it means for a woman to go against all the

proscriptions of the whole history of society. It's really an amazing thing, what it is about loving another woman that would allow a woman to be that courageous, to live the way she wants to live, regardless. I think that in the process of making this film, I'm going to discover a lot about this.

A: That's just one part of the theme of lesbian identity, right?

J: Yes, there will be the part I just described, and then I'm going to do a section about lesbian's relationships with our parents. The ideology behind that is that parents are sort of archetypal members of the traditional sex roles, mother and father, so that on a symbolic level, telling your parents that you're a lesbian is kind of an intermediate step between yourself and the whole society. Also, on a very real level, it's a big hassle that all lesbians go through. Part of this section will be an interview with my own parents. And then there's going to be a whole section about the lesbian community. I've been filming a lot of different events: the West Coast Lesbian Conference, the Lesbian Art Show at Womanspace in Los Angeles, the Southwest Feminist Conference in Tucson, softball games, picnics. I want to travel to other cities too. I'm going to do a whole montage, with footage from all these different events, and voice over, sync-sound, music. The film is going to be very political, but not in the sense of speeches or anything like that. In fact, part of that montage sequence about the lesbian community is going to be on our politics, which is basically going to come out as a satire, I think. The theme of the film is not "Lesbians are people too." The film will look at lesbians as a people, will explore the lesbian experience. In other words, the whole approach to the film is political.

A: What about the second theme of the film?

J: The second theme is lesbian relationships. For that I'm going to film a few of my friends in a cinema-verite style, sort of like "An American Family," like the anti-version of "An American Family." It will show women relating to their friends and lovers... and I'm not using "relating" as a euphemism for making love. What I'm talking about is women in their day-to-day lives, dealing with issues like monogamy, jealousy, role-playing, and just funky down-home transactions.

A: Do you have any source for funds right now?

J: I've raised some money from individuals, about \$1,000. It's clear to me at this point that a lot of support for this film is going to have to come from the women's community.

*["Home Movie" is available from Jan Oxenberg for rent at \$25 or for purchase at \$200. The Women's Film Co-op (see their address on pg.71) also rents the film. Jan welcomes contributions for her documentary and can arrange for large donations to be tax-deductible. Write to her at 54 Rose Ave., Venice, CA 90291.]*

Dear Friends, Dear Sisters, Dear AQ~

What a good book the double issue is. Good strong women's voices, loud and clear. If you believe (as I do) that all things are political, then AQ is political. Just existing as what we are is a political act, and enjoying it compounds the crime. AQ's political line (hooray for you) is not a party line but a life line.

Hooray for the fun in it (the book) as well as the pain and anger. Hooray for the graphics, and the lovely good sense of the design. California sunshine to my New England winter. -- Laura, New York

Thank you for risking to publish a top quality literary magazine that this artsy lesbian can be proud of. I hope the coming year brings success to Miss Q. -- Laura, Indiana

I especially enjoyed the interviews with women across the U.S. Your magazine is a great morale booster when things are down and I believe is helping a lot of women find themselves when they see they aren't alone. -- Pat, Georgia

It is good to hear so many joyous testimonies from strong, happy women who have found themselves and each other. Many of the women who talked to you are different from me in lifestyles, backgrounds, or goals, but none of it matters much in the NOITAN NAIBSEL in our heads.

We are very interested in your questionnaire and results. There certainly are advantages to the kind of in-depth interviews you conducted, but we would like to respond by mail if you would send us your questions. Maybe a lot of AQ's readers feel the same way. So often all we find about lesbianism is condemnatory or condescending, and filed under abnormal psychology, that we'd love a chance to speak about how positively we feel about ourselves, and our lives, and our sexual choices. That glow experienced when communicating ourselves to our sisters shines out of the pages of AQ, particularly when readers and interviewees speak of their personal experiences and their commitment to WOMAN. -- Vermont  
[We're at work now preparing a long written questionnaire to be printed in a future issue of AQ. Thanks to all of you who've expressed interest in participating. -- Gina and Laurel]

Dear Wonder Women, H!

Dear Sisters — Dear Dykes

I am full of admiration and gratitude to you for your foresight and perception in talking with lesbians and sharing your experiences. It gives us a wonderful reality in which each of the rest of us can see our own lives reflected. What a relief for lesbians to gather information from other lesbians about what it means to be a lesbian! (Rather than a male voyeur "objective" observer.)

Your interviews are excellent--a fine example of sympathetic, in-depth conversations from which one can form a subtle and interesting picture of the women you interviewed. Deborah Wolf's analysis of the figures that have been compiled so far is very useful and straightforward. We really need this kind of concrete information! -- Elizabeth, New York

I couldn't help but be surprised, confused, and finally angry on reading the AQ recommendation regarding lesbian publications. You state (or AQ states), "We cannot at this time recommend that you spend your money on any of the other lesbian magazines or newspapers." Can you be seriously "recommending" that all lesbian publications with the exception of Wicce (and I assume AQ) are so valueless as to not deserve the monetary support of other women?

Direct constructive analysis and criticism of individual periodicals is in my opinion necessary and helpful in exchanging views and experiences. A sweeping generalization with no explanation for its consequent conclusion (as I consider yours) does not allow for any basis upon which to share. Needless to say, I'm deeply disappointed.

I do hope you'll share your objections to all the other lesbian newspapers and magazines in the next issue. I also hope my true caring is discernable through the criticism and anger. -- Cindy, Minnesota  
[After looking carefully through the existing lesbian publications last issue we decided it would be kinder and more unifying not to state our criticisms of each one, but instead to simply not recommend any. Obviously many of these publications are of value to the immediate communities they grow from--The Lesbian Tide in Los Angeles, Lavendar Woman in Chicago, Sisters for San Francisco D.O.B. members, etc.--still, we don't recommend them to a national audience. -- Gina and Laurel]

Goddess, what a fine magazine you put together! AQ is the only feminist rag I do read with delight and regularly--too often I choke on the rhetoric in other publications. No rhetoric behind AQ, just womanly humanity. -- Vera, Washington

Dear Amazon People!



*Dear Gina and Laurel-*

A year ago when AQ first started coming out so did I. I don't normally buy lots of women's magazines or newspapers because of very limited finances . . . but I always buy AQ. If I were asked to recommend any one lesbian-feminist magazine to someone coming out, I'd wholeheartedly recommend AQ. It helps to alleviate the pain of coming out and makes me feel so happy I'm a lesbian. -- Karin, California

I can't tell you how much I enjoyed the latest issue. Being new here, I was feeling rather lonely and isolated, and the warmth and openness that was evident, not only in the interviews, but throughout the whole magazine, made me feel part of a community of sisters who genuinely cared about one another--something I hadn't felt since leaving my friends in the small university town where I had previously taught. . . I think it's not even so much a matter of what goes in the journal; it's got more to do with your eagerness to share a real dialogue with your readers. And that sense comes through. (For example, I've never been moved to write a letter to an editor before.)

It'll be good to read more interviews in coming issues--it gives us all a chance to see what other woman-identified-women are into and maybe open up our own lives more. -- Marcia, Missouri

*Dear Laurel and Gina,*

I just bought the May issue at the Women's Bookstore, and now that I have devoured it, I find my faith and active confidence in the validity of Lesbian literature experiencing a rebirth on many levels--after a whole lot of abortive(narrow, crude, shallow, boring) disappointments that have seemed to be the rule in such attempts, lately.

Thank you. Aside from the wonderful timing and personal effect on my own frail self-balance, I just feel much better knowing you're around. -- Judi, Vancouver

Here in Cincinnati some lesbian feminists are finally trying to get something together. There's a woman with a printing press and maybe Cincy will have a lesbian paper soon!!!! There are plenty of lesbians in Ohio, believe me, but we're so isolated.

Your Double Issue about your summer travels is excellent! It made a depressing day joyous! Especially nice is your personal attitude about all of us "out here." You know, we are everywhere, and reading all those interviews just reinforced the fact tremendously. -- Karen, Cincinnati

I have to write this letter to you instantly because I have just been reading the special double issue and I was HORRIFIED to read about your bummer Toronto experience with the gnashing Canadian nationalists....

Personally I have been recently torn between my dear friends, women who are working their hearts and guts out for the women's movement everywhere, and my friends who are sure that Canada is the last stronghold for resources, a "fertile land" in its nationhood AND especially its womanhood. My friends who fear rape on its broadest scale from both men and women south of the border. These women find it difficult to differentiate between their politics and their personal lives, and the tension which this state of mind creates is sometimes forced onto an unsuspecting newly arrived American. -- A Toronto Sister

*Dear Editors et al,*

Have just read Laurel's "Impressions" in the last AQ. Not all Canadians, or Americans now living in Canada, are anti-American. I've been here two years now, and like Canada, but I'm not anti-American yet! Neither are most of the Canadians I know.

Unfortunately there are people who can only see two sides to any question--or should I say they have an oversimplified view of any subject. Thus, they equate being pro-Canadian with being anti-American, being pro-woman with being anti-man, and so on. They are the people who want everyone to throw off one set of chains and put on another set designed by themselves. Freedom to choose--freedom to be yourself and to be respected as a person regardless of choice--is not an alternative in most radical thinking. -- Mary, Ontario

I pick up our old copies of AQ every now and then, and I'm amazed that they come through to me even through all my changes--I don't outgrow them, they just say different things at different times--and that is a measure of real worth... And I wanted to say especially that I never liked or understood the froggy pictures, until last week, when I looked at my lover's skin one morning and that's what it was! Gently, lovingly, specially perceived. I went to find AQ to look at the pictures again, and there it was. Now I know. I like them. -- Roxane, California

I carried the last issue of AQ around with me until it looks like a porn book: All dog-eared and smudged, with dirty finger prints all over "Naked, in T-shirts..." and "Ruby Fruit Jungle," until I had to go get another copy to show people, not wanting them to get the wrong impression. They always take it off and I don't see that copy again for weeks--and then it's all dog-eared. -- Jean, Oregon



I am a graduate student in the School of Social Work at California State University, Sacramento. I am presently working on my masters thesis on Lesbian Mothers. Many Lesbian mothers are now engaged in court cases to gain custody of their children and are in dire need of support from many levels. My hope for this thesis is that it can be used to strengthen the arguments and dispel the negative stereotypes of Lesbian motherhood, as well as increase society's awareness and acceptance of Lesbians and Lesbian child-raising.

I have developed a questionnaire in conjunction with Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon and other members of the Lesbian community, which is now ready for distribution. My population of subjects can include any woman who considers herself to be a Lesbian and who is raising or has raised a child whether or not they are now living together.

All replies will be held strictly confidential and responses will be anonymous and in no way connected to the names or addresses of respondents.

For questionnaires write to: Barbara Bryant, School of Social Work, Calif. State University, Sacramento, CA 95819

AQ reminds me of the innocence and sunlight of my first Lesbian glimmerings--Please start my subscription with the fall issue. And--out of ideology--keep the wrapper. We mustn't consume unnecessarily.

-- Sue, Minnesota

I brought the first three issues of AMAZON QUARTERLY up to the country with me a couple of weeks ago, for a few days alone in an old house where I have spent some extraordinary times. When I came up I was looking for peace and silence but thinking too of the echoes of talk the house is full of. The first evening I started reading the Quarterly, it became apparent that although the physical silence was there as I wanted it, there were conversations going on, of a quality and excitement I have rarely met in print. The writers in AMAZON QUARTERLY are thinking more humanely and searchingly than any I have read at one time in one magazine. I'm impressed by the range of concerns, the excellence of the writing, the sense that work is being done in areas which are essential to us all, lesbian-identified or not...

In a very real sense you are vindicating the history of those many lesbian writers and artists who struggled without political community, whose works were buried or misread or who could not fully engage their talents because of imposed reticences. But your range is truly feminist and I can imagine no thinking, feeling, self-aware woman who would not identify with the spirit and impulse behind the magazine. -- Adrienne Rich, New York

*In struggle, strength & sisterhood* —

# ““MARIE””

is a woman Laurel and I visited during our summer travels, in August, coming down through the Pacific Northwest. This interview offers special illuminations about growing up Catholic and lesbian, about the particular isolation and richness of farms and small towns, and about what happens when a woman who's always been poor sets herself to dreaming a utopian future. When we saw Marie, and Lucy her lover, they both were working at a nursery loading trees onto trucks all day--now that the weather's gotten too cold for that, Lucy's working at a hamburger joint and Marie works as a rag picker at a factory.

We'll be printing one of these interviews in each issue for a while.

M: My father said one thing in his life about sex and that was "All men are bad." I said "But how about you Dad?" and he said, "Well, 99.9% of them are bad." My mother never said the word sex in her life that I know of. She never talked about it except when I had my first period--she took me into the bathroom, gave me a Kotex, and said "Wash your pants, you're a woman now." I was thirteen and freaked out. She was slightly stern.

The sex education my mother did give me came from the things she did rather than what she said. My most startling childhood memory--I must have been all of nine--we went to a park where there were peacocks, and as we were sitting there eating our picnic lunch, two peacocks started to get it on in the grass. The male peacock fanned his tail out and started a circular strutting. It's really beautiful, a ritual, like a dance, and the little female she comes around and picks on the grass, and pretends she doesn't know what's going on, but she stays right close to him. And that was cool, watching the show, but as soon as he started climbing on to her my mother freaked hysterically. There were all kinds of picnic tables lots of people, a lot of little kids, and my mother thought this was bad for all the children to see, so she went shrieking after the peacocks and beat them away. The peacocks just went crazy and went flying off into the bushes. I was just a kid but I was embarrassed for our family because my mother had made this big scene.

G: What's the first time you remember having any sexual feeling?

M: Shivers up the spine? Oh wow! Oh the first shivers up the spine that I remember and I definitely knew that they were sexual I was about sixteen and I used to run around with a girl named Lucy. I would sit in Latin class and think about her and get shivers up my spine. We would write notes and pass them to each other in the halls.

G: Did you have fantasies that were sexual?

M: I used to have dreams at night--In one that I liked best we were playing musical chairs in speech class, and when the music stopped Lucy and I sat in the same chair and we embraced each other and started necking. That was a nice dream.

G: Did your friendship with Lucy get beyond passing notes in halls?

M: The night after the musical chairs dream I decided that something must be done about this, so that day at school we kissed against the lockers. I was scared shitless that she would be cold, but she wasn't, she was just great, we just responded together. And we started having pajama parties thereafter.

G: Did you have any feeling that you should hide what you were doing from other people?

M: Yes, I felt very secretive.

G: Did you try to find information about anything you were doing?

M: I didn't seek out information specifically. For one thing I was sort of trapped--the only information I had was the high school and public library, and in those places there was nothing. However, I did learn from a James Baldwin novel that I really liked, *Giovanni's Room*. It made me feel better because I realized that there were other people in the world who happened to love people of the same sex.

G: Did you feel guilty?

M: Yeah, I definitely felt guilty. I wasn't exactly a practicing Catholic by that time but I still knew all about guilt.

G: How have your feelings changed since back then?

M: I don't feel guilty. I realized that guilt does not get you anywhere, so I don't feel guilty anymore.

G: How did that change come about?

M: It just happened. The pressure of other people's opinions doesn't upset me like it did when I was younger.

G: Back in high school when you and Lucy were carrying on, did one of you think that you had to be like a boy and one like a girl? Did you have any feelings that you should have that pattern?

M: No. I don't think we had that kind of pattern, though it was apparent to me at the time that I was more aggressive in bed than she was. I just assumed she liked the way she was being and I liked the way I was being. It did strike me at the time that in actual, uh, daylight, at school for instance, she was a more aggressive person than I was. She was more aggressive verbally, and I was more aggressive physically.

G: Did you ever have feelings that you wished you were a boy?

M: When I was a Catholic girl I wanted so bad to be an altar boy. I had a dream one night that I was an altar boy, only I was a girl in disguise and the terror of the dream was that somebody out there in the Mass would know. Instead of having the traditional black and white uniform I had on Mary's colors, blue and white, and I had long hair and everything, but no-

body knew. That was a close call.

G: That was the only time?

M: Yeah.

G: How do you think your relationship with Lucy was important when you were in high school?

M: It was more important than anything else that was happening to me, anything that I'd learned in classes or anything. It seemed to be the Number One important thing. Did you say how that was important?

G: Yeah, what did you learn from it?

M: Oh, I learned all kinds of things. I learned that you are responsible not just for yourself, but for the person you relate to in that way. I learned to be secretive and guilty, but I learned other things too. That's the first time I turned on to my body and her body in a sexual way, so I learned about my body.

G: Sexually was that a satisfying thing for you?

M: The genital part of it seemed to be the high point. It was very, very important. I would go out of my way to be with her as much as I could. I would ford rivers, literally--because we were separated by a river and to get to her I had to ford the river on my little white pony and go through a forest.

I learned also that I was capable of being cruel. I suddenly and abruptly left Lucy and didn't write, call or go and see her for six months and that was definitely mean.

G: How long had you been together?

M: A year.

G: Were you still in high school then?

M: The last year I was in high school we were together and then I left. The pressure was just too much for me. I wasn't very strong. I graduated the year before her, and we were going to get an apartment and live together when we both were out of high school, but I just couldn't handle all that.

G: What did you do then? You went to college?

M: Well, the guilt must have been horribly tremendous because I thought if there was really a heaven and hell I knew where I was going, and I had to save myself from this. So I decided to enter a convent. I went away to a Catholic school run by an order of nuns, thinking that I would get to know the nuns in the convent and the life they led, and make up my mind for sure. And that's what I did.

G: How did you make up your mind?

M: Well, there was a certain kind of joke that went around at the school. They said that the nuns had *friendships* with each other, and they said friendships in such a way that I knew there were lesbian relationships. So I was able to see that a lot of things are bullshit, and that people just have to have each other--even if they run away to convents they seem



to get together with each other. So I didn't think they had any more of a corner on the right way to live than I did.

G: So since then you've gotten back together with Lucy several times, right?

M: We've always kept in touch--and we're together now.

G: How would you describe your relationship with Lucy now?

M: Very relaxed. I don't feel so ambitious or so worried about the future as I used to, but I feel like trying harder at anything I do, than I used to. When I wash the dishes, I try to make the dish a little bit cleaner. I don't understand this but I think a life full of comfort and leisure isn't what I'm looking for. At the same time, though, there's something in me that wants Lucy to have an easy life.

G: Do you feel this is a relationship you'll be in for a long time?

M: I see no reason why it can't be.

G: Do you want to be monogamous?

M: Yeah, I like monogamy; I feel comfortable. I see no reason for adding more complications.

G: Is that something you've come to after some conflict?

M: No, I haven't given it a whole lot of thought. I just know what feels comfortable to me. It seems to me that I work from the body to the brain instead of vice versa and so what feels comfortable for my body, my brain will accept.

G: In the times when you haven't been with Lucy did you have other relationships with women?

M: Yes, several--and they were helpful in that they made me realize all the more that I really loved Lucy.

G: What do you think are some of the best things about your relationship with Lucy?

M: Oh wow, she makes me laugh a lot. She makes me happy and I don't know of anybody who can make me happy like she does.

G: Have you had relationships with men?

M: Yeah, I have.

G: Do you think you ever will again?

M: No, I don't really think I ever will except that I might get raped.

G: Have you ever been raped?

M: Yeah.

G: When was that?

M: I was a sophomore in college. Do you want the details? Okay, the gory details: I used to eat a lot in the cafeteria and I met a man there who really fascinated me. He was from Kenya and he was educated at Oxford, just an interesting man. Every once in a while we'd sit down together and talk. We weren't even very close friends, but one night he came over to my apartment. I had the flu, and when I told him I was really sick he said "Great, then we'll have to go get some hot chocolate to soothe you down," and I went through the protest bit--"I think I'd best just go to

bed right away," and he went into this insistence that hot chocolate would make everything better and new again. Just being nice more than anything, I got in his car. I lived right next to the river and before I knew it we were taking the bridge over the river. I knew he lived on the other side of the river someplace and I said "Where are you going?" He said "We're going to my place." At that time I just became a little bit more tense in the car, and I thought "What an obnoxious forceful bastard." We went over to his apartment and he locked the doors and became slightly berserk. He started ripping off my clothes, and became very threatening. Anyway, he raped me, and strangely enough then he brought me home. He became completely nutty, and then he regained his composure and took me home at about 5 in the morning. I talked to a policeman, he got some facts, and we went down to the station. They said "Do you want to make a case out of it? You could have him exported from the country." Now what changed my mind about bringing it to court was when I walked into the detective's office, a big fat ugly cop started lambasting me about two things--one, was I one of those stupid college students and two, did I make a habit of running around with black boys. And I didn't want to do it. I thought, the guy's an asshole but this man here is an asshole too and wants to lynch him, and I said forget it and walked out before the detective came back.

G: Did that have any long-range effect on you? Did it change the way you felt about men?

M: If it has had any long-range effect I'm not aware of it. I saw him around the school almost every day after that, and we silently passed each other in the hall, nodded, and looked the other way, I suppose I was saying "You Bastard," and he was saying "You're just a girl."

G: You have had other sexual relationships with men, right?

M: Yes.

G: Can you talk a little about the differences between the relationships you've had with men and with women?

M: With women I seemed to know what I was doing and why I was doing it and at least part of my relationships with men have been out of social duty. I used to believe in this very strongly--I didn't like women who did not have sex with men, but who still took things from them. A lot of women go out with men, go to movies and to dinner and enjoy the material treat of the boyfriends but they don't give anything to them in return sexually, and I figured out at some point that food and movies are to women as sex is to men, and there should be some kind of exchange going on. I felt that it was fair right, just and proper to make love with the man who showered material gifts on you, and so I did. Then I went through a stage, I guess it's quite common, where I felt I had a soft spot in my heart for all horny, frustrated men, especially old men, and I made love with several old, decrepit, horny, frustrated ridiculous men.

G: Did you ever have orgasms with men?



M: I've made love with one man who gave me orgasms with his tongue, but never from fucking.

G: How do you feel generally about men's bodies?

M: I don't have any great feelings about men's bodies.

G: Do you have any particular feelings about penises?

M: Well, they're incredibly bold for being so ugly. I mean they're such proud little things for being so ugly. I had a dream once when I was about eighteen, in which I had a machete and I was cutting off cocks in my dream, with my machete, in the way that you sickle grass.

\* \* \*

G: What would you like to change about the ways you spend your time?

M: I would like to spend less time with surviving, less time just trying to get the bread and the rent and paying the bills. Less time on those basic things, that would be nice.

G: In five years from now how would you like your life to have changed?

M: I would like to have more free time from the basic necessities. I would like to be able to build things, work with tools, build furniture, and I'd like to have enough time to spend a half hour a day keeping up a journal. Now I spend about fifteen minutes every three days writing in the journal--there just doesn't seem to be enough time.

G: If you had three wishes what would you want?

M: Oh boy. Well just yesterday Lucy and I went over the three wishes and she said the third wish would be three more wishes so to begin with, I'd wish I thought that at the end of the road there's always another way to go, there's always something around the next corner, so I won't become too depressed and apathetic. Also, that my parents and I could somehow or another patch things up. I would just like to see some kind of happiness between us rather than hostility and fears. I would like to make Lucy's life easier and more relaxed. I don't think she's ever really had a secure base.

G: If you could have any kind of living situation you wanted and you could spend your time however you wanted, what would you want it to be like?

M: I would like to live in this town and have it as it was ten years ago, in terms of the physical things in the city. And to have money, and I would live with Lucy in a house. The house would have to be something--ideally it would be a house I built myself, and something I can sort of play with and remain in all my life. Because the house is built and it's there doesn't mean you can't keep working on it, and the house would just change. It would have to have a yard and have chickens, animals.

G: What would you do all day?

M: I would do anything I could do. I would study some of every day,

build things, clean up messes, and prepare food, and go on walks, and write in journals and read, and work at a place away from home, do a certain kind of work that's related to the community. That might be cleaning up some building after people have used it for the day, it might be a number of things.

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# the unicorn

Tradition has it that the unicorn comes willingly only to a virgin, evading with contemptuous ease all other methods of entrapment. So it is that every unicorn trap in history and legend was baited with a young woman who had yet to experience the full measure of physical love.

But the authors of this tradition altered the truth, whether to make the telling easier, or to nourish the hopes of those who would catch unicorns, or even--it has been suggested lately--to provide a certain kind of man with a pretext for testing his lady's virtue.

The truth is this. To attract a unicorn requires something far more complex than the virginity of the body. It demands a particular purity of the will, for which the virgin's celebrated purity is only a metaphor. In fact, whoever would lay a hand on a unicorn must be absolutely free of the desire to do so. For this reason, nobody has ever captured a unicorn. Even to think of the creature as quarry, as a prize of the chase, is to drive it away. The unicorn presents itself only to those who are not seeking it.

This purity is difficult to obtain, because it is nearly impossible to cast out willfully any thought that has once entered the mind. Even to disavow a thing is to think of it, however briefly. And there is another obstacle, which is the very nature of desire. Desire for the unicorn, or for any other thing, being a reflection of what is desired, becomes desirable in itself. The shadow serves in the absence of the reality. So if there have been few genuine meetings between humans and unicorns, it is not because of a prohibitive scarcity of virgins--a virgin can always be found, even in the most improbable surroundings--but because the mind is reluctant to be cleansed of the desire that occupies it.

Most of the meetings, then, involve persons whose wills were virginal not by deliberate effort, but incidentally or by accident. Circumstances had never allowed them to be seduced by the idea of the unicorn. It was these few, unlikely and surely undeserving by some standards, who were the beneficiaries of chance. They include:

a four year old child who lived in a remote corner of the country. The unicorn came to him as he played at the edge of the field in which his mother was working. The description he gave her afterward was at once too fantastic and too familiar to be an invention;

BY KAREN FEINBERG

a woman who inhabited the underside of a great city. She had never heard of the unicorn, although her slum neighborhood bordered a noble center of learning;

a totally ungovernable youth on whom no teaching had ever taken hold. After the unicorn had rested its nuzzle in his palm, it is written that he ripened into the most peaceable of men;

and here and there, the astronomer, the artisan, the musician so absorbed in their own pursuits that they could imagine no others.

We have found only one case in which someone first accepted and then deliberately cast away the seductive notion of the unicorn. Certainly, others must have existed--such strength of will, though rare, is not unique--but only this account has survived.

It concerns a widow of middle age, a midwife and a healer, for whom the greatest source of pain lay in the gap between what was real and what was not. Because her capacity for this pain did not diminish, but rather increased, with the passage of time, she schooled herself at last to believe only in what she could grasp with her senses or her powers of reasoning. She reserved for herself only the cares and pleasures of the bone newly set, the herbs bruised under the pestle, the infant's head emerging into her hands, the diagnosis, the recipe, the cure. All else, all dreams, desires, or visions for which no fulfillment could be foreseen, she banished from her mind. She even denied herself the small indulgence of imagining, before she slept, that a lover lay at her side. She shut the unicorn out of her thoughts as well; for whenever she admitted a vision of this creature, she found that she could not endure the shadow of the bright traces that the vision left upon her days. By renouncing her dreams, then, she restored to its pristine condition a mind violated by dreams.

It was to this self-restored virgin that the unicorn came one morning, as she knelt in her garden among the herbs she was gathering. When she felt its breath upon her cheek, she turned at once, forbidding the play of her imagination, and looked the reality full in the face. And it is written that this woman, in whose mind a taut membrane had grown against the intrusion of pain, felt the membrane break within her; and that, initiated once again, she wept like a young girl.



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## CONTRIBUTORS

ANN STOKES: Separating myself from home money name in order to accept myself as a stray person--to walk upright and with eagerness as a stray person.

THE CARPENTER: Also known as June Arnold, she is one of the founders of Daughters, Inc., publishers of books by women.

ELLEN BASS: I co-edited, with Florence Howe, an anthology of poems by women, titled *No More Masks!*, recently published by Doubleday in paperback. My first volume of poetry, *I'm Not Your Laughing Daughter*, will be published by the University of Massachusetts Press in the fall (1973).

GINA: I've spent the last few months steadying, taking a long breath (while reading lots and doing AQ's day-to-day tasks), and now I'm ready to dive again into what I don't know.

JUDY GRAHN: Works with the Women's Press Collective in Oakland, Ca., which will have "A Woman Is Talking To Death" with drawings by Karen Sjöholm printed in book form and ready to order by March, 1974, from: 5251 Broadway, Oakland, CA 94618. Write for a catalog.

KAREN FEINBERG: Lives in Cincinnati, Ohio, where she teaches Greek and Latin at an all-male Catholic seminary.

KAYMARION: A lesbian feminist currently staffing at a women's center and cleaning a rooming house. The prints were done pre-Movement involvement in a university printmaking class, where they silenced students and professors alike, the only comments to be heard were about technique, and then very courteously made. I identify the prints with a period in my life when I was affirming my body in the movè from dyke to Woman.

LAUREL: Nervously, I'm printing this essay/exploration knowing that the bigger the subject I'm writing about, the broader the generalizations, the more I'm likely to be misunderstood. I have faith in women though to have faith in my changes.

SUZANNE FREEDMAN: A San Francisco artist.

THE WOMEN'S FILM CO-OP: A distributor of films by and for women. To order a catalog write to them at: 200 Main St., Northampton, MA 01060.





by Kaymarion

RADICAL  
REPRODUCTION

♀ without ♂

*POETRY BY*

robin morgana

jennie orvino

adrienne rich

&

how to  
make a magazine

AMAZON  
QUARTERLY







*THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED TO TREES  
and printed on recycled paper.*

# AMAZON QUARTERLY

VOLUME TWO ISSUE THREE

Editors: Gina and Laurel  
Poetry Editor: Audre Lorde

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-- TREES --

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The photograph of the tree on the preceding page is by Barbara Morgan, 1945. It is from *The Woman's Eye* edited by Anne Tucker (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973).

The cover picture is from a batik by Gina.



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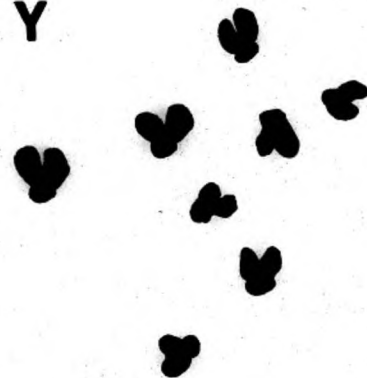
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# RADICAL REPRODUCTION

## X WITHOUT Y



by Laurel

Ever since I read an article called "Cloning" in *The Furies* (May, 1972), I've been interested in the possibilities open to us for "seizing the means of reproduction," which Phyllis Chesler has said will be crucial to a women's revolution. On a purely personal level, I'm not at all sure I want kids, no matter how free of men their conception might be, but I want to know all I can about the latest developments in artificial insemination, gynogenesis, parthogenesis, cloning, etc., because, to be sure, that knowledge if it remains entirely in the hands of men will be used against us. I have yet to read one study on test tube babies or new techniques for selecting the sex of the unborn written by a man which has not started from the premise that if and when all of us know how to determine the sex of our offspring, we all will prefer male children. The cover of the January, 1974 *Science News* is a perfect example: close-up photos of sperm captioned "Sorting sperm . . . to make boy babies." The article inside is entitled cutely "Babymaking: Dress Them in Blue." Fortunately the next issue of *Science News* has a red hot response from a sister who questions their chauvinistic presumption and points out the scientific errors contained in the article.

A similar chauvinism has interfered with progress in the field of parthogenesis. Because only female babies would result, and because "males would be biologically completely superfluous under such a

system,"<sup>1</sup> men have (understandably?) not put much of their energy into experimenting in this field. They are, however, extremely interested in the artificial womb which has been the topic of many articles of late such as "The Obsolescent Mother" in *The Atlantic* (May, 1971). Full page color spreads of the glass and steel (so far unsuccessful) wombs were featured in *Life*, (September 10 and 17, 1965; July 29, 1966; July 25, 1969).

So, whether or not we are personally interested in having children, we can't afford to remain ignorant of the tools men (primarily) are developing in the field of reproduction. My interests in this article are 1) to present the currently available techniques for conceiving girl babies and to talk about ones which are just on the verge of being perfected, and 2) to present up-to-date information on the advances being made so that we will be able eventually to have our daughters entirely without recourse to men or their sperm.

In writing this, I am assuming that you remember as little about genetics and cell division as I did from biology, so I'll stop quite often to give definitions. Five sections will follow: 1) techniques to be passed on to straight sisters who want daughters, 2) selective artificial insemination, 3) gynogenesis, 4) parthogenesis, and 5) cloning. Number 1 is as simple as baking a cake, but the rest will require some brushing up and concentrated study. The single most useful source for this study has been *Utopian Motherhood* by Robert T. Francoeur. Though there have been some discoveries since this book came out in 1970, it is still the best overview of the field. A list of other valuable resources is included at the end.

### 1) Techniques for Our Heterosexual Sisters

One of the most important and efficient of all techniques for having girl babies via coitus was discovered by a sister, Dr. Sophia Kleegman. She found in her research at New York University, that if a woman fucks thirty-six to forty-eight hours before her egg is released from the ovary there is about an 80% chance that she will conceive a girl. This method calls, obviously, for charting one's monthly cycle for several months and taking one's temperature daily. Our temperatures rise one degree on the day we ovulate. If a woman fucks on the day that she ovulates or soon after, chances are four to one that she will have a boy.

There are two kinds of sperm: female producing and male producing. Though there is much information to indicate that the female's egg enables one or the other to enter it and is the deciding factor, a sperm either carries the genetic information X (to produce a girl) or Y (to produce a boy). These two kinds of sperm behave differently and look different under the microscope. Female producing sperm (X bearing

or gynogenic) have oval-shaped heads and are heavier and slower swimmers than Y bearing (male producing or androgenic) sperm. They react differently to different chemical states in the vagina and the uterus. Dr. Landrum B. Shettles and David Rorvik co-authored a *Look* article in 1970 which outlined the uses of our knowledge of these two kinds of sperm's differences.<sup>2</sup> Using their simple procedure, a girl baby can be produced 8 or 9 times out of 10.

Some of the data they base their recipe on are: 1) that the gynogenic (girl-producing) sperm are much slower swimmers and outlive the faster swimming Y sperm by two or three times, 2) that the gynogenic sperm are much less inhibited by the acidic environment of the vagina, and 3) that the gynogenic sperm are more inhibited by an alkaline environment in the cervix, uterus, and fallopian tubes.

So, to make a girl baby, they suggest preceding each coitus immediately with an acidic douche of two tablespoons of white vinegar in a quart of water, avoidance of orgasm (no problem!), shallow penetration of the prick, and the use of the face-to-face missionary position. (The alkalinity of the uterus is greatly increased by orgasm--isn't that a doozy--if you enjoy it, you're going to add to your chances of having a boy!)

If you really want to be absolutely certain that you have conceived a girl baby, there is a technique which has been discovered but not yet marketed for identifying the sex of the unborn child at as early an embryonic age as three weeks. This is done by obtaining through a syringe fluids from foetal membranes, culturing cells from them, and using a special stain developed by M.L. Barr in Canada (1949). So-named for their discoverer, Barr bodies are present only in the female embryo and with his special stain it is possible to sort the sexes. The Barr body is really an inactivated X chromosome -- should it not show up under the stain, some mothers might want to consider an abortion.

## 2) Selective Artificial Insemination

Up 'til now, artificial insemination has not been widespread even though there are sperm banks coast to coast and many doctors anxious to perform the service for stiff fees. Sperm is readily available in the sperm banks because men are being payed a minimum of \$25 for each time they jerk off and contribute to them (*The Atlantic*, May, 1971). Usually couples seek this service because the male has undergone tests and proven to be impotent (a low number of sperm per tablespoon of semen, say). Last year some 20,000 babies were born in this country as a result of artificial insemination as compared to 3½ million (approx.) born as a result of straight fucking.

As usual, the mystique of the medical profession has kept women from taking this tool into their own hands. Why would we want it? Because the female-producing X sperm are now readily identifiable and we could

inseminate ourselves with just these sperm. Two advantages: 1) the chances of a girl would be 100% certain and 2) no fucking required. Now since there are thousands of sperm in every male ejaculation, we sure can't count and sort them under the microscope. It would take a lifetime to separate them and, of course, they don't live long on the microscope slide. So, what is needed is a sperm sorter -- and wouldn't you know it! -- a male has developed one and has received a patent from the U.S. Patent Office for his invention. Think what this means! It's like patenting the cure for cancer. According to *The New York Times* (September 2, 1972) a California scientist, Gustaaf van den Bovenkamp received patent no. 3,687,806 in the name of "Bio-Controls" of San Francisco and Boston for his method of controlling the sex of mammalian offspring, including human babies. Of course, he isn't spilling the details, but it is reported that his technique has something to do with having isolated the antibodies that the egg cell produces to enable fertilization by a Y-producing or an X-producing sperm. With his ability to produce these antibodies, he can introject them into the female before she fucks to produce the desired effects, or he can mix them up with the donor's semen in the event of artificial insemination.

But don't despair ... there is another technique on the way which any sister with access to a university lab should be able to help us out with. Dr. R.T. Ericsson and colleagues working at the A.G. Schering Co. in Berlin reported in the British journal *Nature* that they had centrifuged sperm, separated out the Y-bearing sperm, and produced live male rabbits. The centrifuge is like a super automatic washer on the spin dry cycle. The lighter and skinnier Y-producing sperm slip through the holes (this is an admittedly simplified metaphor) easier than the fatter and genetically richer X-bearing sperm. Once Ericsson and comrades had separated out what they thought to be primarily Y-bearing sperms, they put them in a hard-to-swim-in liquid inside a test tube. They waited a bit and then simply decanted the ones at the bottom of the tube reasoning that only the fast swimmers would have made it that soon. So far their technique has been 85% effective and, of course, within a few years there is every indication that it, like the antibody method which van den Bovenkamp patented, will be perfected to 100% effectiveness.

A woman at Cornell University, Dr. Dorothea Bennett, and a male colleague, Dr. Edward Boyse, have reduced the conception of male mice by 8% according to an article in *Newsweek* (January 7, 1974) by another method which relies on the use of antibodies. They extracted blood from females who had recently had a skin graft from male mice and dipped the sperm in it before pumping it into the female's vaginas. The blood carried antibodies resulting from the attempted skin grafts which, for some reason, discriminated against Y-bearing sperm. Obviously, this



technique has a long way to go, but the more we can learn about our little army of antibodies which will keep that Y-bearing sperm out, the better.

Everyone predicts that within a few years, sperm, which now have been proven to be active three years after freezing, will be able to be frozen for indefinite periods of time ... perhaps centuries. Enough sperm could be collected now quite easily to tide us over until that not so distant time when it will be unnecessary to conception and men will be for all practical purposes rendered unnecessary. The availability of sperm is no problem since men seem anxious to contribute (it seems to do something for their egos as well as their wallets), and additionally, the semen can be diluted many times and still have enough sperm for selective artificial insemination. (If you want to experiment with artificial insemination, remember that daylight irreparably damages the sperm and that it must be used very soon after collecting unless you are able to store it via a sophisticated method of freezing.)

### 3) Gynogenesis -- The sperm's last chance to be useful

What male scientists are now labeling gynogenesis will be an interim measure before we achieve complete control with parthenogenesis. Gyno (female) genesis (generation) still relies on the presence of the male's sperm ... but with a very important difference ... the sperm are genetically impotent.

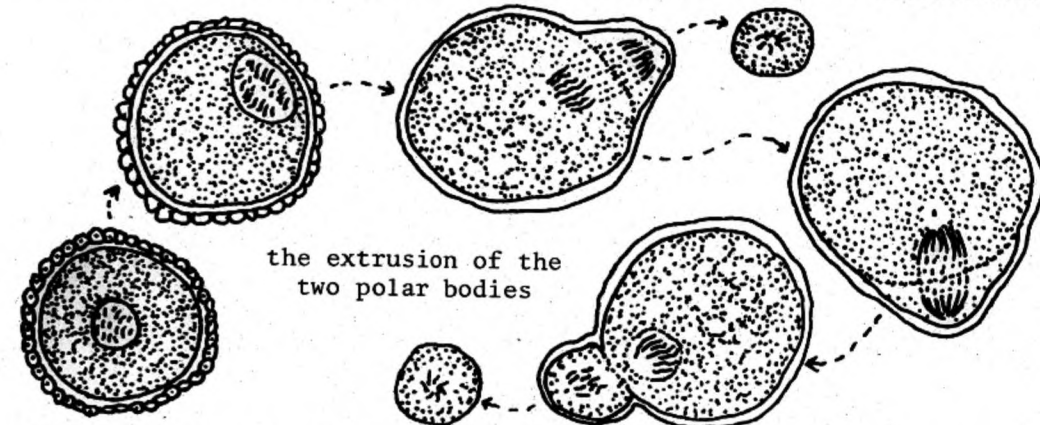
Before we can go any further, it will be necessary to brush up on what happens to our egg from the time just before it leaves our ovary until it becomes a zygote and attaches itself to the uterine wall. Unfamiliar terms will be highlighted in larger print and defined.

The immature cell in our ovary which will develop into the egg is called the OOGONIUM. The oogonium has a large nucleus which contains the CHROMOSOMES--in this case, more than the egg will be able to use. Chromosomes you'll remember are the strands which bear the genetic code which determines color of hair, eyes, skin--essentially everything about the yet to be born baby. The genes (specific coded messages for, say, curly hair) are infinitesimally small points on the chromosomes composed of DNA.

Now, every cell in your body has a full complement of chromosomes -- 46 of them. They, the chromosomes, are the same whether the cell has specialized into being a part of your intestine or your finger. Each cell in your body still carries, then, the basic recipe of all the other cells -- the information contained in the 46 strands of genes -- the chromosomes.

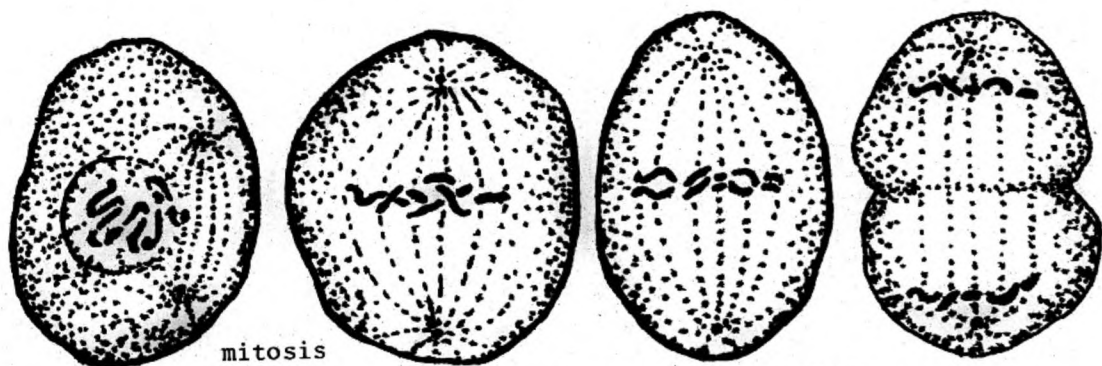
The only time any cell in a woman's body does not contain the full number of chromosomes is when her egg cell has undergone MEIOSIS in

preparation for receiving the male's half of the genetic information--his 23 chromosomes. The process of meiosis occurs in both male and female sex cells. When the male cell undergoes meiosis four independent sperm are produced, each carrying only 23 chromosomes, half the number necessary to make a baby. The process of meiosis in the female sex cell is pictured below. The oogonium (which had 46 chromosomes to start with) undergoes what is called the FIRST MATURATION DIVISION. The egg cell itself does not split apart, but the chromosomes duplicate themselves and at this point the egg cell has  $46 + 46 = 92$  chromosomes.



Since only 23 maternal chromosomes can be contributed to the zygote, 3/4 of these 92 chromosomes have got to go if there is going to be "room" for the sperm's chromosomes. This process of shucking off the extra chromosomes is accomplished through what is called the EXTRUSION OF THE POLAR BODIES. The 92 chromosomes form a TETRAD (two pairs, each containing 46 chromosomes). Before the egg cell has left the ovary, one of these two pairs "drops off" -- this is called the EXTRUSION OF THE FIRST POLAR BODY. This part of the oogonium aborts and plays no further part in reproduction.

Now, the egg cell still has 46 chromosomes and needs to get rid of 23 more in order to accommodate the sperm's chromosomes. The egg, at this point called the SECONDARY OOCYTE, now leaves the ovary--ovulation occurs. The secondary oocyte has yet to undergo the last meiotic division called the SECOND MATURATION DIVISION. Research on humans indicates that this division does not occur until the time when the sperm "pricks" the egg cell's outer membrane, knocking to be let in, if you will. At this point, the egg cell takes the hint and extrudes the SECOND POLAR BODY. This material also aborts and leaves the egg cell with only 23 chromosomes, but they will quickly be complemented by the 23 chromosomes that the sperm is waiting to contribute. With the full



mitosis

number of chromosomes, the fertilized egg will begin MITOSIS, the cell division process whereby the zygote will grow from a single-celled creature, to two-celled, to four-celled, etc.

O.K. Now we can talk about gynogenesis. In gynogenesis the sperm performs only one of its two usual functions on the SECONDARY OOCYTE. The sperm is used to "prick" the egg cell and to begin its process of mitosis, but, the sperm contributes no genetic information because it has been either chemically or radiologically altered. The result is that all of the resulting zygote's genetic information will be from the mother and that it will have no biological similarity at all to the father. And, of course, it will be a girl.

How do these "altered" sperm work? Several methods have been used to "alter" them, but all result in destroying the male's 23 chromosomes without disrupting the sperm's ability to swim and to seek out and "prick" the egg and activate it. So, in gynogenesis the sperm's function is pretty much limited to being a "prick." Yeah!

How are the sperm altered? As early as 1939, researchers were using X-rays to deactivate the genes of male frog sperm.<sup>3</sup> Obviously, it took a lot of playing around to find just the right dose of X-rays which would incapacitate the genes, but not interfere with the sperm's other abilities like swimming and pricking. So much for frog eggs--what about mammals--what about humans?

Well, some frog embryos seem to have a talent which "higher" animals like us have not yet developed. That is, live seemingly normal leopard frogs have resulted from gynogenesis as described above even though the baby frogs have only half their normal number of chromosomes. These frogs are called HAPLOID (having only half a set of chromosomes) as opposed to normal frogs which are DIPLOID (having a full set of chromosomes).

Gynogenesis has been tried with other species, mice and rabbits in particular. While eggs have been recovered from mice uteri that have begun the process of mitosis due to the "prick" and which do not carry

any of the male's genetic information, no live mice have ever been produced this way. Similarly, gynogenetically stimulated rabbit eggs have begun to grow, but they always abort before the zygote reaches the BLASTOCYST stage where it attaches itself to the uterine wall.

So, it would appear that gynogenesis is not going to work for anybody but a few frogs and toads and maybe lizards. The "higher" species just can't make it on only one set (half the normal number) of chromosomes. But what if the female were able to contribute all of the necessary chromosomes (46 in humans)? Is there any way that this could happen?

Yes. It does happen naturally now that some babies are born with more than a full set of chromosomes. There has been much publicity of late about people who are born with a genetic makeup different from most women who are XX or men who are XY: There are people who are born XXY or XYY or even as far out as XXYY. These people are POLYPOID as opposed to DIPLOID (which is the normal state of affairs when each parent contributes the normal number of chromosomes). The fact that these people exist is an indication that sometimes the female oocyte contributes more than its share of chromosomes (and, of course, that sometimes the sperm does too). It is estimated that one out of every 250 births involves a chromosome count greater than the usual 46.

No one knows why this happens, but many scientists agree about how it can happen. Some XXY babies have 46 chromosomes contributed by the mother and 23 by the father. What is thought to happen is that the mother's egg cell at the secondary oocyte stage does not undergo the second meiotic division and thus does not shuck off the second polar body. For some reason the sperm's "prick" does not activate the egg to cast off the last of its extra chromosomes. The sperm enters the egg which still has 46 chromosomes and contributes 23 more.

Now, what if we could learn how to stop that message to cast off the second polar body? What if we could suppress the extrusion of the second polar body? What if when the sperm came to our lady gamete's door and knocked she said "Thanks for waking me up, now get lost. I'm very together and I don't need your help!" That is, what if she refused to shuck off her extra 23 chromosomes and just went on to make the baby all on her own. If only she could figure out a way not to lose her head (her second polar body in this case) then she'd have it made and gynogenesis would be an accomplished fact (barring complications further along in the pregnancy).

So, sister scientists, I hope some of you will take on the challenge and investigate the possibilities for the suppressing of the second polar body. If it will be possible soon to produce live human females through gynogenesis, the scientists aren't rushing to make this announcement. In fact, in 1972, the American Medical Association called



for a world-wide moratorium on all further research with "test-tube babies" and genetic engineering of any type. It is very likely that the best research is now going on in Russia, but this, of course, is no more available to women than anywhere else.

#### 4) Parthenogenesis

Ultimately, the most desirable of all reproductive possibilities is parthenogenesis. Once we understand gynogenesis, parthenogenesis is much easier to picture. Remember that in gynogenesis the "prick" afforded by the sperm was still the thing that triggered the growth of the egg cell, and even though the sperm contributed nothing to the makeup of the resulting offspring, (when it was irradiated or chemically treated) it still was necessary for that "prick." In parthenogenesis the egg cell needs absolutely no assistance from sperm.

Parthenogenesis does occur naturally in humans, but very rarely. The frequency of naturally occurring parthenogenetic eggs in humans has been estimated to be about three-quarters of one percent of maturing human eggs.<sup>4</sup> Virgin births are thought to occur in about the same frequency as fraternal twins and twice as often as identical twins occur among white Americans. (American Blacks have a higher rate of both types of twins than Caucasians in North America).<sup>5</sup> Of course, the reported number of "virgin" births is much lower than this because women having relations with men would have absolutely no reason to suspect that their egg was not fertilized by a male sex cell. And too, this has been one of the surest ways to get yourself put into the looney bin--to declare you've conceived without male assistance--so not a great number of women have come forward.

However, in 1955, one woman who must have been a very tough crusader indeed, Dr. Helen Spurway of London's University College, proclaimed that parthenogenetic births occurred once in every 1.6 million pregnancies. The world population then was approximately 3.5 billion, which indicated that there should be a good number of women right in England who had reproduced by parthenogenesis. A newspaper called *The Manchester Guardian* challenged Dr. Spurway's assertion and sponsored a public scientific test. Of the 19 women who came forward and said they thought they had conceived and had virgin births, 18 were eventually disqualified either because blood tests proved the genetic make-up of their child not to be close enough to their own, or simply because they had misunderstood what was meant by "virgin birth", thinking their intact hymen made them still virgins even though they had had coitus. One woman was not disqualified on any grounds. She passed all the tests the scientists came up with. But get this--just like a man--the fact that they weren't able to disqualify her claim, the male scientists said,

did not prove that her claim was scientifically true. They would have had to witness the egg cell's development in the uterus to establish scientific proof, so many scientists still hang alot on that technicality and insist that no cases of human parthenogenesis have been proven.

No one denies that spontaneous parthenogenesis is widespread in other species. So far the following creatures (plus many more too numerous to mention) have been discovered to reproduce frequently by parthenogenesis: lizards, frogs, toads, bees, turkeys, etc. Spontaneous parthenogenesis in mammals, though, would certainly appear to be too infrequent an occurrence to warrant interest if it weren't for the discoveries made in the last century about induced parthenogenesis.

Doris Lessing was ahead of her time when she wrote in 1962:

*'Did you know that a woman can now have children without a man? ... You can apply ice to a woman's ovaries, for instance. She can have a child. Men are no longer necessary to humanity.'* (Golden Notebook)

But research in induced parthenogenesis, almost a century of it, has brought us very close to the day when men will be biologically unnecessary. The import of this has not been lost on male scientists and social scientists. Dr. Roderic Gorney in his book, *The Human Agenda* (1972), unabashedly revealed the anxiety and defensiveness men exhibit when faced with the prospect of induced parthenogenesis:

*While offhand it may not seem likely to appeal to many women, this technique has a prefabricated clientele waiting for it to reach The Reader's Digest. Such a woman somehow avoids getting into that kind of proximity to a man which might lead to an ordinary pregnancy, either because she doesn't like or is afraid of males, or both. Think what it could mean if women could decide to have children on their own, without fathers even of the anonymous donor variety, and be certain that the offspring would all be girls! ...*

*The emotional consequences alone are cause enough for concern. What happens to the already flagging self-esteem of men when they are further deflated by also being made genetically superfluous?*

*Then there is the question whether women so born and raised would establish relationships with men when they grew up. In the past it didn't much affect the community if some women elected to avoid men. Traditional reproductive arrangements saw to it that each generation of women (and men) who didn't relate to the opposite sex at least enough to somehow bring a viable sperm and egg together were left without progeny. But through parthenogenesis women with this makeup would be quite able to reproduce and pass on to their daughters an ever-mounting disdain for men that in several generations could lead*

to establishment of matriarchy, with eventual demand for separate statehood.<sup>6</sup>

Who can top that recipe for a women's revolution! A bloodless one and one not even requiring any energy to defeat the oppressors. But still we've a long way to go with the laboratory nitty-gritty before Dr. Gorney's paranoia will really be justified.

The first breakthrough in inducing parthenogenesis came in 1896 when Oskar Hertwig and his wife (I'd tell you her name if history had included it) found that if they added a little strychnine or chloroform to seawater containing sea-urchin eggs they began to develop without any contact with sperm. A Frenchman, Jacques Loeb, extended this experiment, and with almost no equipment, anyone can duplicate his work today. Here's how to make a crop of sister sea urchins:

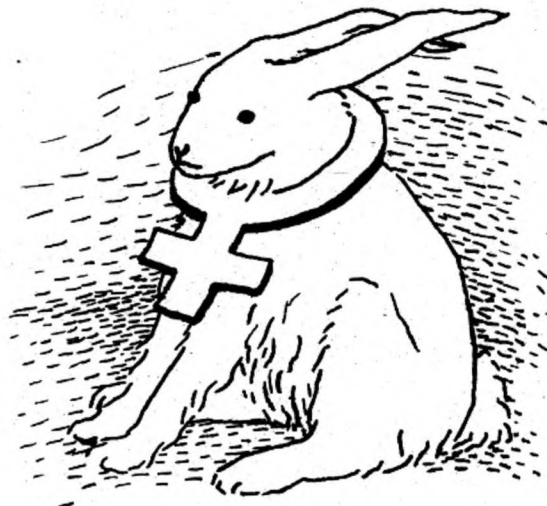
Place a female sea urchin upside down over a glass dish and either give her a mild shock using a six-volt dry cell battery or inject her with a mild potassium chloride salt solution. This will cause her to spill her eggs into the glass dish. Transfer the eggs to as many different containers as possible, each containing sea water. Now comes the tricky part. You'll have to experiment to find just the right amount of magnesium chloride to add to the seawater containing the eggs--try different proportions in each of the different containers. With some concentrated effort you should be able to produce normal live larval sea urchins.

A man with a sense of humor, Dr. A.D. Peacock, in his report to an Irish scientific gathering, pointed out how easy inducing parthenogenesis is by detailing 371 different ways he had produced sea urchins without a daddy.<sup>7</sup> But sea urchins were just the beginning. Frog eggs proved just as easy to induce parthenogenesis in, but they require a different technique. To parthenogenetically midwife a sister frog, you inject her with the blood of any pregnant mammal. This will cause her to drop several thousand eggs so you'll have lots of room for error. Then you very gently roll some of the eggs on blotting paper to remove the three layers of jelly which protect the egg. Next you spread the blood of a nonovulating frog (try several different ones, one is bound to work) over the exposed eggs and carefully prick the surface of each egg with a very fine glass needle. With any luck at all 5 to 10 per cent of the eggs so treated will begin to cleave and develop without the intrusion of any male sperm.

The eggs will begin to develop, but only a small percentage will make it to the tadpole stage, and odds are that very few if any will make it all the way to becoming full-fledged frogs. Why? Because of the same problem we found in gynogenesis--the frog egg has only half enough chromosomes. The "prick" which the sperm normally provides to start the egg cell developing can easily be replaced with the glass needle, but

still the egg will have only half enough chromosomes. Just as with gynogenesis, discussed earlier, the problem is to learn how to suppress the extrusion of the second polar body so that the developing zygote will have a full set of chromosomes.

Now we come to what Doris Lessing was referring to when she talked about applying ice to a woman's ovaries. Although she really was extrapolating too far from what has til now been accomplished, the application of ice to the fallopian tubes of the rabbit has worked in suppressing the extrusion of the second polar body, and normal rabbits with the full complement of chromosomes have been born without a father.



In 1940, Pincus and Shapiro succeeded in bringing the first rabbit parthenogene to full term by cooling the fallopian tubes just after ovulation. One live rabbit was born out of 200 chilled eggs.<sup>8</sup> Another method was tried by Thibault.<sup>9</sup> He caused the female rabbit to superovulate with a hormone injection, and then removed the eggs from the fallopian tubes surgically. He cooled the eggs in vitro for 24 hours at 10 degrees Centigrade and found that he could suppress the extrusion of the second polar body 96-97% of the time. Heating of the unfertilized rabbit eggs has also worked to produce live rabbits.

It should be noted that the heating and/or cooling techniques seem to both perform the "pricking" function and to insure that the second polar body is not extruded--so, if this method is perfected, gynogenesis as described before will be obsolete since the sperm will not be needed for the "pricking" function.

It may be a long step from the rabbit to humans -- or it may be shorter than we think, as Doris Lessing indicates. Certainly much remains to be done, but can we be sure that the scientists are working full speed ahead on a discovery which may be personally very threatening to them? My research indicates that there has been a pronounced slow down in parthenogenesis research. The (male) scientists are much more interested now in another method of artificial reproduction, one which has the "benefit" of producing male as well as female offspring.



## 5) Cloning

Recent articles in almost every popular magazine have made the cloning method of reproduction the most widely known and discussed of all the alternatives to male-female sexual reproduction. The mass imagination has been titillated with headlines like "Cloning a Full Team of Joe Namaths" or "Raquel Welches by the Thousands." Although the discovery of cloning techniques which would work with humans would allow more flexibility in the traits a potential mother would like her child to have than does parthenogenesis, the interest in cloning is really being generated by men who see it as their last chance to perpetuate themselves if women really do stop fucking.

So, although women should know everything possible about the advances in this field, unless we are able to patent the secret ourselves on this one, we might better hope that parthenogenesis is the method of artificial reproduction which will work with humans, and not cloning.

So far, the highest creatures to be successfully cloned with live offspring resulting are grass frogs and African clawed frogs (as far as we know from what has been reported). As was mentioned earlier, the American Medical Association called for a moratorium on this kind of research in 1972, and not much new has been publicly announced since then.

Basically, this is how cloning works with the frog: First, the frog egg is pricked with a clean glass needle. In a few minutes the nucleus will rotate into position underneath the prick. The nucleus can then be removed from the egg by inserting a glass needle under it and lifting it out of the egg. Now the enucleated egg (what's left after the nucleus is removed) has its triple jelly coat removed, as in induced parthenogenesis, either chemically or by gentle rubbing on blotting paper, and it is placed in a petri dish containing a special culture medium. Already in the culture medium is a one or two day old frog embryo which has developed via the normal route of sexual fertilization. A microscope is used now to operate on this donor embryo in order to remove one of its cells. Two very slender glass needles are used like chop sticks to lift the cell out. The next step is very difficult and needs a steady hand. The cell from the donor embryo is drawn up into a micropipette with a diameter slightly smaller than that of the cell itself. The smaller diameter is used so that a very small tear will occur when the cell is drawn up into the pipette -- if it is too large the nucleus will be damaged or if there is no tear on the surface of the cell the nucleus will remain isolated from the host egg's cytoplasm and the transplant will fail. So, a just right size hole is made in the cell membrane by drawing it into the micropipette and then, finally, the micropipette with the cell at its tip is pushed deep into the enucleated egg and deposited there. This method, if it is done right, is almost 99% effective in producing live tadpoles.

Cloning of humans by this same method would be extremely difficult since the human egg is only about 1/10 the size of the frog egg, and there is hardly any chance of getting it into a micropipette (even if one could be made that small) without damaging it. Recently, however, there have been some new techniques developed in cell-fusion which may make this easier. Also, it appears that the nucleus of the recipient egg need not be surgically removed, but can just be deactivated by either a laser beam or a tiny beam of ultraviolet light. So, theoretically, as the pulp magazines never tire of reminding us, it will be possible to produce a thousand little Einsteins, if enough "mothers" could be found who wouldn't mind incubating them in their wombs for nine months, and, if Einstein were alive today or had left his cells in storage. They would be as alike as identical twins and, of course, have no part of "the mother" in them.

As the magazines never do seem to remember to point out, two women could have a child together via this method. That is, if the donor mother's cell could be fused with the carrier mother's egg cell so there would be 46 chromosomes. Or one woman could simply reproduce herself, as many times as she wanted to, by having one of her own body cells introduced into her enucleated egg. (The intestinal cell will be the most likely to work as it is the least differentiated in the body and can "forget" its old role in the donor's body and "learn" its new role in making a baby better than any other kind of cell.)

Of course, men are not blind to the fact that even via this process the egg cell is still required, and hence they are subject to a woman's allowing them to remove her eggs. So, the latest efforts are in the direction of joining any two cells (not sex cells) who would "forget" their old role and begin to create a new organism. Success, so far reported, has been limited to a carrot.

The cloning method of reproduction would, of course, be a graphic depiction of the way men have always seen women -- as vessels to stick it in and vessels to carry their children in. Men might well expect women to refuse this dubious honor of allowing men to use them as xerox machines for reproducing themselves. Just in case, they are fast at work on artificial wombs. So far these glass and steel contraptions have not been able to "carry" any kind of animal to full term. No one has figured out how to duplicate the marvelous life support system that is the placenta, but a lot of money is going into this. Check the splashy full color photo essays on artificial wombs in *Life* (see resources below).

Of course, all of these advances could be very useful in the hands of women. Some women might very much like to turn-over the cumbersome business of carrying a fetus around for nine months to a machine. Indeed, the artificial womb could release women from the last vestige of biological inequality as Shulamith Firestone pointed out in *The Dialectic*

of Sex. Although in this article I have shown the alternatives to fucking and having to use male chromosomes to birth the future generation, Shulamith stresses that we need an alternative to pregnancy itself which she says is "barbaric." As she reminds us, birth is not the earth mother bliss Lamazeists crack it up to be, but "like shitting a pumpkin,"

PAINFUL!<sup>10</sup> If women were able to control the use of the artificial womb, it might turn out to be one of the most important contributions to the freedom of women ever. And similarly, if women were in control of cloning, many women would be very excited about their new ability to have a child together -- especially since there would be a 100% certainty of having a daughter. But how likely is it that the knowledge and tools will be in the hands of women? Our reproductive lives are now in the hands of men almost entirely -- from the males who make the birth control devices to the male doctor who delivers the baby -- or does the abortion. What are the chances that women will be able to take control of their own reproductive lives and that they will want to control these new, and perhaps frightening, alternative methods of reproduction?

Whatever our feelings, whether we are morally repelled by this kind of tampering with nature, or sure we never want children anyway, or content to have them by the usual method, none of us can afford to ignore the potential (for good and/or evil) which is developing in the scientific laboratories. We can only hope that women will see that this is a new but crucial political battleground -- one we can't afford to walk away from.

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3. R.A. Beatty, "Fertilization by Genetically Inactivated Spermatozoa," *Effects of Ionizing Radiation on the Reproductive System* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1964), p. 231.
4. Robert T. Francoeur, *Utopian Motherhood*. (New Jersey: A.S. Barnes and Co., 1973) p. 140.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Dr. Roderic Gorney, *The Human Agenda* (New York: Bantam, 1973) p.221.
7. Francoeur, *op. cit.*, pp. 134-135.
8. R.A. Beatty, *Parthenogenesis and Polyploidy in Mammalian Development* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1957), p. 37.
9. *Ibid.*

10. Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex* (New York: Bantam, 1971) p. 199.

Special thanks to Cheri Brown, Zoologist, for her advice on this article.

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#### ADDENDA

A few days before we went to press with this issue, I found a new book by a woman with exciting relevant information. Maya Pines has just published a book called *The Brain Changers* in which the following information about altering gender appears:

...it is already possible to alter sex during a critical period right after birth by an injection of hormones that act on the infant rat's brain.

Maya Pines says, "in the beginning all brains are female," and then goes on to quote Dr. Seymour Levine of Stanford University as saying:

*It is an additive process. The proper male hormones must act upon the brain at the proper time for the brain to send patterns of maleness throughout the system. If the brain is not triggered in time, the fetus remains female. It is a struggle to become a male.*

Depriving a newborn rat of male hormones for 24 hours has been found to cause a male rat to become functionally female. Ms. Pines casually remarks that if one were dealing with human beings, the injections would have to take place before birth.



# EMILY

by PAT EMMERSON

The 4:40 sent a sharp blast through the thick fog and a great grey cat-erpillar dragged its belly clackety clackety through town. Me and that train, the only signs of life in this town. The top light reflected off the fog. JOHN'S TAXI 843-4400. I thought of Emily. As I drove through the damp silent streets I thought of fat Emily. I had loved her with her sausage fingers and fat breasts; her mouth that laughed in whispers and her ruthless razor tongue. As I turned right onto Forest I heard the tires grab the pavement. I pulled into an all night diner.

"Coffee," I told the pale waitress behind the counter. Her hair was messed up and a pimple threatened to erupt on her chin. She set my coffee down with thin freckled hands and her eyes showed red around the pale blue center. She looked tired and I wanted to tell her it was all right she could go to sleep now everyone was taken care of. But I didn't. I shoved two dimes across the crumbs.

"Any business this time in the morning?" she yawned.

"Not much." I answered, lighting a cigarette.

"Not here either. You drive all night?"

"Yeah."

"I do too. I mean I work all night. Not drive." She let out a little laugh. Sharp. Not in whispers. "I get tired. I don't like it. How about you?"

"Oh, it's O.K. Why don't you quit? Look for something during the day?" I said, staring into my coffee cup.

"Yeah," she answered softly. "I tried but there's not much available here in this town. I tried once working for Mr. Hardin at the variety, but he only pays \$1.05 and that don't buy much. I'd like to get married but there ain't much lookin' around here either."

"Why don't you leave? There's other places. You haven't been everywhere."

"I don't know where I'd go. Maybe over to Phillips but it ain't much better over there. At least I know people here."

"I know what you mean." The faint sound of a radio playing country western drifted in from the back room. Something about heartache. I tried to hear it. The waitress leaned back against the milkshake machine and chewed the skin on her fingers.

"You like driving?" she finally asked.

"Sometimes."

"Do men bother you, drunks and things like that?"

"Sometimes."

"They do here, too."

I drained my cup. Emily floated in the bottom of it.

"I gotta go. Only an hour left but I gotta get going. See ya." She stood there in the empty diner, leaned up against that milkshake machine, chewing her fingers and erupting pimples and putting in her time. Maybe I'll go back there sometime, I thought. Maybe she needs me.

Emily's name kept knocking at my brain as I slowly circled town. That great empty hole she left when she picked up everything else welled up inside of me. I bit my tongue. Why I loved her, that crazy woman, I guess I'll never know. She was devastating. I shook my head. Just let yourself in for it, didn't you Gail? Frail Gail. I pushed the accelerator hard onto the floor. A blue light flashed in the rear view. I pulled over. Mr. Cop sauntered up to my window. I rolled it down and looked up at him innocently.

"Hi, Gail," he said with a sigh. "What's the idea?" He sounded very tired of the whole thing and we had just gotten started. "You were doing sixty. Do you know you were doing sixty?"

"Yes officer, I mean no officer. I know I had my foot on the floor but I had no idea this piece of junk would do sixty."

"Have your license on you?"

"Right here, Paul." I pulled my taxi license out of my back pocket.

"I got to sight you."

"Yeah, I know." I watched as he wrote out the ticket. All business. What the hell. He didn't just lose Emily. What does he know. What do I care. I shoved the ticket into my pocket and waved as he drove off. Bastard. Goddamn insensitive bastard.

I decided to drive past Emily's. Just to see the old place. My heart pounded in my throat as I turned toward the outskirts. The sun showed red on the horizon and burned off the low fog. Two dogs heisted their legs on a lamppost.

There it is I screamed in my head, my ears burning. There's where fat Emily told me to split. For no good reason. Three long months of beautiful union. How could she do that? I sighed. And after all we had done together. Like the silverware we picked out down to Goodwill. We got the rose pattern. She wanted the rose ones. We were lucky to get a whole set. Some of them don't exactly match up. Some of them have a different kind of rose, like a climber. But basically they're pretty much the same. Four knives and six forks and ten spoons we got. Before we just used plastic because I didn't have anything and neither did she. But then we got that silverware and it was ours.

There was the rings, too. I got her one as a symbol. The night we met down at the Anchor. God I remember it so well. Me, just sitting there spinning my beer and looking around. Hardly anyone was there except Freddie and Joyce. Then in walks Emily. She laughed those little whispers and she was alone. Her teeth were like fragile hope that crumbles when you touch it. Her mouth, a dream that tortures your sleep. And her breasts. Her fat warm breasts. Like everchanging clouds in a high wind. She noticed me right off. I asked her to my place. That's when I gave her the ring. It had an aquamarine in the middle. My birthstone but I think hers is something like it. Anyway, she liked it. I said, "Keep it as a symbol." Two days later she bought me one almost like it. I still wear it. She took hers off but I still wear mine.

My radio was silent. I yawned and stretched at the next light; figured I'd go park and wait it out. Only fifteen minutes.

Emily waited with me. Goddamn woman hangs around my head like bums around lampposts. Maybe we just weren't suited, I thought. I've thought about it a lot. Me, with my crazy dreams and Emily so practical. Maybe she just couldn't stand that. Jesus, we could have had a life together. We could have gone back down to the Goodwill and got some more dishes. Some rugs maybe. I would buy them for her. She knew I would. But she didn't want me to anymore. I guess that's the way it goes. One of you in love and the other one just doesn't care. But it's a crying shame. It really is. Just a crying shame.

6:00 and time to turn in my car. I figured I might just drive back by that diner when I got off. Maybe the waitress needs a ride home or something. I could give her that.

# new ink

reviews by gina

FROM TIPI TO SKYSCRAPER -- A History of Women in Architecture  
Doris Cole

I Press (paper) \$3.95 136 pp.

This book is valuable as the first of its kind and provides a lot of herstorical information otherwise hard to find, though it has gaps in vision where the author's feminist consciousness leaves off, and gaps in information where her definitions of "architect" close in. The book, which covers the geographic area of the United States, begins with a history of Native architecture -- Indian women having been the designers and builders of tipis, igloos, pueblos, hogans, and longhouses. American pioneer women in Doris Cole's documentation prove to be ingenious in their architectural inventions, as they had to be working outside the established professions as they were, with no one's help or approval or money but their own. A good example of this is Mary Bethune, a Black woman who started her own college in Florida, building it herself from scrap lumber, and mashing elderberries for ink. As Doris Cole moves into the twentieth century, and women begin to gain a toe-hold in professional architecture, she begins to forget the deep and common roots that many women shared in designing buildings -- the rest of the book focuses primarily on women in the field of architecture as it is now professionally (male) defined.

As a herstory book From Tipi to Skyscraper is a comprehensive, needed tool. If you'd like to know what women are doing now as pioneers in architecture, see the newest Country Women (#9), subtitled "Structures" -- an inspiring collection of women's experiences as architects and builders of their own homes (75¢ from Country Women, Box 51, Albion, CA, 95410).

AMAZON EXPEDITION -- A Lesbian Feminist Anthology

Edited by Phyllis Birkby, Bertha Harris, Jill Johnston, Esther Newton, and Jane O'Wyatt.

Times Change Press (paper) \$1.75 93 pp.

This very sparse anthology includes a few articles that can be called lesbian feminist in perspective -- an old classic by Ti-Grace Atkinson,



two articles by Jill Johnston (one reprinted from her *Village Voice* column and the other from *Ms.*), and an article by Bertha Harris on lesbian society in Paris in the 1920's.

Also included are a feminist parable and an article on sexual abuse of children, by Florence Rush, an article on man-hating by Joanna Russ, one on Emily Dickinson by Rebecca Patterson, a personal account of adolescent "madness" by Esther Newton, and documentation of a woman's attempt, in the 1870's, to set up a matriarchal community in rural Massachusetts.

#### IN LOVE AND TROUBLE -- Stories of Black Women

Alice Walker

Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc. (hardcover) \$6.50 138 pp.

These are spirited, moving stories of southern Black women, written with a sense of humour that never overlooks the tragic.

#### BY A WOMAN WRITT -- Literature from Six Centuries By and About Women

Edited by Joan Goulios

Penguin Books (paper) \$2.45 379 pp.

The most thoroughly researched and unflinchingly feminist of the anthologies I've seen, by a Woman writt includes letters, diaries, autobiographies, poetry and fiction by twenty women whose work has until now remained obscure and often out of print.

#### I'M NOT YOUR LAUGHING DAUGHTER

Ellen Bass

University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst (hardcover) \$7. 84 pp.

In her first book of poetry Ellen Bass traces memories of her girlhood and of a period of time spent in Japan, with gentle imagery and a use of understatement that allows for a finely tuned sense of ambiguity but sometimes trails off into meaninglessness. The "Japanese Notebooks" section gives a fine complex account of two women-friends who are trying to ignore their sexual feelings for each other. (My one outstanding complaint is that this book was printed as a \$7 hardback when it could have been produced and sold for 1/5 the cost with a paper cover. It's time for feminist authors to take some responsibility for making their work available to all women who want access to it.)

#### PIT STOP

Pat Parker

The Women's Press Collective, 5251 Broadway, Oakland, CA 94618 \$1. 44 pp.

Pat Parker's second book of poems explores in simple and honest language the ever-narrowing options available to Black lesbian feminists --

Who do you trust? -- and comes up with a sensibility and vision too complex and feeling to be expressed by political rhetoric of any color or sex.

#### A WOMAN IS TALKING TO DEATH

Judy Grahn; with pictures by Karen Sjoholn

The Women's Press Collective \$1.25

This poem is one of the most moving deep and true experiences I've ever had in reading anything. Karen Sjoholn's pictures are a powerful counterpoint to the words, and include a beautiful full-color painting that is (among other kinds of wonder) a technical wonder of an achievement for the Women's Press Collective. If you didn't read *A Woman Is Talking To Death* in Volume 2 #2 of *Amazon Quarterly* by all means order the book from the Press Collective. Or if you did read it, consider a gift for a friend or yourself.

#### WOMEN AND LITERATURE -- An Annotated Bibliography of Women Writers

Second Edition, revised and expanded \$1.25 58 pp.

The Sense and Sensibility Collective, 57 Ellery St., Cambridge, MA 02138

An excellent sourcebook with critical summaries of each of the 400 works included -- fiction only. (Copies can be ordered directly from the Sense and Sensibility Collective; bulk rates too.)

#### WOMEN AND THEIR SEXUALITY IN THE NEW FILM

Joan Mellen

Horizon Press (paper) \$4.95 255 pp.

This book is a series of essays about female characters in major American and European films of the last several years. In a chapter on lesbianism in films, Joan Mellen dissects every film with lesbian content and finds all the usual male fantasies and cultural (male) stereotypes, which she denounces as clearly untrue presentations of lesbianism and as more or less transparent ploys of the fearful male ego behind each film. She doesn't quite know where to go from there, though; lesbianism is never really incorporated into the feminist ideas she uses in the rest of the book.

#### THE LESBIAN MYTH -- Insights and Conversations

Bettie Wysor

Random House (hardcover) \$8.95 438 pp.

This is a major new non-fiction book about lesbianism, by a woman who speaks positively of us, with conviction, and obviously from her own experience, yet does not say she's a lesbian -- a concession she may have made thinking it would validate her words as an "objective observer," but one which actually invalidates much of what she says, and shows that

she really doesn't think her readers will believe her statements about the health and normality of lesbians -- a paranoia that may be justified, as the book seems meant for a "general" (non-lesbian) audience. I must confess that I haven't actually read through the book yet, as the price is high and the publisher didn't send a review copy, so I can't make sweeping generalizations or even recommend or not recommend. I can describe: the first half of the book explores the myths about homosexuality perpetrated through theology, science, and literature. At some points, mostly in discussing literature, Bettie Wysor separates lesbians from male homosexuals, but in most of her arguments she refers to homosexuality in general. Her perspective is feminist to an extent but she seems to have deeper ties to the "gay" movement.

The second half of *The Lesbian Myth* consists of transcripts of four taped group discussions with lesbians on topics ranging from Lesbian Mothers to Gay Activists. The discussion titled "Lesbian Lifestyles" is held with a group of white upper-middle-class professional women, all of whom hold doctorate or post-doctorate degrees. As you may guess, they present a narrow range of lesbian lifestyles, and tend to be extremely concerned with maintaining their social positions, hiding evidence of their lesbianism, etc.

The book as a whole is a very positive statement considering the culture in which it was written. It may, depending on where you're at, either bring you support and encouragement in affirming your lesbian identity and struggling free of patriarchal stereotypes, or make you depressingly aware of how far we have to go.

#### LAVENDER JANE LOVES WOMEN

(Women's Wax Works A001)

Alix Dobkin (vocals and guitar), Kay Gardner (flute), Jody Vogel (cello), Patches Attom (bass), Marilyn Reese (engineering), the Great Patriarchal Reunion and assorted other sisters and daughters

Women's Music Network, Inc., 215 W. 92nd St., New York, NY 10025 \$5.35

For all the women who've listened diligently to female musicians for traces of lesbianism, or even sisterhood, in record albums, and have had to find encouragement and identification in the most obtuse hints or by changing strategic "he's" to "she's" -- here is the first up-front lesbian feminist album. *Lavender Jane Loves Women* is musically as well as politically a very fine and loving production, an energizing and inspiring sign of our emerging women's culture. On the next page are the words for one song from the record -- *Hearts and Struggles Music* hopes to publish a songbook with words and music for all the songs by Fall 1974. The record can be ordered directly from the Women's Music Network (bulk rates are available).



## A WOMAN'S LOVE



*Because she's a woman  
I didn't think I loved her  
So unexpected;  
We just stood and smiled  
And I felt so fine  
And it was so right inside, but  
How could I know I loved her  
Because she's a woman?*

*Words and Music  
by Alix Dobkin  
Copyright 1973*

*Hearts and Struggles Music*



*Because she's a woman  
Confusion hid my feelings  
I tried to name it  
Everything but love (but)  
Like a magic dream  
It would not be turned aside, but  
Softly and warmly it held me  
Because she's a woman*

*Because she's a woman  
She doesn't try to change me  
She knows and understands  
A woman's ways  
And I feel so free  
To be what she sees in me, it's so  
Easy to be her lover  
Because she's a woman*

*I realize a woman's place is in my home, and I know  
We've always been in love, and so it shall be  
For Liza and me*

*Because I'm a woman  
A way was laid out for me  
I always thought I'd need  
A man to love  
(and) While the men I've known were as  
Loving as they could be there's  
No one can match her beauty  
Because she's a woman, and she  
Feels so much the  
Sweet touch of a  
Woman's love.*



## SULA/a review/ by Audre Lorde

SULA, by Toni Morrison. 174 pp. New York, Knopf. 1974.

"Oh, they'll love me, all right. It will take time, but they'll love me."

Toni Morrison. Black. Woman. Poet. Flowing in and out of those words are fire and ice.

Sula Peace is another planet in the universe of Black girls/women inhabited by the blasted Pecola, a young Black girl whose waste is pictured in *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison's first novel.

Sula opens with mad Shadrack proclaiming National Suicide Day in the Bottom, a hilltop section relegated to Blacks in the small Ohio town of Medallion. It closes with the keening voice of one Black woman's sorrow. These two events are separated by the growth, maturity and/or death of many inhabitants of the Bottom, as well as other crystalline indicatives of change within Medallion itself, between 1919 and 1965. But both events are attempts to touch something which is human and redemptive -- self -- lying at the core of a painful and inhuman world.

The heart of this book is the friendship between two Black girls who grow into Black women in the Ohio town of Medallion. Sula Peace and Nel Wright meet at twelve, when they are both "Wishbone thin and dreaming of princes." Black and female, they are primed to fight an ancient battle, using each other as weapon and adversary.

As children, they mirror each other's thoughts and share each other's pain. This was the time when, in Sula's later thoughts, "we were two throats and one eye and we had no price." But after a ten year separation, they come together again as young women. And Sula, who left the Bottom and returned, becomes for Nel, who married and remained, at first a vicarious taste of freedom returned, and then a threat to everything Nel must now accept as the fabric of her living.

As such, the plot line is familiar, although seldom dealt with as a reality in the lives of Black women. But this struggle is only one distortion of living superimposed, throughout the book, upon a primary and most deadly other distortion: that one of growing into womanhood, Black, in a white man's world. It is this distortion which once led Sula's grandmother, Eva, to place her leg across a train track, hoping to buy a future for her children with the insurance payments. It is this distortion which leads Helene, Nel's mother, to crucify her young daughter on a cross of endless hot combs to straighten her crispy hair, and end-

less clothespins to raise and narrow her flat nose. It is this distortion that drives the same humiliated Helene to nonetheless vomit her dazzling smile upon the rudeness and insult of a salmon-faced southern train conductor. As her daughter, Nel, watches from the aisle of the train, it is this same distortion which turns the proud and beautiful Helene forever into jelly within her daughter's shocked, embarrassed eyes.

The book *Sula* deals with love that can be misshapen and frightened into hatred. For hatred -- necessary, self-protective, or cleansing -- can seem terribly useful in the absence of any real power over the forces that affect our lives. And hatred is a painful and ultimately self-destructive lesson that Black women have often learned from having to love in desperate and inhuman situations.

As her infant son Plum screams in the constipated agony of starvation, Eva's love uses the last bit of lard in her wintery house to either open up his bowels or put him out of his misery. Plum survives, to grow into a man, years later, who returns from war as an example of living waste. And so it is Eva who kills him, in love, burning out his drug addiction in a sacrificial fire of kerosene; explaining years later to her daughter: "I had room enough in my heart, but not in my womb, not no more. I birthed him once. I couldn't do it again."

But Plum dies no less kindly than his niece, Sula. Decades later, lying helpless and alone, Sula passes through pain into the neutrality of death, her last thought a wish to share this final secret with Nel. And yet, the harsh truth is also that "the death of Sula Peace was the best news folks up in the Bottom had had since the promise of work at the tunnel."

Earlier, as Sula returns after ten years away, open and alien, the love between Sula and Nel becomes one with the hatred that sustains the Black folk of the Bottom. It becomes one with the hatred which sears both mother and daughter after Sula overhears her mother's "...I love Sula. I just don't like her." And it becomes one with the terrible ritual of defilement and death into which the young girls are almost casually driven, following that overheard remark.

From this ritual, neither the twelve-year-old girls, nor the undressed twigs they dig with, nor the five-year-old boy, Chicken, can escape. The twigs are buried in the littered earth, and the boy is drowned. In a beautiful and devastating scene, the budding girls symbolically violate, bury, and then avenge the pain of their growing sense of the enormity of their sexual role in a racist world.

But Sula, with the mark of a burning rose upon her face and the inner rage she shares with Nel but cannot compromise, is not merely an allegorical trip into our own furies. She is as clear and as real and as remembered as the hot blood we all heard in our ears under adolescent

blankets.

She is as real to me as the dark Sister sitting beside me in a street-car who, when I told her she was beautiful, got up and changed her seat to sit beside a white man. When one part of yourself leaves another part behind, the pain of stretching can be almost beyond endurance -- especially when you do not break.

Morrison captures this gut pain with vigorous and evocative language which sings out like the legends beneath our skin. With little insistence but much clarity, she lays out the permutations that can occur in the lives of Black women. She presents them in vignette-like relationships for all of us to learn from, who will.

In the end, because hatred seems a more powerful distortion than corrupting and weakening love, Nel must accuse Sula of the same cruelty which she so patiently accepts from her husband, Jude. For her own sanity, Nel must believe that it is Sula who "had twisted her love (Nel's) for her own children into something so thick and monstrous she was afraid to show it lest it break loose and smother them with its heavy paw." In other words, Nel must blame Sula for the wasting emptiness of Nel's life. After all, who else? Hadn't she learned the difficult lesson that she tells the dying Sula? "You can't do it all. You a woman and a colored woman at that. You can't act like a man. You can't be walking around all independent-like, doing whatever you like, taking what you want, leaving what you don't."

But when Sula dies, taking her reasons with her, Nel and the other Black folk of the Bottom learn their real need of her. For even though in an unlovely world it is easier to be pushed by hatred than to deal with the many faces of love, Nel leaves Sula's grave with a dawning sense of her own real loss.

If the character of Sula becomes shadowy toward the end of the book, it is because the people of the Bottom, including Nel, need to deal with her in those terms only; they can only understand Sula Peace through her shadows.

The author has taken the particular experience of her characters and used that experience to stir within us some piece of each woman's truth; sharp and unforgettable as a stomach cramp. And because Morrison does not lie in Sula, nor shrink from fingering those bonds, destructive and redemptive, which exist between Black women as well as between them and Black men, her book may make some women enemies, skin-deep. But the women in Sula will eventually speak out to each of us, through those experiences which separate us, to those feelings which connect us.

"Oh, they'll love me, all right. It will take time, but they'll love me."



## S I S T E R S !

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# THE CITY OF GOD

by Robin Morgan

(in memoriam Milena Jesenska)

"The question, simply, is: How can one be a saint without God?"  
--Albert Camus

I just got up. Incredible. I just got up  
and lurched downstairs to put on water for tea  
and wait for it to boil.  
But I am the one who is simmering  
already, and my god, I just got up.

What a cosmic error,  
to have decided to sit at the kitchen table  
and wait for the water to boil.

Look at the cockroach egg laid precisely  
in the crack between the table leaves.  
Another member of the colony is crawling up one chairleg,  
having heard, no doubt, about the crumbheaps  
left in the tufts of the chair cushions  
whenever the four-year-old passes through.  
Lower-east-side ninety-five-degree Manhattan July  
lies flat in the rooms, not even air enough to stir  
the coy dustballs nestled in corners,  
under the furniture, in the crotch of each stairstep.  
No Saint Elmo's Fire here,  
but filth enough to cause Saint Jerome  
nine mystical orgasms.

I try looking up, away--another mistaken assumption, embodying  
only the ceiling. Low anyway as the New York smog,  
it chuggles cracked plaster, peeling paint,  
discolorations, across my gaze.  
To say nothing of the moon craters,  
holes the size of my clenched fist  
left there from the last time we tore down a wall.  
It was to give the illusion of greater space;  
time being what it is, the holes remain,  
now and then belching little chunklets of plaster  
or an exposed beam's offsprung splinter down,  
like mini-inverted volcanoes, extinct we imagine,  
reminding us of their presence  
in the blank, skun face of heaven.

There are holes in the face of hell too, of course:  
jagged chasms yawning between the antique floorboards,  
gorges which have been patched and filled so many times,  
only to warp again at the slightest weight.  
Cockroaches crawl amicably up through them, and lately  
giant water beetles--they're a treat only Saint Francis could love.  
I start to meditate on whether the downstairs cockroaches  
have met their brothers upstairs, whether each has some intimation  
that there are comrades near, or not.  
I wonder if it would be kind  
to bring one of these from the table to meet a sister by the sink,  
or to transport three or four--a small collective--

to parley with the batch upstairs. But which batch?  
Elitist of me to choose.

After all, there are roaches in the child's room,  
reeling like science-fiction monsters  
through the doll-house doors;  
intellectual roaches who patrol the chessboard,  
music lovers who jostle the wires and wheels of the phonograph  
(which is of course unplayable and a cast-of-thousands production  
to get fixed, dear Jude, patron of hopeless projects).  
There are the roaches who make insectual advances  
to my sleeping body, on those memorable nights  
when I bound out of bed, sweating,  
to shudder them off--factual visitations  
more ingenious than my nightmares.  
Is this the phallus of their lord, Theresa?  
When I light the oven, infrequently in summer,  
roaches run from all the burners  
like Albigensians scurrying, singed, from the fire.  
I wish their reproductive habits were as chaste.  
There was one frozen to death on the lowest refrigerator shelf,  
next to something left uncovered, rotting.  
No wonder you hunger-struck, Ms. Weil.  
There was one in a glass of wine I had stupidly left  
standing for half an hour, floating feet up  
like a happy, dead Li Po.  
There was an egg-sac affixed to a sheaf of my poems yesterday.  
Meanwhile, my frénzied spraying merely  
mutates their species, poisons our lungs.

Not that I want to be obsessed with roaches.  
They are, after all, only one familiar symptom  
of the malaise I sicken and die of, this one-dimensional  
city summer of 1973, everything flat as a bad painting.  
The money-worries, for instance,  
which make me feel that poor, desperate Iscariot  
was royally had.  
Or the door on the downstairs cabinet  
which falls on your foot when you unforgettingly swing it open,  
or the clutter of errands undone:  
shoes that need gluing, the faucet oozing  
rust over an intrepidly stained tub, the grit on the windowsills,  
the windowframes that stick and slant  
like a Dr. Caligari set or a vision of Saint Dymphna's.

Small comfort, that I vow the next time anyone pontificates  
a correct line on poverty and privilege to me  
they will get smashed on their downwardly mobile nose.

What about the windows, the panes themselves,  
given up on, given over to dirt,  
all but opaque with grime, except where streaked  
by pigeon crap, or my small son's hieroglyphic alphabet?  
What good would it do to wash them and look through?  
I have been there, I know what is there:  
the whores shaking like saplings under a winter wind  
in the blast of July, for a fix?  
The pimps modeling patent leather and white linen?  
The human shit on the sidewalk, pillowing the drunk  
who speaks his dreams aloud in gape-mouthed mumbles?

Last week, in the bus, I was preoccupied with feet.  
So many were in sandals, almost squinting  
at a light they rarely see.  
One woman's toes, grotesque contortions cramped beneath  
a brave facade of purple polish--  
I missed my stop, with staring.  
Who could heal such feet?

To say nothing of Mao Tse-Tung's alarm  
that Watergate is hurting Nixon's reputation.  
Or of my ill and aging mother now having to pay  
the interest of her last years caring for a husband,  
a terminal cancer patient, and a cranky obnoxious old prick,  
even when well. Smile  
enigmatically at that, Saint Anne.  
France tested a brand-new nuclear "device" last week,  
drought bloats the sub-Sahara,  
and India's Untouchables are being massacred anew  
for their salvation.

Where do I begin, this time?  
To break the inertia, find the motor, churn the woman  
and the man and even the child into cheerful and frenetic action?  
And if  
we rewired the dangling cables, patched up the holes in roof and floor,  
whirled like dervishes in a holy delirium of paint, wax, polish, soap, spray,  
and took to the shoemakers, cleaners, repairshop,  
and then picked up from the shoemakers, cleaners, repairshop,



Martha, what then? Give me some helpful hints  
on what revolutionary cleaning agent  
could make the women on the corner put forth leaves again,  
rinse the bum's mouth with rosewater,  
straighten and anoint those gnarled, nailpolished claws?  
What can dust off my mother's life  
or scrub the air shiny again?  
How many locusts would feed the sub-Saharans?  
What can scour the old men and teach the new ones  
to pick up after themselves?  
What scarf is large enough, Veronica, to take the imprint  
of so many Untouched faces?  
What can recycle them?

To say nothing of having contempt for my own self-pity,  
drawn into the Cabrini whirlpool of others' pain.  
To say nothing of being detested or trumpeted politically,  
but not understood.

To say nothing.

I have utterly lost the energy they sing at me about.  
My energy, my energy, how I give it to them in waves, rays,  
bursts, like sunlight. Hallelujah, how they bask in it.  
The sun is dying, they forget, a star in some addict's blind eye  
rapidly burning itself out.  
What should I fix up this time, and watch decay?

The water is almost boiling.  
I can't believe it, I just got up.  
Already my ribcage is cast in bronze,  
the congestion in my chest literal, as if  
I had swallowed a lump of sponge.  
The exterminator is due around noon, but it's early yet.  
The house is waking into morning sounds, tightening around me.  
Doors slamming open, bureaus yawning their drawer jaws in protest,  
a toilet flushing more waste toward the rivers.  
A man's footsteps overhead,  
a small boy's voice, complaining.  
Maria, deposed and co-opted, look how my child  
is growing to schools which will rob him  
of whatever grace and curiosity he still wears  
like the nimbus encircling your blissful infant Horus  
plumped on his momma Isis' lap.

And what word could descend  
to melt the silence between this man with whom I live  
and me, this woman half-alive?  
What blessing for his pain? No usual struggle-phase, this--  
he who has also spotted god as an immense green mantis  
rotating eyes unseeing over what it reaches for, uncaring.  
What miracle?

The water has boiled and will crack the pot  
if I don't turn it off.

Politics is not enough.  
Poetry is not enough.  
Nothing is not enough.

If I could smash the carapace.

Only God would be enough, and She  
is constricted inside my torture-chamber ribs,  
this whole planet one bubble that floats briefly  
from her drowning mouth  
up toward breaking.

Oh my God, if I could wholly love Thee,  
wholly be Mine own, then I would not be snared  
in loving all these fragments of Thee.  
Let it be done, once, complete, total.  
Look at Thy doorstep, Mother, Thy feet,  
where I lie in all my pieces.  
See the fear that streams from my bladder.  
My own divinity asphyxiates within me.

Let me take myself by force, yes Heaven,  
or by pity or even by patience.  
But let me not remain diasporic to myself,  
shards, mosaics, clues, riddles, fossils  
all my loves, creations, fears, failures, triumphs.

Peel back, universe, to the slum of your meaning.  
Let me recognize one other like me, in the drains.  
Mother, ah,  
let me sleep in the buzzing breath  
of Thy preoccupied embrace.

FROM  
AN  
OLD  
HOUSE  
IN  
AMERICA

—————  
by Adrienne Rich

1.

Deliberately, long ago  
the carcasses

of old bugs crumbled  
into the rut of the window

and we started sleeping here  
Fresh June bugs batter this June's

screens, June-lightning batters  
the spiderweb

I sweep the wood-dust  
from the wood-box

the snout of the vacuum cleaner  
sucks the past away

2.

Other lives were lived here:  
mostly un-articulate

yet someone left her creamy signature  
in the trail of rusticated

narcissus straggling up  
through meadowgrass and vetch

Families breathed close  
boxed-in from the cold

hard times, short growing season  
the old rainwater cistern

hulks in the cellar

3.

Like turning through the contents of a drawer:  
these rusted screws, this empty vial

useless, this box of water-color paints  
dried to insolubility -

but this -  
this pack of cards with no card missing

still playable  
and three good fuses

and this toy: a little truck  
scarred red, yet all its wheels still turn

The humble tenacity of things  
waiting for people, waiting for months, for years

4.

Often rebuked, yet always back returning



I place my hand on the hand

of the dead, invisible palm-print  
on the doorframe

spiked with daylilies, green leaves  
catching in the screen door

or I read the backs of old postcards  
curling from thumbtacks, winter and summer

fading through cobweb-tinted panes -  
white church in Norway

Dutch hyacinths bleeding azure  
red beach on Corsica

set-pieces of the world  
stuck to this house of plank

I flash on wife and husband  
embattled, in the years

that dried, dim ink was wet  
those signatures

5.

If they call me man-hater, you  
would have known it for a lie

but the YOU I want to speak to  
has become your death

If I dream of you in these days  
I know my dreams are mine and not of you

yet something hangs between us  
older and stranger than ourselves

like a translucent curtain, a sheet of water  
a dusty window

the irreducible, incomplete connection

between the dead and living

or between man and woman in this  
savagely fathered and unmothered world

6.

The other side of a translucent  
curtain, a sheet of water

a dusty window, Non-being  
utters its flat tones

the speech of an actor learning his lines  
phonetically

the final autistic statement  
of the self-destroyer

All my energy reaches out tonight  
to comprehend a miracle beyond

raising the dead: the undead to watch  
back on the road of birth

7.

I am an American woman:  
I turn that over

like a leaf pressed in a book  
I stop and look up from

into the coals of the stove  
or the black square of the window

Foot-slogging through the Bering Strait  
jumping from the *Arbella* to my death

chained to the corpse beside me  
I feel my pains begin

I am washed up on this continent  
shipped here to be fruitful

my body a hollow ship  
bearing sons to the wilderness

sons who ride away  
on horseback, daughters

whose juices drain like mine  
into the arroyo of stillbirths, massacres

Hanged as witches, sold as breeding-wenches  
my sisters leave me

I am not the wheatfield  
nor the virgin forest

I never chose this place  
yet I am of it now

In my decent collar, in the daguerrotype  
I pierce its legend with my look

my hands wringe the necks of prairie chickens  
I am used to blood

When the men hit the hobo track  
I stay on with the children

my power is brief and local  
but I know my power

I have lived in isolation  
from other women, so much

in the mining camps, the first cities  
the Great Plains winters

Most of the time, in my sex, I was alone

8.

Tonight in this northeast kingdom

striated iris stand in a jar with daisies

the porcupine knaws in the shed  
fireflies beat and simmer

caterpillars begin again  
their long, innocent climb

the length of leaves of burdock  
or webbing of a garden chair

plain and ordinary things  
speak softly

the light square on old wallpaper  
where a poster has fallen down

Robert Indiana's LOVE  
leftover of a decade

9.

I do not want to simplify  
Or: I would simplify

by naming the complexity  
It was made over-simple all along

the separation of powers  
the allotment of sufferings

her spine cracking in labor  
his plow driving across the Indian graves

her hand unconscious on the cradle, her mind  
with the wild geese

his mother-hatred driving him  
into exile from the earth

the refugee couple with their cardboard luggage  
standing on the ramshackle landing-stage

he with fingers frozen around his Law



she with her down quilt sewn through iron nights

- the weight of the old world, plucked  
drags after them, a random feather-bed

10.

Her children dead of diptheria, she  
set herself on fire with kerosene

(O Lord I was unworthy  
Thou didst find me out)

she left the kitchen scrubbed  
down to the marrow of its boards

"The penalty for barrenness  
is emptiness

my punishment is my crime  
what I have failed to do, is me..."

- Another month without a show  
and this the seventh year

O Father let this thing pass out of me  
I swear to You

I will live for the others, asking nothing  
I will ask nothing, ever, for myself

11.

Out back of this old house  
datura tangles with a gentler weed

its spiked pods smelling  
of bad dreams and death

I reach through the dark, groping  
past spines of nightmare

to brush the leaves of sensuality

A dream of tenderness

wrestles with all I know of history  
I cannot now lie down

with a man who fears my power  
or reaches for me as for death

or with a lover who imagines  
we are not in danger

12.

If it was lust that had defined us -  
their lust and fear of our deep places

we have done our time  
as faceless torsos licked by fire

we are in the open, on our way -  
our counterparts

the pinyon jay, the small  
gilt-winged insect

the Cessna throbbing level  
the raven floating in the gorge

the rose and violet vulva of the earth  
filling with darkness

yet deep within a single sparkle  
of red, a human fire

and near and yet above the western planet  
calmly biding her time

13.

They were the distractions, lust and fear  
but are

themselves a key

Everything that can be used, will be:

the fathers in their ceremonies  
the genital contests

the cleansing of blood from pubic hair  
the placenta buried and guarded

their terror of blinding  
by the look of her who bore them

If you do not believe  
that fear and hatred

read the lesson again  
in the old dialect

14.

But can't you see me as a human being  
he said

What is a human being  
she said

I try to understand  
he said

what will you undertake  
she said

will you punish me for history  
he said

what will you undertake  
she said

do you believe in collective guilt  
he said

let me look in your eyes  
she said

15.

Who is here. The Erinyes.  
One to sit in judgement.

One to speak tenderness.  
One to inscribe the verdict on the canyon wall.

If you have not confessed  
the damage

if you have not recognized  
the Mother of reparations

if you have not come to terms  
with the women in the mirror

if you have not come to terms  
with the inscription

the terms of the ordeal  
the discipline the verdict

if still you are on your way  
still She awaits your coming

16.

"Such women are dangerous  
to the order of things"

and yes, we will be dangerous  
to ourselves

groping through spines of nightmare  
(*datura* tangling with a simpler herb)

because the line dividing  
lucidity from darkness

is yet to be marked out

Isolation, the dream  
of the frontier woman



levelling her rifle along the  
the homestead fence

still snares our pride  
- a suicidal leaf

laid under the burning-glass  
in the sun's eye

Any woman's death diminishes me

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#### CONNECTIONS

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If you would like to contact women who share your interests we will try to help. Send us a brief description of yourself, your name, address, and your age (we can not accept anyone under legal age). Let us know if you want to meet women in your area, women anywhere living in communes, women in the arts, women with children, women just coming out, etc. -- make up your own categories. Include \$1 plus a self-addressed stamped envelope. The first issue of Connections was mailed out to a hundred women in February. We'll be doing another issue around July 1st, so try to get your letter to us by mid-June.

Correction: Mail for DOB in New Hampshire should be addressed to Occupant, Box 137, Northwood, N.H. 03261. Daughters of Bilitis should not be used in the address.

# WOMAN BLOOD

BY FRANCES ROONEY

If I could wish for anything tonight, it would be to be a poet, for poetry is the usual vehicle for feelings like these. But I am too content to want to be anything but what I am, and since prose is my medium, I will use it.

I am keeping a vigil. I am watching over your sleep. Not because you are ill or because there is any danger, but simply because I must. I write beside you in bed. You will not wake--I hardly move and the shadow of my body protects your face from the one small light. That face, so proud and sensual and innocent, so much like your body, really, a body never bowed under the savageries of men, never torn by children, a body kept eager and supple by twenty years of cavorting with women. I compare it to my own, ten years younger, but scarred and misshapen, tired and desensitized, purposely made ugly in a vain attempt to lessen the pushing and pulling and poking and joking of the husband I thought I had to have. Even now, even with you, my body sometimes refuses to give up its deepest fears of pain and humiliation, refuses to feel everything, to become eager and vital again. How can you stand to touch me? I marvel that you can. You can even kiss me--all of me--with that incredible mouth of yours. Have you ever noticed how few lesbians have those tense, pursed, thin lips that are almost universal among married women? Your mouth, usually closed, is open a little, while your eyes, the eyes of the thousand expressions, are now, of course, closed. Funny, I don't even know what color they are--I never notice the color of people's eyes --I just know how much I need to see them wide and shining, how I reach out to their sadness, how I am compelled to obey their desire or command. How fully we trust each other to be able to submit so happily to each other's tyrannies!

But these are all things of any night. Tonight is different, and it is that difference that makes me keep my vigil.

We had made love during our periods before, but I at least had always tried to ignore, or at best to accept, the fact of the blood. Like every-

body else (?), I had always accepted womanblood as a sign of weakness, a source of shame. The fact that I had always rather enjoyed my own periods--felt a sense of pride in a heavy flow, of disappointment in a too light one, enjoyed the warmth, the smell and the deep red color--had only served to intensify my feelings of strangeness, of separation from normality and from other women. Tonight, as I knelt between your now relaxed and curved legs, I was afraid. You laughed, and then, serious and firm and gentle, you said, "Drink." I dipped my hands into you, wondering for the thousandth time how anatomy so similar to mine could be so full of awesome sights and sounds. When I withdrew them, you said, "Hold them up. See it." And I did see: blood given, not shed; blood as strength, not weakness; blood the sign of wholeness, not mutilation. Beautiful blood. Womanblood. And what I have always known, so deep in my soul that I had hardly ever admitted it to myself, let alone to anyone else, came out and expanded to include all women. This blood is part of us, not something we do, it is real and strong and good--like us. And then I did drink. I drank until there was no more. And I cried. And we laughed. And by then there was more, so I drank again.

After a while you moaned, tensed, and then relaxed. I covered you and gave you my breast. And when the sucking had stopped I pulled away, rearranged the blankets around your proud and adventurous body, and began my vigil. And here we are.

Womanblood. My body understands it. My soul understands it, but my head is having trouble. I don't want to think of the positiveness and independence of womanness in man-language, but our own language was stolen from us so long ago that not a trace remains to help me express the womanthings I am learning. The only verbal language I know makes menstrual blood and good/joy/strength/pride contradictions in terms. Men fear and despise this bleeding. No wonder: we do so regularly and (relatively) effortlessly and for days and days each time what not one of them has ever been able to do. For us blood is part of living, to them it is a sign of weakness, the companion of death. No wonder they exult in their ability to impregnate, that stops this effortless bleeding and translates the place of the bleeding into something they can understand: a place of fear and pain and wounding, a source of power over us.

I cannot, even if I would be inhuman enough to want to, pervert the bleeding into something to give me power over you. We can work to free each other of the brain-washing that labels it ugly and weak. We can explore to find other things that are good womanthings and that have been labelled bad or silly or petty and free ourselves of those man-definitions too. What I want to do first, though, is listen to what my womanness says about this bleeding and accept it so that, in a week or two, when I bleed, I can be eager and unafraid, can spread my legs to you and say, "Drink."

## WAITING FOR SOMETHING TO CHANGE

by JENNIE ORVINO

from a heaviness like my father's arms  
strapped around my back and hips,  
dull ache in the summer morning waking  
with a lover who didn't touch me;  
from eight days' head pain and  
blemished skin, the clamp is broken  
I'm bleeding.

the tears and the blood--salt sisters--flow  
together in great clots. the one brought on  
the other, the one stopped the other's release  
as I held the dark red inside me  
by clutchings and ravings.

I fill my pen with my womb's blood  
I could write with it today  
I could write my name over and over  
to remember my self  
as a bronzed warrior with hair curling  
under my arms and down my sturdy calves  
as a mother-goddess stroking her  
earth daughters  
as a singer of poems who lies down  
with a woman and finds sustenance  
as from her own breast.

## JOANNE/AN INTERVIEW

*This interview is another of the conversations recorded last summer with lesbians around the continent (--for a full report of the editors' journey and more interviews see AQ Vol.1 #4/Vol.2 #1, the Special Double issue). Joanne lives with her lover, Patty, in Boston, where she works as a secretary by day and goes to women's liberation meetings by night.*

Gina: Can you say briefly what your mother was like when you were a child?

Joanne: My mother and I were very close and still are very close. I still feel able to communicate with my mother, still feel able to tell her everything. My mother's very femme, you know, her big thing has always been her sensitivity and she really is sensitive and creative, and she put all her creative energy into raising children. She always tried to push femininity on me, I guess because she really believed that the way to make it was to be beautiful and to be feminine in the traditional way--you could get any man you wanted and do whatever you wanted. So to be valued, according to my mother, was to be able to make your way with as many men as possible as effectively as possible.

G: Did she tell you these things very overtly?

J: Well she didn't use those words but she did things--like no price was too high for beauty, I could spend any amount of money to get my hair fixed, because in those days curly hair was ugly. She was always giving me things of hers. She would give me her underpants to wear. Lots of black lace underwear.

G: When you were how old?

J: Fifteen, sixteen. I had every padded bra you can imagine. Any time a man would hassle us on the street her whole attitude was that we should be flattered. So I got into a super femme trip, way before puberty I was worried about my femininity. I was convinced I wasn't feminine so I was determined to act as feminine as possible. I wasn't delicate, you know.

G: What was your father like?

J: Both of them were perfect role models. My mother was feminine, and my father was strong. He used to keep a placard in the dining room that said, "The Captain's Word Is Law." He's a doctor. We didn't have any discipline, but he was the decision-maker. He knew everything about the finances. Nobody knew anything but him. And he maintained his power by fostering and encouraging dependency in all of us. He was strong, he was infallible and he was also never around. He was always

working. He worked himself into a heart attack. And he's going to die of a heart attack. I was afraid of him. I was angry at him. I was uncomfortable. I didn't know what to say to him--I didn't have anything to say to him.

G: He made most of the decisions about what was going to happen in your family?

J: Yeah, he made the decisions but he explained everything to my mother. He was a martyr, and he always made it very clear what he wanted and after he'd made it clear he'd do whatever mother wanted, and then the reason, he made it clear, that he was doing what my mother wanted, was because she was weak and he was strong and could handle not doing his thing, but my mother would just fall apart emotionally. So he was always making sacrifices for her and for us.

G: Do you think he was controlling that or was your mother planning it that way?

J: They were both contributing to making a fucked up process. She could have spoken out more than she did too.

G: How did you perceive your parents when you were a child?

J: Perfect. It couldn't have been better. He was handsome, she was beautiful. He was masculine, she was feminine. It was the ideal relationship.

G: When did you start seeing flaws in it?

J: When I was fifteen I tried to commit suicide for one thing, and I decided it was time for me not to be a virgin anymore. I snuck out of the house and walked the streets until I got raped by a bunch of cannibals. And I went through a lot of acting out of self-destructive things sexually with men. And what happened was after I had taken the phenobarbital my parents tried to wake me up and I started screaming at my father--I had never before known that I was hostile to him, but I said to him, "Bullshit Daddy Doctor!" We had a dog whose name was George, I said "I'm not like George, you can't do this to me." They sent me to a shrink and that was when I first realized that I had some things to work out.

G: Were you close with your mother then?

J: Oh yes. I always felt when my father walked into a room that he was catching us. I didn't know what we were doing wrong but I knew something was wrong. I always felt guilty about it. I always went to a progressive school and learned Freud and found out that little girls are supposed to be closer to their fathers than their mothers, and I wasn't. I had nothing to say to my father and had a really intense relationship with my mother. I never wanted my father around. I was never comfortable when he was around and I used to worry about that. It was threatening to my sexual identity.

G: When you were how old?



J: I have entries in my diary from when I was thirteen, saying there was some boy who came over to my house and forced me to kiss him--I had this whole entry in blue, because I wrote in blue when I was unhappy and red ink when I was happy--and I was talking about how disgusting it was when he kissed me and how gross that was, and in it I said, "I don't know what's going to happen to me, I'm sure this is going to ruin my life, I'm going to be frigid and I'm going to be a lesbian." And that's exactly what happened, I became a lesbian. I called it right. I didn't know when I wrote it, that I'd be pinpointing it so accurately.

G: What's the earliest thing you can remember that has a sexual connotation, when you felt something sexual?

J: I remember toilet training. What I remember is some strange man walking into my room and asking me if I was going to wet my diapers that night and thinking to myself, "I don't know if I'm going to wet my fucking diaper or not, when you're asleep you don't know what you're going to do." I knew I wasn't supposed to, and I remember being really scared that I wasn't going to be able to succeed, and that strange man I figured out later was my father.

G: How was that a sexual thing to you?

J: That wasn't sexual, that was just something early I remember. I was fat when I was a little girl, I was fat all my life, and I could hear my mother and my father talking in the bathtub about me. I remember my father saying, "She's as big as a house," referring to me in a very angry tone. And that was sexual, because I was unattractive to him. I was unacceptable to him, and I always felt that way. I always felt as though men wanted me to be something, and I didn't know what they wanted me to be--but it had nothing to do with me personally. There were a lot of things that happened later. Shall I go into them?

G: Yes.

J: My father is a very sexual person and he and my older sister had a very incestuous relationship. They never slept together but they used to take baths together when she was eighteen. And he used to climb on top of me in bed at night to kiss me goodnight. One night he was on top of me, he was playing with my ear, and I started to move. He was really scared. He got off really fast.

G: Did he think you had been asleep or something?

J: No, I just wasn't supposed to respond sexually to what he was doing. But he was doing these things. He used to feel my tits when I came home from college, tell me how big they'd gotten. One time he did that I said "Daddy what are you doing?" and my mother said, "Oh, he's allowed to do that, sweetheart, he's your father." He always hid behind the fact that he was my father--he wasn't going to do anything bad to me. He was also my gynecologist. I didn't realize until I was twenty that I had a right not to be violated by him. When I was about nine or

ten I fell on a jungle gym at recess and broke my hymen. I didn't know from hymen, all I knew was I was bleeding and I had heard about menstruation and I thought maybe that was it. I came home and told my mother and she showed me the blood on my pants, and she said it looked like menstrual blood but that I should see my father. I didn't want to see him because I was scared of him, so she went and told him which I didn't want her to do because he always resented me not telling him things directly. He knew I didn't like him. He knew I was scared of him, and her being the go-between antagonized the relationship. So I was hiding in my room. I'd been bleeding all day, and I didn't know what the fuck was going on. I heard him tromp tromp tromp come up the stairs. He always shook the house when he walked. He was a heavy person. He was heavy. I weighed as much as he did but I had to tiptoe around because that was supposed to be feminine. He shook the house when he walked. I hear him come up the stairs and at my door and in a really hostile tone of voice he says, "Mother tells me that you've started to menstruate." Nine years old, you know. I say, "Well, I was playing at recess and I had this accident." He says, "Okay, get in your bed and take off your pants." I say "Daddy!" He says "Shut up and do as I say." So I took off my pants and got in bed and he looked at me and said, "No, you haven't started to menstruate." He closed my legs and walked out of the

room, leaving me half naked and terrified on my bed. It wasn't until several years later that I figured out that what had probably happened was that I had broken my hymen, but I felt very guilty. I felt like I had done something wrong but didn't understand what I'd done wrong and why it was wrong. I knew whatever it was, it was something dirty.

My father pushed birth control pills on me when I was seventeen. He sent me for a diaphragm when I was twenty--that was really terrible. I couldn't figure how to work the fucking thing and I didn't know how to get it in right--I was in his office and his office was in our house where I grew up and lived all my life. I finally asked "How do you use it?" and he got up and started to walk out of the office. "Well," he said, "Don't forget to take your new toy with you." So that was my sexual relationship with my father. Very hostile.

G: Was there one point where you learned to cross him?

J: When I took thirty sleeping pills, and called him Bullshit Daddy Doctor, that was the first time.

G: How is your parents' sexual relationship with each other, did you have much idea of that?

J: My father told me a lot about it. He told me grudgingly, he didn't tell me as much as he told my sister--my sister was like his mistress. Oh I know what it was--because I never had orgasms with men and I thought maybe that said something, and he was a doctor, I figured he

knew about those things. He started telling me about his relationship with my mother which I really didn't want to hear about. He went into this whole song and dance about how she was romantic and unrealistic and she wanted to be wooed all the time, and then he talked about how the only way she got off was if he bit her clitoris and how he did it. But I always got the impression that he thought it shouldn't have to be that way. She should get off on his penis, and a woman who couldn't get off on a penis wasn't quite a woman. He sounded very grudging about her clitoris, I don't think he liked it--but he did it because it kept him from having to deal with conflicts in their marriage. Kept everything going smoother.

G: Was masturbating important to you when you were little?

J: Um, masturbating. Yeah. I think you're asking such good questions. Yeah, I figured out how to masturbate when I was about ten. My parents had a vibrator which my mother always told me my father used to rub her back with--I swallowed that because I didn't know. And I discovered how to use it.

G: Just accidentally?

J: Yeah, it felt good. I tried it on different parts of my body. I was interested in my cunt, I was curious about it, and I was curious about what the vibrator would feel like on my cunt. I tried it on my head and my feet, but when I tried it on my cunt it was different from the other places. I didn't know what was happening. I'd never heard of orgasms or anything. I thought it was really neat and I also sensed that that feeling I was getting had to have an ultimate conclusion. I didn't know exactly where it would end, but I knew that it had to reach some kind of a peak and stop at some point. One day I decided I was going to see this thing through to the end and figure out what it was all about and I did. And then I figured out how to do it with the water in the bathtub. A couple of years later, I was at camp--there's no water, there's no vibrator. I figured out scientifically what the water did and what the vibrator did, and figured I could probably do the same thing with my hand. We had a group when I was about twelve called the Cozy Four, a bunch of girls who used to meet together. We never touched because it was a very straight community I grew up in, but we eventually got into trading secrets about masturbation--not the word masturbation, but we knew about what felt good down there in that dirty place. We felt guilty about it, and thought it was dirty, but we talked about it anyway. I felt horrible about masturbating. I felt sure the reason I couldn't come with men was that I'd masturbated. I asked my shrink once about it, because I was feeling like a yo-yo with this guy I was going with, and he was feeling strung out about the fact that I wasn't coming. I asked my shrink if he thought it was maybe because I masturbated. That was a real admission, I felt terrible about masturbating because boys do it, but girls don't, you know. And I was sure that any

girl who masturbated must be masculine and all fucked up. He told me that it was alright to masturbate, but that perhaps I would have to re-educate my genitals if I wanted to come with a man.

G: You had to re-educate your genitals?

J: I had to re-educate my genitals. Yes. I had no idea how. I thought maybe if I stopped masturbating and started thinking "vagina" I could do it. But I wasn't able to. I tried for a long time. I tried so hard to be straight. You couldn't believe how I tried. I had two abortions. I slept with every guy that came along. Anything as long as it would prove that I was heterosexual. I was so scared, because in my family the most important thing in the world was to be a successful woman, which meant being sexy and beautiful and having lots of men and loving them all. I never liked men. I hated them all, I never even saw them as the same species as myself. But I figured I might as well get used to it because I just assumed that I'd have to get married and have children.

G: When did you start realizing that you were attracted to women?

J: Well I was always vaguely uncomfortable about that. I always had really nice relationships with women. I had a best girlfriend who I was going with by age thirteen--I remember one time we were babysitting together and she said to me, "Gee, if you were a boy I'd really want to kiss you right now." I said, "Gee, Judy, if I was a boy I'd want to kiss you right now too." And we looked at each other and got really embarrassed and said, "What are we, a couple of Lezzies?" Then we dropped the subject and didn't talk about it anymore.

By the time I got to be about fifteen I was into being a beatnik and figured that lesbianism was something that I ought to try, as a life experience--and I suppressed it, and suppressed it, until I was about twenty. Then I began to get in touch with a lot of hostility, because by that time at least fifty men had fucked me over, and I was pretty pissed. I knew I hated men but I still wasn't ready to accept the fact that I was a lesbian. I was beginning to be uncomfortable about rubbing women's backs--I was afraid that I was being sexual. I guess that was because I was feeling sexual, but I found it very hard to touch women during that time. Then when I was twenty-two I got pregnant on purpose. I was seeing a shrink then and that was the time when all of my hostility towards men came to the surface. It's a heavy thing to be pregnant.

G: Why did you get pregnant?

J: To prove to myself that I was a woman.

G: And then how did you feel about it?

J: I had been doing a lot of self-destructive things since I was thirteen--I dived into heterosexuality and I did it angrily and was contemptuous of any man I ever fucked. I somehow thought that fucking them would get back at them for everything, and somehow I thought that de-



basing myself would do something. So I got pregnant, which was very heavy 'cause at the time I thought I wanted to have kids. I really believed that there was a living person in me--my whole body was freaking out. They say you can't feel it, but I felt that energy, and I knew there was something alive in me--even if it was no more than a string-bean I thought it was still something alive, it was something that I was going to stop from being alive, but I figured I would rather do that. First of all I knew if I had a boy I'd drown it, and even if it was a girl I knew it had 23 genes I hated--and I didn't know who had made me pregnant. All of my hostility came to the surface, I was blind with fury and it all came out. I couldn't sit in the same room with one without wanting to murder him, literally. I couldn't listen to Beethoven, I couldn't read Dylan Thomas. Lots of great male artists who had always been a great comfort to me I just couldn't...no male... I couldn't deal with any male, I hated them. After I calmed down about that it became very clear to me that I loved women, and I always had loved women, and that I had never had good relationships with men. I had always had good relationships with women. I had never been attracted to men, I had always been attracted to women, and I realized that I was just going to have to get used to the fact that I was a lesbian.

G: You had an abortion then?

J: Yes. I had two abortions...That was the first one. I dropped out of school--I was in theater school at the time and theater is really a sexist profession. I wanted to direct but I...you know women directors--lot of trouble being a woman director, and I enjoyed acting but the roles that were available to women are hideous in the way people relate to women and I couldn't deal with that. So I dropped out of school and plunged right into feminism. It was obvious to me even at the time that the main reason I was there was because I wanted to come out. I wanted to come out so bad--I just wanted to do it and get it over with, you know, and just be comfortable in my identity as a lesbian. I had been avoiding the women's movement for years because I didn't want people to think that I was the old dyke who couldn't get a man. I wasn't able to become a feminist until I realized that I didn't give a shit if I was an ugly old dyke who couldn't get a man. I didn't want a man anyway. So I became active in the women's movement, and I met lesbians for the first time in my life. It was scary because even though I knew I was one I had never met a real one.

G: Were you saying you were a lesbian at that time?

J: Oh yeah, I had been saying that I was a lesbian for years before that. I can remember saying to my sister a couple of years before, when I was fucking all these men, "You know, I'll bet I'm a lesbian." because people with case histories like mine always turn out...if I didn't know me and I heard my case history I would be convinced that I

was a lesbian." And she said, "Oh, don't worry, you're not a lesbian." She tried to reassure me, but I knew. I just didn't want to deal with it, it was scary being a lesbian. Particularly since being a woman was so important in my family. So I became involved in the women's movement full-time. Then I needed money--so I got a job as a waitress. I was working nights and sleeping during the day and I didn't have any time for the women's movement. The only people I was hanging out with were the people I worked with. All of a sudden since I didn't give a shit about men, I was really attractive to them. I'd never been attractive to them before, but all of a sudden I was fascinating--I guess every man wants to fuck a dyke, you know, to prove they're a real man. So they started following me home. I was horny and I didn't have any lesbians knocking at my door, and I knew how to manipulate men, so I figured fuck it, I'll give them one more chance--so I started fucking a couple of guys. I told them, "Look, I hate men. I'm a lesbian, I haven't come out yet, but I promise you I'm a lesbian." So I fucked them. And at that time I had an IUD which I had gotten after my first abortion, which they had promised me would be very effective. I got pregnant again, six months after my first abortion. My second abortion was really nice. I went to a really nice clinic and it was very clear to me, never again, never again. It's over. There was a really nice woman who was my counselor and I was awake for the abortion. She was holding my hand and while the fetus was being taken out of my body I was holding her hand saying to her, "Never again," and she said, "Oh, you're going to come out?" I said, "Oh yes," and she said, "Far out," and she called across the room to another woman who was a counselor, and said, "Hey, this woman's coming out." It was so nice, so supportive, she's holding my hand, a woman, and I was telling her that I was a lesbian. She was telling me that that was great, and they were taking that goddamn thing out of my uterus. It was almost worth being pregnant, it was such a nice abortion. I was so into her that I didn't feel any pain, it was annoying but all of a sudden it was over. It was really nice.

I remember one time after that--with a guy I had known when I was a waitress--he was a really nice guy, I told him I hated men and I was a lesbian--and we tried to get something on sexually. We were making out and it got down to more basic things, and I said, "You know Mike, I'll tell you, I like you, I'm attracted to your mind, but I can't feel your penis." He wanted me to do things to it, but I said, "I'm sorry but you're just going to have to accept it that I really must be a lesbian because I really can't relate to your penis at all. There's no way you're going to stick that thing in me, might just as well forget about it." And that was the last time any man ever came near me.

G: Let's move to the present now--can you talk some about your relationship with Patty? What do you feel best about?



J: I guess the thing I feel best about, first of all, is it's the first relationship where I haven't been in limbo sexually.

G: How do you think it's come about that your relationship is good sexually? Did it start out that way or has that been something that you've really worked at?

J: The way it started out was I didn't have any complaints. It wasn't my fantasy, it wasn't everything I'd always dreamed of, but right from the beginning it was absolutely adequate. And it's grown really smoothly, none of this encounter group shit, do you know what I mean?

G: Yeah, you were talking about limbo.

J: Uh huh.

G: Where you have encounter groups in the middle of love making.

J: Yeah, right. It's the sort of thing where I don't feel we have to sit down and spell it all out, but somehow the longer we're together the more comfortable we feel about each other. We're sensitive and we're able to let each other know what we feel.

G: Do you think you've gotten more sensitive to each other's needs than you were at first?

J: Oh sure. It's gotten to the point where we can say things like "I have this need," or "That feels really good," without it being a heavy analysis of what's wrong with our sexual relationship.

G: Was that hard at first?

J: It was hard but it was easier for me than it's ever been before. It's always hard to take, and it's hard for somebody to tell you what to do. You should have thought of it yourself. It's just easier and easier for us 'cause it's no big deal. It's not like our relationship's going to fall apart if I don't add a little doohickey on the hoodickey here. It's not going to fall apart if I don't do a special thing, but it's nice.

G: You think you're both trying equally?

J: Absolutely, yes, and I've never in my life felt so comfortable with my body before. I had a terrible body hang-up from being fat. I didn't think I was ever going to get over it. I used to think I was the most hung-up person in the world--I couldn't get undressed in front of my best girl friend, I couldn't get undressed in front of myself, I was so upset. I wouldn't go swimming in the summers because I thought my body was so ugly.

G: Now you're not fat at all--did you lose a lot of weight just recently or something?

J: I did lose some weight, although several years ago I really thought I was grotesque. If this was a couple of years ago I would have pictured myself as 400 pounds. But I have lost about twenty pounds, and I never could lose it when I was straight. I think the reason I lost it is I don't have a need anymore to cover my body. When I was straight

I was afraid of my sexuality and I wanted to cover my body up so that men wouldn't be attracted to me. I didn't like men. Now I know that I don't have to fuck men ever again--I can afford to have a body and to be a sexual person without risking being assaulted by men. What I did was stay fat as a way of keeping men away. That was why when I came out I had to be butchy--I figured I won't be ugly any more, I'll just be masculine. I had to do something to keep them away, because men were very scary to me. Now I'm gaining a lot of confidence and realize that I can keep them away any old way. Another thing about fatness--I think I'm getting over it because I just decided I don't give a shit. I'm just going to be who I am, and if that happens to be fat, then that's okay. If people can't deal with a little extra slush they don't understand about women. Men always want women to be skinny, and I think part of that has to do with their homosexual fantasies, because they want women to look like boys, with no breasts, no hips, no nothing. Those are male values and those are values I won't accept anymore. As soon as I gave up those values and realized that it was okay for me to be fat I realized I didn't have to be. And what's happening now is I'm getting in touch with what feels healthiest. I don't care what it looks like. I think that the better I feel the more I'm going to like myself, and I think attractive people are people who feel good. I know very few women who don't have a fat hang-up, and I think that all comes from male values.

G: What are some conflicts that you and Patty have with each other?

J: The conflicts we've had with each other have mainly come about as a result of hang-ups with ourselves. She finds it difficult to take criticism. I find it difficult to express anger. I find it particularly difficult to express anger to her because she's very sensitive about anger, so I get negative reinforcement. I wrap up all my courage and tell her, "You did this thing that made me angry," and I get slammed in the head for it. So I don't know what to do with my anger. She gets angry and then she feels guilty and then I suppress my anger because I hate hassles. I'd rather suppress it than confront her, so she senses that I'm suppressing it, and I deny it. She gets insecure, which makes me defensive--she knows I'm angry at her for not letting me express my anger, she picks up on my bitching and she thinks I hate her. This is the pattern we've gotten into a lot. Every major hassle that we've had over trivial shit, like keep the shirts in this drawer and that drawer, has been on that pattern. We put out incredible amounts of energy working on this, because we know that if we keep on in that pattern we're going to do irreparable damage to each other's psyches. People eat at each other for twenty years with that kind of shit and it's ugly and horrible and we don't want to get into it. SO we put out an incredible amount of energy trying to understand what's going on, trying to figure out what we're feeling.

G: Do you see some improvement?

J: Yeah, I see some improvement. Patty seems to have a lot more courage, to be stronger. And I feel, I think because she's stronger, more able to express anger. We're working at it.

## \$50 REWARD

AMAZON QUARTERLY IS OFFERING ONE \$50 REWARD EACH ISSUE FOR AN OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO THE MAGAZINE BY A WOMAN WRITER OR ARTIST. WE ESPECIALLY ENCOURAGE WOMEN WHO HAVE NOT PUBLISHED BEFORE TO SEND US YOUR WORK. ALL MANUSCRIPTS AND ART WORK MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A STAMPED SELF-ADDRESSED ENVELOPE. PLEASE ALLOW THREE MONTHS FOR ACCEPTANCE OR RETURN.

# Letters

Dear Readers,

It's layout finale night and we've saved some space to let you know how we're doing. We're a little ripped on a fine California wine, cause to be perfectly honest, proofreading and the final details of layout are less than exciting. So s'excuse the errors and turn on your right brain for the remainder.

We've got some news -- we and AQ are moving. Your next issue will be mailed from Cambridge, MA where Gina and I will be teaching a course in Contemporary Lesbian Culture at The Feminist Studies Program, Cambridge-Goddard School for Social Change. AQ will continue, as ever, but possibly a little later than scheduled if we have difficulty finding a printer. We would really appreciate hearing from sisters in the Boston area who'd be interested in helping us and AQ make the transition. Write to us care of Cambridge-Goddard, 5 Upland Rd., Cambridge, MA 02140. All other correspondence should be sent to our California address.

As some of you may have noticed, we have a new poetry editor, Audre Lorde. She is a Black lesbian-feminist poet in NYC -- read her review of *Sula* in this issue. We're happy to welcome her to AQ.

We also welcome your manuscripts--especially essays and art work--and hope you'll continue to support AQ in the coming year.

*Laurel and Gina*

*I want to tell you that your publication is by far the best one of its kind that I've read. I hope Miss Q has a long and prosperous life. Nothing - NOTHING AT ALL - of the kind exists anywhere in England. It's appalling. And moreover, very little of the literature from the States has found its way across the Atlantic. There's an incredible potential for political unity among women here, and I think that one of the major obstacles to it is the lack of national organs of information and literature.*

--Sherry, England

*There have been few things in my life that have given me the joy and courage that I have felt reading Amazon Quarterly. I feel such great happiness and warmth in the sisterhood that flows from the pages of your work. I can never remember not feeling the excitement of loving another woman but only recently I have come to know myself as lesbian. Amazon Quarterly has and does mean so much to me in my struggle for self-reclamation. "Thank you" are such simple words, yet they carry such gratitude and rejoicing.*

*Keep loving and exploring -- we are hearing!*

-- Margie, Oklahoma



Thank you, sisters, AQ feels like a friend and I love you for it. We all have a very real need for knowledge of each other and you are doing a fantastic job of providing a vehicle for communication.

-- Gay, California

I found your interviews showing a cross section of lesbian experiences fascinating, even down to the variety of speech patterns.

It's sad and ironic that most of us grew up lonely, afraid and convinced we were the only ones in the world who were gay, simply because there was no one around to tell us otherwise. May this never happen again to anyone!

In remembering the hell I went through just 10-15 years ago, I find the Gay Liberation Movement glorious and a little awe-inspiring. Perhaps due to my traumatic teenage years, I still have not found the courage to step out of my closet. I'm dedicated to the day when I can do just that. Until then, we think of you women as lifelines, giving us hope and pride in ourselves.

-- Trudy and Marie

Please renew me! The efforts of you beautiful people have made me a new woman! When I am able to shed my "Post-Office Box Lesbian" title and come out, it will be for good and forever and you, sisters, have given me the courage to make such plans. I love you!

-- Sherry

I've read every issue of the Quarterly, and each one for me is a resource for my thinking and feeling and strength. No other magazine has ever given me quite the same sense of the palpable presences of those of you who make it--and of all the women who are coming in touch with themselves, and of the buried strength and wisdom in women who have not yet allowed themselves (in the face of all that opposes it) to know what they know.

I read Judy Grahn's amazing poem sitting in the library of Harvard University where I teach. Weeping and feeling my head expand with the truth and courage and insight of it--and then went on to read Laurel's article that explores and ramifies so much that I have lately felt and begun, myself, to articulate in my teaching of literature and fiction-writing. And I thought of all the years I have studied and taught in this patriarchal institution, where the "great literature of the ages" is read, and how bizarre it seemed in this setting to weep with the joy and pain of a poem - how antithetical to the spirit of the place. The male vision that shapes this institution is working overtime to ensure (through its ideals of "objectivity" and "reason") that such connections with our lives never be made. They must almost totally obliterate their own feeling lives in order to deny ours: because once women's emotional knowledge was taken seri-

ously as something other than hysteria or "mere" subjectivity, the whole patriarchal structure would blow sky high.

If your circulation isn't yet as large as Time, please know the nourishment and support you bring to those women who do read you.

--Cynthia Glauber, Massachusetts

I want to thank you for the range and variety of material that you make available to women in Berkeley and the rest of the country. The women who live in my house, and who are connected with it, have different attitudes about feminism, sexism and lesbianism. But we all find it a catalyst for thought, conversation and action.

--Wendy, California

The other morning I tuned into Zodiac News and discovered that the Lesbians on the Continent are/ were organizing a movement to acquire the Greek island of Lesbos. A Lesbian homeland. A new society. A refuge.

And that idea fortified me. I suddenly felt that I could endure anything just knowing that there was a homeland.

We need it--just as we need the supportive network of the underground in this hostile society.

I do not think that private groups of women on communes constitute a Lesbian Nation. National organization is necessary. Probably a corporation would have to be formed to acquire land and

take care of legal hassles. But the Mormons did it--and the Amish--not to speak of the fighting Israelis.

I have faith that when we come together we will discover that we are farmers, mechanics, doctors (I am 3 yrs. away from my MD and know 2 other women who are also), teachers, carpenters, lawyers--and--that we are committed heart and gut to other women in general and to Lesbians with all our strength--and--that we are and can be mutually sustaining--and that we can build a new society.

My sisters--Next year in Lesbos!

-- Sue, Minnesota

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PLEASE WRITE FOR  
COMPLETE INFORMATION

# HOW TO MAKE A MAGAZINE

BY LAUREL

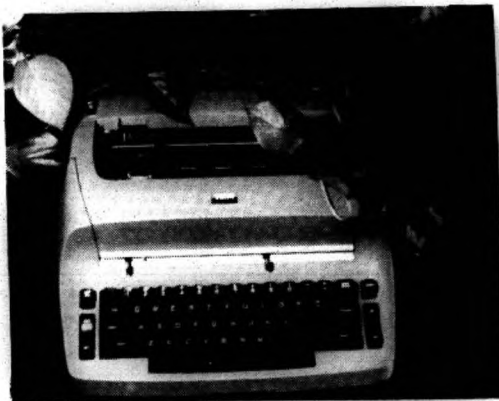
When we started Amazon Quarterly we knew almost nothing about what was involved in publishing a magazine, which was a good thing, since we assumed it was fun and easy and that helped make it so. We've just blundered through and learned from our mistakes . . . but often we've muttered "Why didn't somebody tell us!" as we realized we'd taken the long way around once again. We thought some of you might want to share some of what we've picked up, whether you think you might want to start a magazine, print a book of poetry or photographs, or just help out with the newsletter from your women's center.

Because of new advances in printing technology, small runs (less than 2,000 copies, say) can be printed for much less than it would cost to xerox the material -- and, of course, the quality is much better. So, even if you have to pay a printer, it shouldn't be more than 3¢ per sheet (or 1 1/2 ¢ per page since there are 2 pages per sheet), and the more copies you print the cheaper each one will be.

The first step is to typeset your copy. Professional typesetting on a machine that "justifies" the length of lines so that they come out even on the right hand side is very expensive. It could cost you as much or more than what you pay the printer. Even margins aren't all that important, so we decided to use an IBM Selectric and type the manuscripts ourselves, saving about \$350 per issue. A Selectric can be

rented for @\$30 per month or purchased for \$490 new. It is preferable to other electrics because the style of type can easily be changed from this to this to this, but whatever electric typewriter you decide on, you should use a carbon ribbon which you type on only once and throw away.

What comes out of the typewriter will be exactly what the printed copy will look like unless you decide to have the printer reduce it when she/he prints it. We reduce everything by 10% in order to fit more into



AQ's pages. When we type the copy we set the margins so that what is typed will be 10% larger than we want it to be when it's printed.

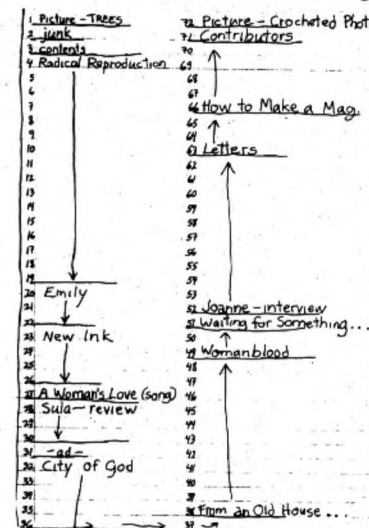
After everything is typeset you're ready to start puzzling over what will fit where. We use a chart like the one below to help us visualize what pages are opposite each other. If you'll open this issue up all the way and flatten it out, you'll find that its 72 pages are printed on 18 legal size sheets (8 1/2 x 14). There are 36 sides. Now except for the centerfold (pp. 36 and 37 in AQ) none of the consecutive pages are on the same sheet: page 1 and page 72 are on the same sheet, page 2 and page 71 are on the same sheet, etc. At first this was mind boggling, so we made up a dummy--that is, a mock-up with the number of pages we wanted (72) all numbered and stapled like the finished-product-to-be. This is a workbook for planning your layout. You'll undoubtedly need to reshuffle things, so use a pencil, and don't panic -- everything is fixable.

O.K., when you know where all the copy will go and have measured carefully to insure it will really fit, you're ready to do layout, or paste up as some people say. Only DON'T USE PASTE and don't use that old standby rubber cement unless it's really an emergency. Paste will ruin your fine typing job with blisters and bubbles, and rubber cement is a pain in the ass.

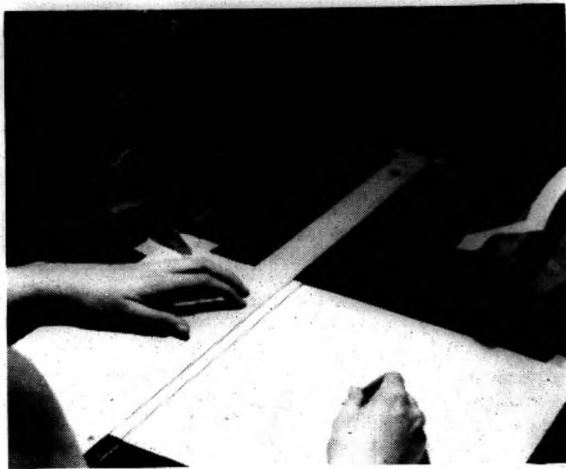
One of the tools you really owe it to yourself to get is an Electro-Stik Hand Waxer like the one pictured here:



This little gizmo rolls warm wax onto the back of your copy. It dries and hardens, but it will be sticky forever--no rush like with rubber cement, and you can peel up the copy 3 or 4 different times if you have to without ruining it. The waxer costs around \$30 new, but we got ours for \$10 used (good photo-supply stores carry them). The Electro-Stik wax costs around \$2 per box, but it goes a long way.







After you've waxed your copy, you're ready to make your layout sheets. Some people use blue-lined commercial graph paper and some printers can furnish layout sheets to you free. We've never found just the right size, so we make our own using a T-square and a non-photographic light blue pencil.

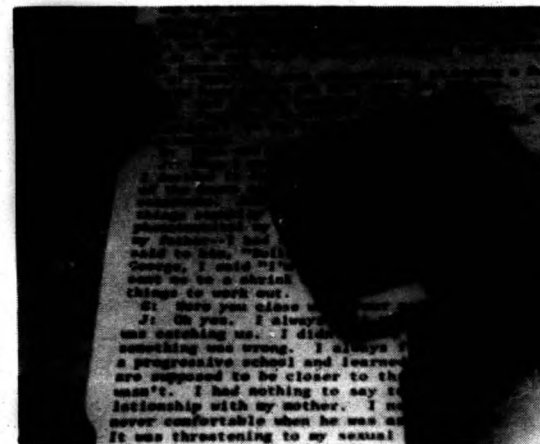
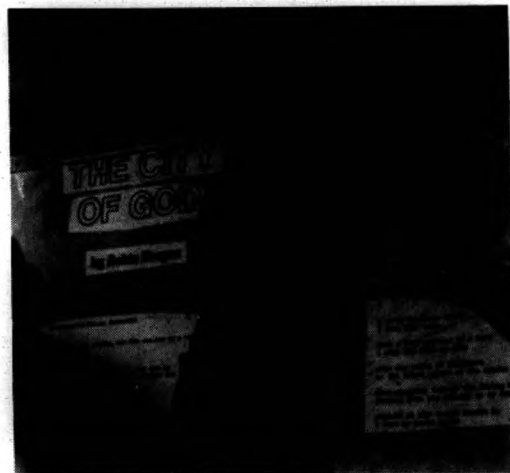
You need a large flat surface to work on -- we use an old door atop concrete blocks for a layout table. It should be smooth and have some reliable right angles (check with your T-square). If you make a "frame" for your layout sheets on the table with

strips of tape, you won't have to keep measuring when you draw in your margins with the blue pencil. If you use the side of the table next to your tummy as the base of your frame, you'll just need to make two corners at the top with masking tape. Mark the margins on the table and then just use the T-Square to blue pencil them onto the layout sheets as you go.

If you are starting with page 1, what you'll have in front of you will be page 1 and page 72. Even numbered pages are always on the left and odd numbered pages are always on the right. Our most common mistake was forgetting this and trying to put page two on the same layout sheet as page one, for example. So, remember, after you've layed down page one, you've got to get out another sheet and make page 2 and page 71.

Check the placement of each strip of copy you lay down both top to bottom and across with the T-square. The wax will allow you to slide things into place. A pair of tweezers will be helpful for placing small chunks--use the point of an X-acto knife to adjust things.

Tap the copy gently into place, now you're ready to roll it down.



For this you'll need another gizmo which you shouldn't try to do without--a porcelain hand roller. Roll from the center outward, like making a pie shell. Even after you've rolled down the copy, you should be able to pull it up if you've made a mistake, but unless you really work at it, the copy is permanently put.

Be careful not to get wax anywhere on the layout sheet -- it picks up dirt like a magnet, and you'll have big blotches on your printed copies. Use liquid paper typing correction fluid to cover

any finger prints or spills you've incurred during layout. This will cover stray wax too.

Usually, at this point, we put down our headlines which we've saved room for at the beginning of each article. This is a slow and painstaking process unless you have access to a headliner machine. Most small magazines don't and, like us, they use press type lettering. This comes in alphabet sheets--as many as 50 or 60 different styles depending on the company. Many styles and sizes should be available at your local architectural supply store. Choose whatever you like, but keeping the mood of your articles in mind, you'll have some idea of what is most appropriate. For our splashy Double Issue layout we used outrageously baroque lettering. Last issue we wanted things quiet and understated--and we used completely different kinds of press type.

They'll probably try to sell you a stylus for rubbing on the press type, but all you really need is the rounded end of your X-acto knife. Don't be discouraged if letters tend to break apart and peel off at first. It takes a little practice. Be sure to line the letters up straight with your T-square and to make them equidistant. Note that some letters like "L" have lots of "open space" on one side and can be placed closer to the next letter than a letter like "H" which is



solid on both sides.

Once you think everything including the headlines is in the right place, you're ready for several proofreadings. Try to get people to proof who've never read the stuff before and who aren't immune to the errors. Each error should be circled with the blue pencil--the marks will not be picked up by the printer's camera, so you can make them as big and bad as you like. Make a list of the corrections that go on each page. Type them along with their page number, wax the correction sheet, and simply cut them out and stick them over the goofs. Use the T-square to help you keep things in line. Unless you've been a perfect typist, expect to spend some time on this proofing process. Make sure that you check to see a sentence which carries over from say p. 13 to p. 14 makes sense, and really read each paragraph to make sure you haven't accidentally left something out.

So far, I've been talking about only the typed copy. Next issue we'll pick up with graphics and half tones, show you how the printer photographs the copy, burns the metal plates, and runs the press. Drop us a note if you have any questions about the process so far.

#### SPRING/1974 AMAZON QUARTERLY AWARDS

The first quarterly \$50 award will be divided and given to: Pat Emmerson for "Emily" and Frances Rooney for "Womanblood." A generous sister has given us a grant for the 1974 year so we can continue to offer this incentive to new writers and artists. We especially would like to encourage women to send us in-depth essays and visual art, as our need is greatest in these areas. See page 62 for details.

#### SAVING THE TREES

In the Fall 1973 Special Issue, we asked for women to help us with the extra cost of using recycled paper. We were especially concerned since the trees AQ is printed on are cut down in Canada for use in the U.S. A very kind sister from Canada has made this issue possible by sending the \$300 extra necessary to buy recycled paper. We hope that her example will lead other women's publications to want to save the trees, and that you will want to send a contribution (however small) to:

TREES  
Amazon Quarterly  
554 Valle Vista  
Oakland, CA 94610

## CONTRIBUTORS

ADRIENNE RICH: Lives in New York City where she is working on a book about radical mothering. Her most recent book of poetry is *Diving Into the Wreck* (W.W.Norton and Co., 1973).

AUDRE LORDE: AQ's new poetry editor lives in New York where she writes (most recently, *From a Land Where Other People Live*, Broadside Press, 1973) and teaches classes at S.U.N.Y. on creative writing, and racism.

FRANCES ROONEY: I'm a writer, a Canadian-American (eighteen years in the States, the last ten in Canada), and somebody who's trying to figure out what this being a woman is all about.

GINA: I balanced at the edge of what I don't know, jumped, and found -- more of the same shit. Heaven (and the women's culture) don't come all at once.

JENNIE ORVINO: Is active in Milwaukee's lesbian community, where she works in video, writes for the *Amazon*, and takes care of her kids.

LAUREL: I'm looking forward to moving to the East coast, and at the same time aware of how far from the center the hassles will take us. Hoping all of you will bear with us and help us make the transition.

PAT EMMERSON: I'm 28; I write a lot to entertain myself and have the standard unpublished novel sitting on the shelf. My love is animals and I live with a kitten and my dog, Jolly.

ROBIN MORGAN: Is the author of *Monster* (Random House, 1973) and is now at work on a second book of poetry and two prose books. Of "The City of God" she says: 'The poem was written out of a despair which is as necessary to the vision as the vision itself. The exorcism of the despair is of course at the heart of the artistic process and the revolutionary process ( as if those two were separate).'





AMAZON QUARTERLY  
Box 434, W. Street MA 02144



# AMAZON QUARTERLY

*dupl*



volume 2  
issue 4

\$1.





AMAZON QUARTERLY IS VERY HAPPY TO ANNOUNCE THAT WE HAVE RECEIVED A \$1000 GRANT FOR WRITERS' AND ARTISTS' PAYMENTS FROM THE COORDINATING COUNCIL OF LITERARY MAGAZINES. EACH ISSUE WE WILL BE ABLE TO PAY \$250 FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE MAGAZINE BY WOMEN ARTISTS AND WRITERS. WE ESPECIALLY ENCOURAGE WOMEN WHO HAVE NOT PUBLISHED BEFORE TO SEND US YOUR WORK. ALL MANUSCRIPTS AND ART WORK MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A STAMPED SELF-ADDRESSED ENVELOPE. PLEASE ALLOW THREE MONTHS FOR ACCEPTANCE OR RETURN.

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ROSE RIO Brazilian Rosewood 8 inches high 1972.

# AMAZON QUARTERLY

Box 434, West Somerville, Massachusetts 02144

VOLUME TWO ISSUE FOUR

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## CONNECTIONS

If you would like to contact women who share your interests, we will try to help. Send a brief description of yourself, your name, address, and your age (we can not accept anyone under legal age). Let us know if you want to meet women in your area, women anywhere living in communes, women in the arts, women with children, women just coming out, etc.--make up your own categories. Include \$1 plus a long self-addressed envelope with two 10-cent stamps. We will send you the next issue of Connections listing at least 100 other women's descriptions and requests.

Nearly 200 women have taken part in Connections so far. We hope those of you with a need for contacts with other women will participate in the next issue. Send your description-requests to us by September 1. Each issue is different, so some of you may want to insert your request several times.



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Many thanks to Katie and Patsy for a fine job on Connections, to Mary and Paula for their photographs in this issue, and to the donor who matched our matching grant, and to all who have contributed money to *Amazon Quarterly*.



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## FROM US:

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This issue of AQ is devoted to right-brain experiencing -- to realities other than the linear, logically predictable ones to which we ordinarily confine ourselves in order to act in our workaday world. The article beginning on p. 12, part 1 of a 2-part series on women and alternate codifications of reality by Gina, sets our course for Donna-Juana-Land. Many of the stories in this issue, too, bring us messages from beyond the limitations of left-brain logic. We hope you'll enjoy this journey and that some new possibilities will open for you along the way.

AQ is now embarking on her third year and we'd like to mark the occasion by remembering some of our original dreams for the magazine. In the first issue we said that AQ would be an exploration of female sensibility and we invited women to write not necessarily about lesbians, but about anything with a woman-loving-woman perspective. To quote,

*The important factor is that it be in some way a launching out from all that we as women have been before into something new and uncharted ...a voyage into the depths of your mind or a new connection you've discovered between something in your anthropology class and a book you were reading in herstory. Even science is not verboten.*

We said, then, that what we wanted was communication from lesbians who are consciously exploring new patterns in their lives. We called that first message from us "Frontiers", as we are pioneers, all of us, in learning to see and to act apart from the patriarchal patterning we've all been subject to.

For us, AQ has become much more than we could have imagined 2 years ago. We think all our dreams for it have been coming true and that the dream itself continues to expand. We would very much like to hear from women who've been reading AQ for some time now: has AQ opened up new frontiers for you? What have you especially liked (disliked)? What is your dream for the magazine? We'll print as many letters as will fit, next issue.

On to news. As forecast last issue, we have moved AQ to the Boston area. It was an incredible undertaking, but we are settled now and AQ (all her many boxes of supplies and equipment) is back together. We are sorry for this issue being late, and for our lag in answering correspondence. Thanks to all who've been patient on both counts.

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We'd like to mention, too, that the reason we moved from the West Coast is to create what is undoubtedly the first accredited Masters Degree program in lesbian studies. In the Fall, we will be teaching a year-long ovular in Contemporary Lesbian Culture at Goddard-Cambridge, and we invite any of our readers who may be interested to write them for a catalogue and course description. It's free from: Goddard-Cambridge, 5 Upland Road, Cambridge, MA, 02140. Applications are being accepted through August for the year beginning September, 1974. There are also many other fine ovulars in the Feminist Studies Program such as Women and Literature, Women's History, Women and Psychology, etc. The result of any of these, including lesbian culture, would be a master's degree in Feminist Studies.

Also, another scoop. We've a friend in California who has just bought a 40-acre paradise of wooded hills about an hour north of San Francisco. She is looking for other women with money and/or skills to make her dream of a women's retreat come true. Women who wish to get actively involved can write to AQ and we'll pass on your letters. There are other similar opportunities listed in Connections -- please see p. 2 for information on how to participate.

We are happy to announce that AQ has received a \$1000 grant for the next year's artists' and writers' awards. That's \$250 for each issue -- five times what we have been able to offer. Our need is greatest for in-depth essays, researched articles, and visual art. Artists can send photos of their work instead of the originals. We also would like to receive womens' record reviews in the hopes of establishing a column. Please understand that we won't have time for personal critiques on everyone's work. We read and appreciate all the art and writing which women send.

AQ is growing up to 5,000 copies per issue. This is a big leap and we ask all of you who possibly can to give a gift subscription or to interest a bookstore in ordering so we can actually distribute and pay for what we've printed. Be sure to see the information about FREE SUBSCRIPTIONS on p. 49. The big bite that inflation is taking out of our subscription price makes it essential to keep growing -- spread the word about AQ. And a warm heart-felt thank you to all of you who have loved and supported us through *Amazon Quarterly's* first two years.



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# riverfinger women

FROM ELANA NACHMAN'S NEW NOVEL PUBLISHED BY DAUGHTERS, INC.

SEE THE REVIEW ON P. 41.

"Once upon a time there was a wonderful bear, named Lucy. She lived in the deep magic forest, on the other side of Talking River. What made Lucy wonderful was not only how strong she was, not only how beautiful--all gold and orange colored in the early sun--but how kind she was, gentle with all the other animals in that forest no man has ever found. She never ate fish the way bears in the world do, she would sing duets with them instead as they swam along Talking River. She helped the bees scout for good clover, and had learned the secret bee dance, so she could tell them where it was. The bees rewarded her by giving her all the honey she needed, which she would eat along with all the other wonderful berries that grew all year long. But there weren't many other animals her size in that place, so she grew lonely and restless. One day the River noticed that she was singing fewer and fewer duets, and peering farther and farther over the River's edge.

"What are you looking for, Lucy?" the River asked.

"I'm looking for someone big enough to dance with me," she said. "I'm thinking of crossing to find others more like myself."

"Oh no, Lucy!" the River cried. "There are dangerous men on the other side, who will capture you and dress you in ridiculous skirts and charge a price for your dancing and make you eat flesh, and keep you locked up for their own amusement--either that, or they'll shoot you outright."

"But there must be another kind of people besides these men."

"There is. There is another kind that walks, called women, but they're mostly afraid--afraid of each other and the men and of what the men tell them. Among them there are some who aren't afraid, who are trying to know something different, but they are outlaws and in hiding. One, called Rainbo Woman, is heading this way alone. Wait for her to come."

"Okay," said Lucy. So she waited, and began dancing the bee dance again, to pass the time."

"Will she have to wait a long time, for Rainbo Woman to come?" asked Inez, rubbing Abby's neck with her nose.

"I don't know yet. Stop that, it tickles, bum," Abby said.

"And when Rainbo Woman comes, will she turn Lucy Bear into a beautiful woman, will they live happily ever after?"

"Well, now, kid, I don't rightly know. You're getting ahead of the story. Maybe Lucy Bear will turn Rainbo Woman into Rainbo Bear, and they'll spend the rest of their nights growling at each other, their stomachs full of blueberries."

Abby turns to look at Inez in the Colorado street light, in their first apartment, a two-room converted attic. Peggy Warren sleeps in the other room, which is also the kitchen. Inez is curled on her side, cuddled into the hollow of Abby's thin arm, looking up. They fit. Seventeen, eighteen, thin to fat, not self-conscious, pleased to be there, seam against seam. Their hands trace each other, begin to touch as leaves touch in first summer winds. Unbelievable. All the forces of civilization had worked against this, still it happened. They made love again that day, the last time before falling asleep. They had the freedom to touch while they were still children. No one had given them permission. They just made it all up, taking their freedom with their hands in front.

There was nothing in either of them that was older than seven, except that they knew how to do it, finally, after five weeks they had figured one hold from another. There were no movements putting pressure on their consciences, only safety in being two together. There was only the fairytale, being seventeen and sleeping in each other's arms in Colorado. These small protections they wove like nets, to keep away what they understood perfectly.

They understood perfectly about names and rumors, psychiatrists and angry father, perverts, rotten ungrateful selfish vain children, disgust and fear, more fear, self-hatred, confusion, no women will let us babysit for their children if they find out.

They were beginning to learn to protect themselves by never touching or looking at each other in public. By waiting until they got into gas station restrooms when they wanted to kiss each other. By calling themselves roommates. By watching other people very carefully. By being children only together, in their first double-bed. Sometimes they were open with Peggy, who never told them until three years later that she was jealous, for wanting to join them.

Abby accepted it, because it was safe and at the same time exciting, a



little dangerous--she knew it felt good, and she wanted it. She was very stubborn about what she wanted, when she was positive that she wanted it.

She had been stubborn with her parents for two years now about her independence. About not going to a Long Island suburban high school anymore after tenth grade. Her mother had screamed and cried, and her father had consoled her mother by sending Abby away to boarding school--first to an experimental school in the South which Abby had hated almost as much as the suburban one, and then to Highland Hills in Massachusetts, where she met Peggy and Inez. She was also stubborn with her parents about not taking any more money from them, except for school. She was stubborn to be on her own, to start really running, to build muscles at least eight ways. The plans for the octagonal cabin she was going to build in the wilderness were all drawn up, down to even which way the doors would slide. There would be room in her life to travel cross-country on horseback, and there would be room for horses to live inside her cabin in the cold mountain winters. She would take care of all the animals that would come to her, and she wouldn't bother with people.

Back on Long Island her family was saying: She'll grow out of it. It's a phase. So we spoiled her a little, because she was our youngest daughter, we let her be a tomboy, and she got a little willful. But she's young still, there's plenty of time for her to get married, like her sisters.

Whether or not they'd drag her back if they learned about Inez, about what was going on, was a question Abby was not about to risk answering.

She knew better than to trust almost anyone. She almost knew better than to trust Inez. What she saw was that Inez was a little crazy. Many a woman has been a sucker for that one. Feeling protective. If only you would stop looking at your eyes reflected in windows, if only you would be happy, Inez, and ride horseback across country with me. We could take care of stray animals together.

Abby picked up worms so they wouldn't get run over in the middle of the street. She began to see Inez the same way she saw her cat, or the horses in her fantasies. To have that feeling about Inez, that she needed and would simply accept protection, returning simple sexual affection, was to come very close to trust.

Still Abby wasn't sure. What is this sex and living together? What is going on here? She knew it wasn't wrong, it couldn't be wrong, to feel this. But what do the words mean anyway.

She knew that she would not let Inez hurt her, that no human being would get that close to her. She knew people wielded power over each other, seeing how her mother and father, good middle-class Jewish people, controlled each other with the power to make each other miserable. She saw all people trying to get that edge, parents over children, teachers over students, bosses over workers, lovers over lovers. She didn't understand why it was, but she knew she did not want it. She would go alone into the mountains first, with her camera, and be with the animals.

Inez heard Abby when she said, "I don't like people, I am better company for just myself, I'd rather be a hermit." But Inez knew that she could get

Abby to follow her, just the same.

There are powers, there are ways, and Inez knew about them. Guiltily she extended a paw towards Abby, saying: I too am a creature, I am a wounded creature, nurture me. There was just enough attraction in their bodies and confusion in their heads to bind them.

A thousand fantasies multiply in that feeling--of marriages, weddings, houses hung with ribbons of safety. Abby was the first person who didn't hurt Inez--didn't make her feel freakish and clumsy. Inez knew what that meant, what the game was, how you had to hold on to it, opportunity only knocks once, she had read about it in books, she had read a lot of books, now it was her turn to play, to use her real body as a marker in the game. It would be good, it would be gentle, it would be so tender that they could make a movie, and get someone else to play her part (who wasn't quite so heavy). They could make a movie about Inez and Abby, so that people would see that lesbians are beautiful, there is nothing, nothing at all unnatural about them, they too can have weddings and be in the movies.

Some pornographic novel! Some novel! What's going on here anyway? Where's the sex, where's the action, the angst?

Let me try to make it clear. In 1967 we still wanted to repeat the same straight story. But we knew even then, in our careful duplications (toasters, laundry, feeding the cats, a whole inventory of living together), that we were pornographic because we were both women.

Nothing else--we were too modern already to believe that one of us was the man and the other was the woman. We felt like neither men nor women. We were females, we were queers ("but I'm not a lesbian," Abby said in Colorado, "I just love you, Inny."). We knew we had the right to love whomever we loved--it was part of the amorphous thought of a sexual revolution we found ourselves in the middle of. It was very democratic, theoretical, and very very personal. And we knew that when we made the movie about how good it was, how after all lesbians could live normal lives, have jobs, go to college, how they were the same, the same, really the same as straight people, only they were both women, but that was just--an accident--a matter of--chemistry--we knew that when men came to see the movie we would make, the men would come because it was pornographic, that's all, baby, sinful, immoral and certainly absurd, for women to think they could do it without them.

Let me try to make it clear. There is Inez. There is Abby. They became lovers when they were seventeen. This is the story of what it means to be women and lovers when you are seventeen, with the years just behind (moving them toward it), and the years just ahead, with everyone waiting to say, uh-huh, just as we thought!

There is Peggy Warren. She is smuggling hash from Tangiers, accumulating a thousand tattooed stories behind her eyes like veils that keep even her old friends away. She's been sleeping with every kind of man there is, sadists, baby pimps and North Pole engineers. She comes to speak about heroin and the (real) 42nd Street porno trade, massage parlors and organized



crime. She is an old friend of Abby and Inez.

There are all the places where these stories touch each other and make the start of a common life, the beginning of an idea about community. There are all the places where the story falls apart and something else shows through--an isolation, a terror, a hunger to shape that isolation and terror into some kind of love for ourselves.

A hunger for each other, two hungers, three: one out of fear; one for metamorphosis (to be girls no longer, to be women, and serious); one for actual love, whatever it is. There is a first powerfulness in knowing what our hungers are, that they may not be taken from us and sold by Tampax or Pepsi-Cola.

When you're talking about someone's body, that's about as close as you can get. This is how it worked in our bodies, how our hungers worked into our bones. There was authority at every pressure point, trying to direct us (for our own good). We fought back with fads that nearly killed us. And slowly in our bodies words grew, formed a strength against both the fads and the pressures of our mentors.

We thought we were very special then, we thought we were hot shit, for being perfectly existentially unique, reading all the books by men about ultimate aloneness and the isolation of mass man.

We were exactly like millions and millions of others in the sixties and seventies and long before and after, self-important with big words like alienation and technological elite. It's the same story for every girl and boy adolescent who knuckled under waves of words they couldn't own: sexual revolution and hard rock and LSD. We were scraped along the sharp stones of those, where the undertow dragged us.

But in being faceless unmentionable nameless lesbians, unapproved by Ann Landers or Jerry Rubin, in being unable to find catch words in newspapers or the books we read in our dormitories, for that, for what that meant, women loving women--in that we could have no fads. That was where some of us began our resistance, learned to change (acid on stone) who we thought we were doomed to be into who we are. Tough, strong, proud: free women.

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#### SUMMER/1974 AMAZON QUARTERLY AWARDS

Diane Derrick will receive \$50 for her contributions to this issue in sculpture and fiction. \$25 will go to Maud Haimson for her story, "Hands." Our five fine poets will receive \$5 each as a token of our appreciation. Though we have just \$100 for awards this issue, beginning with our next issue we will have \$250. We hope this will be an incentive for new women artists and writers. We would especially like to encourage women to send us in-depth essays and visual art, as our need is greatest in these areas. See the inside front cover for details.

here is the attic room  
where i sat in my borrowed dress  
winding my fingers round old bones

here my skin first opened  
drank the flowers dying on the wall  
like a desert drinks the rain

By Martha Courtot

here the coffin-closet  
where my father's clothes hung  
empty as eggshells

years after we left him  
in the happy ground  
his smell stayed on

on summer nights the trains cried  
my ears grew sounds only this room knows

i used to run my hand  
along the window sill  
look, i can still scrape the dirt from my fingers

i have made myself  
out of pieces  
no one else was using

a scrap here  
a scrap there  
sew sew

mother to myself  
my own god  
i blew life into found bones

between beats in the blood  
the attic breathes and pauses  
as if it knows the real me

it thinks someday i will come home

but i know this:  
i'll never climb those stairs again

a piece here  
a piece there  
sew sew

## ROSY RIGHTBRAIN'S EXORCISM/INVOCATION

(by gina)

(part one)

*The perceptions recorded here are paths I've been exploring the last two years. I started this writing wanting to share my feelings about the patriarchal art world and my alternative visions for the meanings and uses of art--but I'm finding even that large subject too narrow, I'm finding it impossible to separate art and life even for the sake of the conventions of essay-writing. For a compelling but as yet unknown-to-me reason, I've found myself going back before "history" to the first matriarchal cultures, reconstructing the time from then to now like no history book I've ever read. Sometimes I think I'm a feminist herstorian, chronicling the inner events of the last 5,000 years. Sometimes I'm a mapmaker, scribbling diagrams of states of consciousness and labeling the parts. Sometimes I feel I'm a brave and lonely pioneer at unknown frontiers--just as often I'm sure everything I may have to say is already perfectly obvious to the women I want to reach--or complete gibberish of no use to anyone but me.*

*Always though, I have a sense of the personal importance of this writing for me. I'm trying to give myself (and in the process other women) a positive valuable definition of art. My artist-self has been in limbo the last two years (with rare exceptions like the day before an issue of AQ goes to the printer and she has no cover), because of the morass of lies and schemes called Art by the patriarchal cultures we live in all over the world. I know, and other women know, that art can be a real power for change. We know that art is not fame or status or precious objects or museums or galleries or even paint or paper or clay or a video camera. But when we women try to practice art as we know it, we work in the midst of the patriarchy's rot, and by not articulating our own definitions we fall into theirs.*

In the coming women's culture, that fantasy of fantasies, when the left hand moves everywhere openly, when the full moon shines bright as the sun on our days, when every particle of white = right = male = good black left female bad has been burned out of all our genes by our growing insistence on a consciousness based on multiplicity (yes/and) rather than duplicity (either/or), when we as a planet live cooperatively without the patriarchal tools of war, money, governments, racism, family and religious systems, etc., when each of us can live her life with as many options as we each can imagine--in that woman-centered culture there will be no art. We will say, as the Balinese did before the American tourist industry discovered their culture, "We have no art. We do everything the best we can." Our buildings will be designed not by architects in the service of land development corporations but by those who will use the buildings, who can integrate aesthetic, utilitarian and economic concerns according to their own needs. Our children will grow

up in many different environments and will be free to choose those environments. We will all finally be in control of our own lives in a world of our own making--our lives will be our art, and time the medium for our constant individual and collective creation.

I spend whole days, when I can find them, and many nights, dreaming the world into a woman-place: I dismantle cities and remake them according to the maps of our body systems; I imagine what a thousand years of women's research in the healing arts could produce; I wonder at the meanings sexuality will take, freed from male influence. I live on this vision. I need this vision, in all its complexity and detail, just to get out of bed some mornings--yet I don't mean to imply that I see the new world-wide matriarchy around the corner, or even that I see it as inevitable. Just possible, if the boys don't manage to destroy the planet along the way. We need to shift sometimes to a several-thousand-year perspective to find such large-scale hope. Three thousand years from now the lives of all the earth's peoples may have changed so drastically that no one reciting herstory will think in terms of a past "women's" revolution. Women may not be considered a separate group of people. Women may be the only people. The world transformation may be understood as: those who loved life grew strong and multiplied and squeezed out of existence, sometimes patiently and sometimes by force, those who love death and tried to spread it everywhere. That's 3,000 years in the future--for now, we women need to keep in mind who the death-lovers are. Since men's objectification and ownership of women set the precedent for all other forms of ownership, we must peel back and expose that first layer of deceit, at its most personal and most public level, to make any basic change in the world.

If we look back four or five thousand years we can see that although women were originally the artful ones, there was no "art" until the advent of the world patriarchy. In the old matriarchal cultures, aesthetic, spiritual, sensual and practical ways of perceiving the world had not yet been separated and labeled, so it was possible for a visit to the community spring, for example, to be a daily chore, a social event, an aesthetic and sensual pleasure, and an experience of spiritual affirmation, all at once. (Think of doing these all at once: turning on the tap in your apartment, being baptized in a religious ceremony, looking at a public fountain, picnicking with friends at a beach or lake.) "Pre-historic" women were the first to use agriculture, weaving, pottery, architecture, all "art" forms more valued for the activity involved in their production and for their use in everyday life than for their existence as objects. If I slip inside the body of one of these ancient women, I notice immediate and welcome changes. I'm aware of the earth beneath my feet and the clay in my hands as part of my body. Everything I come in contact with is alive, so my attention takes in every detail with respect and alertness--an alertness free, now, from fearfulness, because I feel strong familiar communication with this clay and all the spirits of this place. Energy flows freely through my body, down my legs grounding me in the earth, and sparks out my fingertips making a dance with the half-formed clay bowl. My attention is unfocused, not fixed any



one place, so I can believe at once in the bowl as porridge container and as a tool for channeling spiritual power, and I'm open to whatever new meanings may become possible. I'm relaxed, calm, and whirling in the dance.

I've described what I'll call this woman's body state--the organization of energies in her body as she molds the clay. Energy in her body is free more than blocked, and is being contained, channeled into her movements and intense attention-style, rather than being expressed as emotion. Other body states can be very different--energy could be caught in parts of her body, blocking certain movements and emotions and freeing others, as it would be if she were frightened. Or energy could flow more openly than it was when she made the bowl, as it would if she were making love with her sister cave-woman--lots of free energy, being expressed in feelings and movements rather than contained.

Did the "pre-historic" woman don that particular body state in order to make a beautiful and useful clay bowl, or did she make the bowl because the process of making it enabled her to enter that enjoyable body state? Can you believe this question is repeated over and over again, these days, by artists and art patrons and art teachers and feminist artists? Product vs. process. Chicken vs. egg--the assumption that one or the other had to come first has created a lot of problems. The idea of cause and effect has had its uses--it built Western civilization\* but, like that venture, it oversimplifies, separates, imposes hierarchy, where there should be connecting interdependent living networks. It's true that the creative process is the means for materializing the important part, the work of art. And it's true that the work of art is simply an excuse for the artist to experiment with body states for the sake of her own transformations. A body state doesn't cause a work of art, or an orgasm, nor does the art or the orgasm cause a certain body state--they are equally cause and effect to each other, dancing together in simultaneous communication.

#### The Takeover:

I want to describe now how men came to hate women, and how they took over the world. As I separate men and women so quickly into air-tight boxes, I am aware it doesn't work exactly that way. I know there are racial, cultural, class differences and more, that allow for some women sometimes not to be oppressed by all men, some men to in some ways not oppress all women, etc. blah blah blah. For me, the generalities hold true enough to use. When I say "men" I most mean white men in Western cultures as they've evolved the last 3,000 years, with white men in contemporary American culture being technologically the most extreme examples. Men of other races and non-Western cultures have evolved in similar directions, sometimes to more barbaric woman-hating extremes than Americans (i.e. the Moslem countries), and sometimes to ways of perceiving that are very like women's ways (i.e.

\*Many people's guess is that men's discovery of paternity was the single most helpful impetus to the patriarchal revolution, for obvious reasons. Such a discovery was likely to make men want to remember the value in assigning cause and effect.

some native American cultures). We women, too, find ourselves in many different contexts--white Western women being closest in patterns of perceiving to white men.

*I don't like the way I'm writing this. I'm bored. I apologize a lot, I get bogged down in peripheral explanations. Everything I want to say is if not factual, at least straightforward and pseudo-factual--so why this big bog, why can't I just state the primordial case, from point to point, and go on toward the twentieth century? Yes, why not? In my efforts not to distort through simplification (which I can see has happened anyway just by using language), I'm making a sticky mess of this essay. The usual way in writing of this sort is to tie in each new subject of inquiry as it's mentioned; it's like making a wall of building blocks, each one added, one at a time, to form part of the very solid whole. Instead I'm weaving an airy shawl, picking up some threads and letting others hang loose, making a pattern that won't be visible til the end--maybe not even then--and that in any case will let the wind blow through.*

The most crucial--and still inaccessible by way of fact--stage in our evolution was the development of female and male. Why those particular forms? Why such built-in asymmetry and impossibility for equality? I'm assuming Eve and Adam did not spring fig-leaf-covered from the garden, that there is substance and truth in the older myths of gods birthing children parthenogenically, that once we were all mothers. How we got to be two sexes I won't even guess, but by the time we were, the struggles of the next many millenia were outlined before us.

A reduction of female and male genitals to their simplest symbols shows the basic fact of a woman's sexual identity to be a circle--man's, a line. The circle and the line imply differences in ways of perceiving--cyclical, inclusive, vs. aggressive, fragmenting--that reflect the history and future of women and men on the planet. On the concrete level of sexual relations between women and men, the same patterns hold--i.e. no matter how loving, sensitive and knowledgeable a woman and man are as lovers, the woman still opens herself physically to the man in a way he can not be open to her, and he still comes into her in a way she can't reciprocate. And that's under the best conditions. What is more apparent in the lives of most women is that a woman's pleasure or even consent is not necessary to the hetero-sex act, while a man's pleasure defines the act. And then there's rape--a violation not physically possible for a woman to commit. Violence and conquest are always basic components of male sexuality in patriarchal cultures.

In the same way that rape, man's model for action in the world, has a basis in anatomy, so the fact of women as bearers of children is a basis for man's jealous hatred of women and his attempts to control living creatures and processes by killing them. Women were the focus of the old matriarchal cultures because they were the ones who kept human life coming. Since women had this intimate connection with the birthing of all living beings, and since they were connected still further by their cycles of miraculously pain-



less bleeding to the moon, the tides, the earth's cycles of growth and rest, women knew what to do. They raised the children, planted and tended the crops, decided the cycles of the community, sang the prayers. Men did not create life and had no noticable cycles, except the daily one, synchronizing them with the earth's movements. (Researchers are only in the last few years beginning to wonder about men's biological cycles, and haven't yet found much.) Men hunted--killing was easier for them, distanced as they were from the processes of life.

The situation of men throughout the matriarchal time was shaky, from the men's point of view. Women accepted men in the usually ambivalent but nevertheless real way a mother can accept a son--but men couldn't have a mother's perspective, and came to experience women as fundamentally different from themselves. Here was the beginning of womb-envy. Here was the start of men's fears that they may not be necessary, and the basis of men's gut-level panic at exclusively women-loving-women. Here was the start of the evolution into patriarchy.

Men's separation of women into an "other" apart from themselves made ownership possible and murder justifiable, and set the precedent for the dualistic thinking that's become a basic assumption everywhere, even in me as I write this. At first women were probably "different" but not "inferior" in men's eyes--but after many hundreds of years and lots of male bonding (consciousness-raising groups, they may have called them), all the qualities men valued or wanted lined up under the heading "good," and women and all the men's fears were sorted over to "evil." Valerie Solanas has described this process as the incomplete male's attempt to become female (complete) "by claiming as his own all female characteristics--emotional strength and independence, assertiveness, courage, integrity, intensity, etc.--and projecting onto women all male traits--vanity, frivolity, triviality, weakness, etc."

*I'm feeling better about the writing of this now, staying interested, but why is it that the two times (several days ago, and now) I've had anything to drink I haven't found a way to go on writing? It's all so very abstract and emotionless, so very left-brained. I want this article to include all of the process I go through in writing it--all the despair and ecstatic vision, the boredom blocking fears, the fears themselves and then the vision again behind the fears. And the frustration and wailing anger and screaming pain at being conscious, in this world, now. And my fumbling artist-self, so sensitive to criticism I want to apologize beforehand, and so sensitive, just so sensitive, I feel like I've never been touched and I'm not sure whether I want this to be a first invitation. And the wise lean Amazon I am who can say "This is how it was 5,000 years ago, I feel it in my blood and that is proof enough." I know that if I include all the parts of me I will have included parts of all of us, and what I say will be true. The times I lean toward the linear, the parts of this I try to "prove," are indications both of my own unfinished struggles with patriarchal values and my attempts to reach other trapped sisters half-way, with a pick and a flashlight for*

*the tunnel.*

The evolution of the white man's brain is one level at which it's possible to describe the ways of experiencing men developed and how they differ from women's ways. I can't guess at the timing of this evolution--whether men's brains were structured as they are now at the beginning of the patriarchy, or whether men's ways of thinking, have only recently, in the last 3,000 years, created neuro-physiological correlates. What matters is not cause and effect but the connection and interdependence of these evolving processes.

The cerebral cortex of the brain is divided into two hemispheres, left and right, which are joined by a thick bundle of nerve fibers called the corpus callosum. The left and right hemispheres, in white men more than anyone else, each deal with information in different ways, and specialize in certain functions. The left hemisphere processes information sequentially, as if moving along a straight line, one point at a time. It deals with "objective" facts--ordered lists, analytic thinking, objects that are one thing and therefore not another. In men, the left hemisphere is the only one to use language. The left side of the brain controls the right side of the body. The right hemisphere deals with experience in a diffuse non-sequential way, assimilating many different phenomena simultaneously, finding connections between separate bits of information and organizing them in loose, changeable ways. Awareness of our bodies, recognition of faces, understanding of art and music, dreams and "extra-sensory" perception all are based in the right hemisphere. The right hemisphere controls the left side of the body.

So dualism resides in the very brain. The ways of perceiving that came to be grouped in the left hemisphere are the tools men used to take control of the planet. Linear thinking, focused narrowly enough to squeeze out human or emotional considerations, enabled men to kill (people, animals, plants, natural processes) with free consciences. Propositional thinking enabled men to ignore the principles of morality inherent in all the earth's systems, and to set up instead their own version of right and wrong which they could believe as long as its logic was internally consistent. The initiation of hierarchy, a concept with its basis in analytic thinking, was a valuable tool in centralizing power and building up the new military states. All ways of perceiving that threatened the logical ways with other realities were grouped together on the other (right) side of the brain and labeled "bad."

The separation of "good" and "bad" qualities into left and right sides of the brain, and the universally constant valuation of qualities, can be seen in every patriarchal culture through its attitudes toward left and right-handedness--the left hand representing the right hemisphere and the right hand the left side of the cortex. In a semantic differential test given to American college freshmen and sophomores (Osgood, Suci, Tannenbaum, 1957) the left was strongly characterized as bad, dark, profane, female, unclean, night, west, curved, limp, homosexual, weak, mysterious, low, ugly, black,

incorrect and deathly, while the Right was rated (by a different group) to be all the opposite qualities--male, erect, heterosexual, white, etc. The same associations hold for every culture. Women among the Bedouin Arabs live on the left side of the tent because they are bad; the men are good so they live on the right side of the tent. American Indian sign language uses the left hand for concepts like "weak" and "cowardly." Many Hindus still follow the custom of using the right hand to touch the body above the navel, the left hand only below the navel. The prevalence of right-handedness itself is a sign of the success of patriarchal enculturation, as genetically the chances for either side to be dominant are equal (Hildreth 1949). During wars and depressions, when the patriarchy's power is less secure than at other times, the percentage of left-handers increases (from 5.7 between 1929 and 1931 to 17.64 for 1932, for example--New York Times, 1959).

Only right-handed people are used in studies of left-right specialization in the brain, because the results don't hold for left-handers. Some left-handers have the same pattern of specialization as right-handers; some show a complete reversal in brain function; and some don't show bilateral specialization at all, but use both hemispheres for music, both for language, etc.

Children don't develop brain specialization til they are around five years old--the age of accountability, of the separation of fact and intuition, the beginning of guilt. Women develop some specialization but retain the use of language in both hemispheres, and can switch to using the other hemisphere if tissue in one is destroyed. Much of the research on specialization of the hemispheres has been done with people who, because of accident or disease, have had tissue removed from one hemisphere or the other. Women messed up the statistics for many years (til someone thought to sort the results by sex) by relearning to speak after tissue was removed from the left hemisphere, or showing unimpaired aesthetic judgment after surgery involving the right hemisphere. Women have thicker corpus callosums than men--many more nerve fibers connecting the two hemispheres and thus more communication possible between them. Girls show positive correlation between their levels of artistic interest and competence on tests of verbal ability, whereas boys show no correlations between artistic and verbal areas. Black and other non-white men show brain patterns similar to all women's, with less specialization than white men and readier access to both hemispheres.

The possibility for overthrow of the patriarchal world lies in the fact that women (and children, Blacks, etc.) did not become the Man's image of them, though they/we were and are forced to masquerade as that image, and many times must believe it's real in order to survive. As we break through or sneak around the social strictures against using our left hemisphere's ways of thinking we are able to become, not men, but complete beings--women--able to use the capabilities we've had all along but haven't been able to admit to.

Many men's worst fantasy about the women's movement is that women will gain power by becoming just like men, and will create a society in which men will be treated as women are now. This is as good an example as any of the

infuriating egomania of left-hemisphere perceiving. The left hemisphere's ways typify the constricted ego, the insistent "I" all the patriarchy's religions have tried to dissolve in the cosmic sea, or merge with the Atman, or at least control and humanize with rules about helping one's neighbors (not that religions in the patriarchy have not had more malevolent roles than this to play). Women have a basically different sense of self from men because even when we use left hemisphere ways of perceiving we are not balanced there, as men (with some variations) are--we balance in the movements from one state of consciousness to another, we balance when we glimpse more than one reality at once. We women can think in the ways men-in-the-patriarchy do, but we can't get stuck there--we are able to calculate the making of a hydrogen bomb, but can sense enough of the living world at the same time to decide not to.

When I started reading about the brain, I found the right-handed, adult white male brain pattern of extreme bilateral specialization always described as the universal human brain function pattern. In the beginning years of brain hemisphere research, neurologists believed the right hemisphere to be something of a spare, or space-filler. They eventually found it had uses, and labeled it the "minor" hemisphere, the left being "major"--labels that are still used in a lot of writing about the brain.

I finally did find studies (or rather Laurel did--credit for finding all this brain information goes to her) that admitted to differences in brain function between men and women, white and Black people, etc. Every one of the studies concluded from its data that women were inferior to men, Blacks were inferior to whites. One commonly used test situation that I especially liked for its ridiculous Freudian humor was a dark empty room lit only by a fluorescent rod attached to an armature. Subjects were instructed to enter the room and grasp the rod, placing it vertically in front of them. Males generally caught on to this sooner than females--the males showed "better visuo-spatial ability than females" according to the test results. I.Q. tests designed to measure specialization of thought and white middle-class values, and at which Black children average lower scores than white children, are used as evidence that Black brains function in a way inferior to white brains. The rationale researchers use is that the white male's specialization permits him to concentrate on just one subject at a time, and thus give greater energy to it--women's and Black people's brains tend to expend electrical energy in several areas at once, and one area of energy detracts from another in the same hemisphere.

One assumption implicit here is that our brains have available a finite amount of energy for use at any one time. Another is that specialization is always best. The white male very specialized brain is the evolutionary latest, as is the newest ABM system and the DDT-resistant cockroach. The men running this world imagine an evolution ever onward, precise and straight ahead into the pure abstraction of death.

#### Patriarchal Body States:

The highly specialized and alienating pattern of brain function character-

*continued on pg. 67*





MA HO Mahogany 8" 1973.

# THE PREOCCUPATION

by DIANE DERRICK

Initially she had considered it a spiritual boil, later a canker of the soul. Anyway, it had commenced as an irritation, a slight or some type of forgotten minor annoyance, a yellowing bruise, except that, obviously, it was far from minor or it could never have developed in that way. But, for all the glittering spoils of her later recall, the triggering cause lay buried under well-trod repressive layers. The spoils sufficed of themselves, rich in understanding and through understanding glimmered a superiority over the original petty quirk and later, transferred and spread to include almost the entire universe.

It had appeared early one evening after supper, as her bored, tired eyes buffeted about the vacuity of the room. It was there, hugging the corner. Unable to quite define it she approached, scuffed it with her toe, reached down, picked it up, scrutinized it carefully like a dust ball hiding a nest of roaches and dismissed the runty specimen as a trick of her fatigued vision. But the following evening it was again in the same corner, even though she was sure she had previously tossed it with the trash. However, on closer inspection, it appeared a degree larger than formerly and exuded a pitiful saddening quality. Deliberately she wrapped it in newspaper and buried it in the garbage.

On the third evening as she bent down to swat it with the broom, it turned doleful, pinched eyes upward as it reached out to cling at her ankles. The broom fell flat as she grabbed the soft claws and bringing it to eye level, gazed fully into its exposed docility--a penetrating moment for both. Instinctively she pressed the hard pit to the cleft between her breasts, where it instantly fell asleep.

A sparkle glimpsed her eye and her lips unexpectedly cracked a modest smile as she settled into her maple rocker and timidly felt it all over and actually lost herself for hours that evening petting it until at last it ceased to fuss on awakening and lay snugly content nestled in her arms. She tickled part of it with her little finger and a drop of inky purple liquid spilled from a tiny crack. Gently, she wiped the stain with a tissue and stroked the area. Its transparent exterior gradually shaded an opaque mauve. In bed she held the tad close to her and by morning it had grown molded by her contours, squeezed upward through pliable folds toward her chin, spread wide underneath her cups according to the rolls of her belly. It conformed in such agreement that as she dressed for work she blushed with a shy pride enjoying such rare flattery.

It squirmed and wriggled on her pillow and she felt guilty leaving and

paced the room several times and attempted several more abortive starts before bolting the door behind her. And the day frayed raggedly with too many cups of coffee and too many traffic jams and a stale crumb bun, and an extraordinarily long line at the bank, and a refused refund for either cash or merchandise, and a missed lunch, and a misplaced file, and too many errors, and too much noise and a constant draft down her back, and a water-main break and a subway delay, and a ticket for jay-walking, and the market just closed, and a broken heel on her own front stoop. But, as the tumbler turned in the lock, inside the door it readied itself for the leap into her arms and for the first time she could remember, the flushed rage drained from her pores as she bounced it light-heartedly and truly felt she was home. And each evening frisked similarly and each day she anticipated returning home to cuddle and play with the fat, healthy nit. And its hide smoothed and its color brightened and it continued to grow.

Parting grew increasingly painful each succeeding morning. It grunted and belched and hung to her, and rode on her shoulders as she carried it about the room while they inspected the philodendron and fern, fingered bureau tops for soot, tussled making the bed and half-tidying the dishes and then she rocked it, humming, softly singing until it fell asleep and then carefully she lay it on her pillow, covered it with a down comforter and tip-toed to the door where, with a shriek and a scramble, it would be crawling up her back to attach itself to her shoulders and burrow into her hair and stifle her thoughts. At last she would forcefully extricate herself to rush from the room, slam the door and as tears welled, scuttle blindly downstairs, dash to the subway, finally, to arrive late at the office and in a low mood.

The obsessive thoughts of her dear lonely waif dwindled her office efficiency so that Personnel found it expedient to rotate her to a less pressurized desk, and her co-workers sprouted alarm. In the lavatory, they twined about her garbling the injustice of her transfer, the impersonality of Personnel and the need not to worry because a replacement had not yet been hired for her old job. However, they noticed the catastrophe did not appear to alarm her nor even, apparently, slightly faze her. So each one, unobtrusively, inspected her reflection in the mirror for some distress sign and then directed their quips after the haze clouding her stare. The fat Girl with fluffy flaming hair and magenta-rimmed lips nudged the Girl of the clear plastic spike heels and twittered something about a lover. The middle-aged Girl with thick lenses and a tubercular husband asked, as she placed a sisterly arm about her shoulders, if there was trouble at home.

She vaguely heard the remarks and questions and knew she could never discuss her change and realized she was now of another world from theirs and was unable even to fathom it herself. It was deeper or more grand or different or subtler or rootier, anyway, she itched with an awareness of having been, at least, almost, Chosen. They could never comprehend it. It was inside and they were retreating beyond her span. So she looked through the window and answered not thinking of the words as they formed her explanation.

The Girls, who had assumed she held them all as confidants, were not

happy and all prattled to each other how they were just trying to be understanding. And as she walked back to her desk They stayed at the basins and talked among themselves and from then on concentrated pointedly on her movements. She seemed oblivious. After two days they glowered hostility and when she failed to respond to that and continued to stare out into a void and refused to lunch with them on Friday, they knotted themselves into a tight welt of hate and procrastinated the time calculating her galloping downfall.

And she sat in the midst of the conspiracy thinking of her own sweet love at home.

The day before her vacation not one of the Girls spoke or asked where she was going, or wished her a good time, or even expressed a false sympathy over her final rotation to the typing pool. And she did not notice the slights, but arranged her new desk neatly and left the office at five o'clock without even a goodbye.

\* \* \* \*

All this while her shadowing protege had fattened and toughened and spawned tiny configurations circumventing its entire hide: lavender spikes extended above its eyes and its underbelly jiggled encased by a dark wavering border of blue. At 5:36 as she turned the knob, it had already amassed its bulk before the entrance and squeezed about her warm and sticky sweet. She spread her arms wide to scoop up as much as possible, murmuring, "There, there, it's all right now," and began examining its new boils developed during the day.

For a week they frolicked in the park. Each morning, after toast and coffee, she laboriously lifted it to the maple bureau from which, as she turned herself, bracing her bent legs and supporting an arm against the door jamb, it combined its own slithering leap to land weightily on the small of her back. And after slipping to the floor and missing the second leap with a thud, they at last victoriously became one and thus affixed, proceeded the seven long blocks.

The sun, outside air and exercise relaxed its growth at an even greater rate and eventually it matched her body like a lead filled plaster cast and then its inflating weight gradually forced her to her knees and then, to a final half.

They retired permanently to her room.

She telephoned for deliveries and continued to pet it and coddle it as it mushroomed, filling not only its side of the bed, but hers as well. And soon there was no indication from its gigantic form that it had ever developed from her. It was bulbous as rampant tumors, its coloring had flamed almost the entire spectrum of vibrating clashing hues. The blotches of color changed randomly as did its form, so that if she commenced to doze sitting on the floor leaning against the mattress, her arms reaching around it as far as possible, it would suddenly erupt a great violet bulge bashing her shoulder into what seemed a splintered fracture or spraining her neck until



she would be unable to hold her head erect.

Nor did its growth subside, but energy particles coaxed others, reproducing their like with such rapidity that she could see that her room would soon no longer hold either of them. The floor boards creaked and bowed and tiny cascades of plaster periodically poured from deepening fissures. The filth and stench mounted as rapidly as her free space shrank. It would splurt a great slobber at her to be hugged and she, confined within its plasmodium, would meekly gasp for her strangling breath and wait for the wave to subside.

So, from inseminated shy vanity her attitude matured to an acceptance of her Cross. And she met this serious responsibility with a renewed activity and quiet enthusiasm: in reality it had become a terrific burden, carbuncled, gnawing, ever-demanding and if she failed to immediately satisfy its mean cravings, it would rear back its great hump and knock her chin and wrench her abdominal muscles by its fury as well as dislodge more stresses and gouge more holes through the composition walls. When she was not administering to its whims, she lay exhausted wherever a speck of room remained momentarily free from its encroaching blubber. She was semi-crippled, mentally feebling, growing weaker and weaker. Nor had she noticed that the two weeks vacation had long ago elapsed, nor had she attended to the jangling phone, nor was she aware that it rang more and more infrequently until, it perpetuated silence. She no longer called for deliveries but reflexively placed bits of stale crackers, debris or dust balls--whatever her nervous fingers contacted--to her mouth, swallowing the matter whole. It grew regardless of diet.

But it no longer seemed aware of her presence. It reared and groaned and pounded and thumped until she could hear downstairs' neighbors retaliate with broom handles prodding the ceiling. One day the landlord croaked through the key hole that she was evicted and whatever she was carrying on had better get out quick or the police would do it for her! In fright it backed against a window, shattering the pane into the street. The landlord's boots resounded thumping downstairs and, it seemed to her, immediately return duplicated and with the other, even coarser tone, brackishly chorus the demand to open up!

After a moment of hollow silence she heard the scratching pickings of a pass key in the lock.

She pulled at her useless legs, wedging herself between the walls and its ubiquitous block, never ceasing to massage its crusted welts, whispering and soothing it. And as she lay, a memory trickled through her dim brain of the freedom she had had when she had been alone, she sensed it like seeing through the transparent barriers of a carnival glass house. For a moment before crumbling, she felt the panicked impulse to bash her head through the mockery. The great lump belched an opaque film across her vision and she struggled against her weariness to comfort the hulk. It was her Cross, it was her Cross she inwardly echoed. She painfully released her right wrist from a roll of fibrous membrane and gently kissed a great festering throbbing wart.



APPLE MARY Apple 10" 1972.



## A STORY ——— by susan griffin

This is a story about two women who love each other. The beginning of the story is not just one beginning but two. Two women were born. They were born and lived each for twenty-eight years before they met, one wearing a beautiful pea-coat, the other in a white neck brace. Or rather, one writing poetry and reading it to everyone, the other writing poetry and folding it into a small square and putting it in her pocket. You could say that the one thought she loved the other more than the other loved her. Or rather that the other loved also a man and was not sure who she loved more, or rather who she wanted to be with. Or rather you could say that they loved each other equally, but one, or rather, both, did not believe the love was there. Or rather the one thought she was needed and so she served and believed that was why the other spoke of love. Or you could even say she never believed anyone loved her. And that might have been said about the other too, only she did know, because she felt happy at times, that there was love between the two. The question with her was more that she wanted all the love because she thought if the other gave away too much love in other places to other people there would not be enough left. And really, what she was sure she knew was that if the other ever got far enough away to love someone else she most certainly would prefer that other person, and then, she would go away. Well, anyway, in the midst of all this fear of the one and the indecision of the other, they became twenty-nine and then they became thirty and they still lived in the same house and they still loved each other but they did not make love. That is they did not touch each other on the breasts or the vagina but only slept near one another or curled up together or stroked their heads, or rubbed their backs, or held one another, or kissed goodbye and in the morning. These things they did but it was what they did not do that made the one upset. Upset and angry and hurt and all those feelings. And the other felt bad, bad for causing the hurt, and the other felt anyway that she was always causing hurt, just by existing, or by sitting down and putting her feet on the ottoman. For instance, the one who wore the beautiful pea coat and stuffed her poems in her pocket and did not want to make love would always take care of the other. The other was sick for a long while. And for instance, the caring one would say, to give an example which is very exaggerated but shows the point, "I am sorry that I cannot carry you up the stairs." And at first the other was very touched that the one would even want to carry her up the stairs

but she said, "First, I am too heavy for you, and second, I can walk up the stairs myself." And this went on, this very conversation, for a while. But gradually the conversation changed and it became like this, "Really, I can't carry you up the stairs, I'm so tired." And then the other would say, "I never asked you to." And finally the one who didn't ask began to believe she had asked and decided she had to prove that she had offered to carry the other up the stairs, or at least would if she could, only everyone knew she had a weak back. And there were other conversations of a different and of the same nature. And both women worked very hard to show that each was good herself, and each woman felt each herself that she herself was very selfish. But there was a truth apart from the feelings and that major problem was that the woman with the pea coat, though she did not carry the talkative poet up the stairs, did nearly everything else for her. And all the other could do was to say thank you or occasionally to loan the caring woman money. This she herself felt was very cheap since she knew there was no reason but luck that she had the money to loan or to give. But the caring woman felt guilty about the money. And in any case it was true that there was no comparison between money and caring. And the one who had been sick felt guilty. And so, she tried to give love. And this was only partly accepted, not in the sense of making love, but in the sense of belief. And in addition, the sick woman could not really accept the caring woman's care. She would at first pretend she did not need the care, and then if she asked for the care, did so in a tone of voice implying that the caring woman did not want to give care. You can see that nothing in this story is simple. You can see that but you must also begin to be suspecting the outcome. More and more, as the sickness and the caring went on, the two women felt selfish inside. Finally, they gave each other as much pain as they did love. And the one who wore the neck brace would say to the caring one, "You should not feel guilty," and then later she would say, "Last night I was sick and you did not know." And she would also say, "I think you should not make love to me if you do not want to but I think you should make love to me." And she would also say, "You should not always do what you should but do what you want." As you can see the one was very confused. And the other, for her part, would say, "You should not be afraid that I will leave you because if you keep on acting afraid, I will leave you." And the other would also say, "You are always acting so fair; you are always acting so self-righteous." But if the one became then unfair, or angry, or even nasty, the other would say, "You'll be sorry," and she would walk out the door. This went on and on in between what the one still remembers as tenderness and love and joy until one night the conversation repeated itself again and the one with the folded up poems left the house again. And she did not come back. And the truth is that she may never have come back because the truth is that she wanted to die. And by this, the other was frightened almost to death. And this then is the ending of one story about the two and also the beginning of two more stories, as only time will tell.



## THE POET AS LIZZIE BORDEN

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My mother,  
whose ears are purely ornamental  
thinks poets are something like  
overgrown parakeets,  
unfit to hunt their own dinners  
too dainty to swallow anything  
larger than a barleycorn  
or stray syllable.

We who dance to these tuneless rhythms  
are better informed.  
A sentence can frag you,  
each word, like splinters of a guava bomb,  
can shatter a rib on entering  
and tear off a shoulder on the other side.

My hands shake with the day's exertion.  
They seem to be clean.  
A lie. I can show you  
castrated corpses,  
blood-soaked towels burnt  
under a wienie roast,  
strangled babies  
hastily crammed into dustbins,  
raped men in prisons, women on highways,  
aged gardeners shot down over cabbages,  
strangers' bones and more:  
the severed heads of family and friends.  
My own breasts covered  
with cigarette burns.

My gentleness is mere restraint.  
I lock myself at home  
and hide the whiskey and the knives  
to keep from acting out a poem.

## READING AT THE VILLAGE GATE

I said, as I walked to the ferry,  
clutching a briefcase jammed up with papers,  
I don't want to go to Manhattan.  
I don't want to read my poetry tonight.  
This one was written to shove in a shoebox,  
and that one, for posthumous publication  
on the back of a corn flakes box.  
I wrote the other to recite on Ground Hog Day  
at four a.m. in Battery Park.

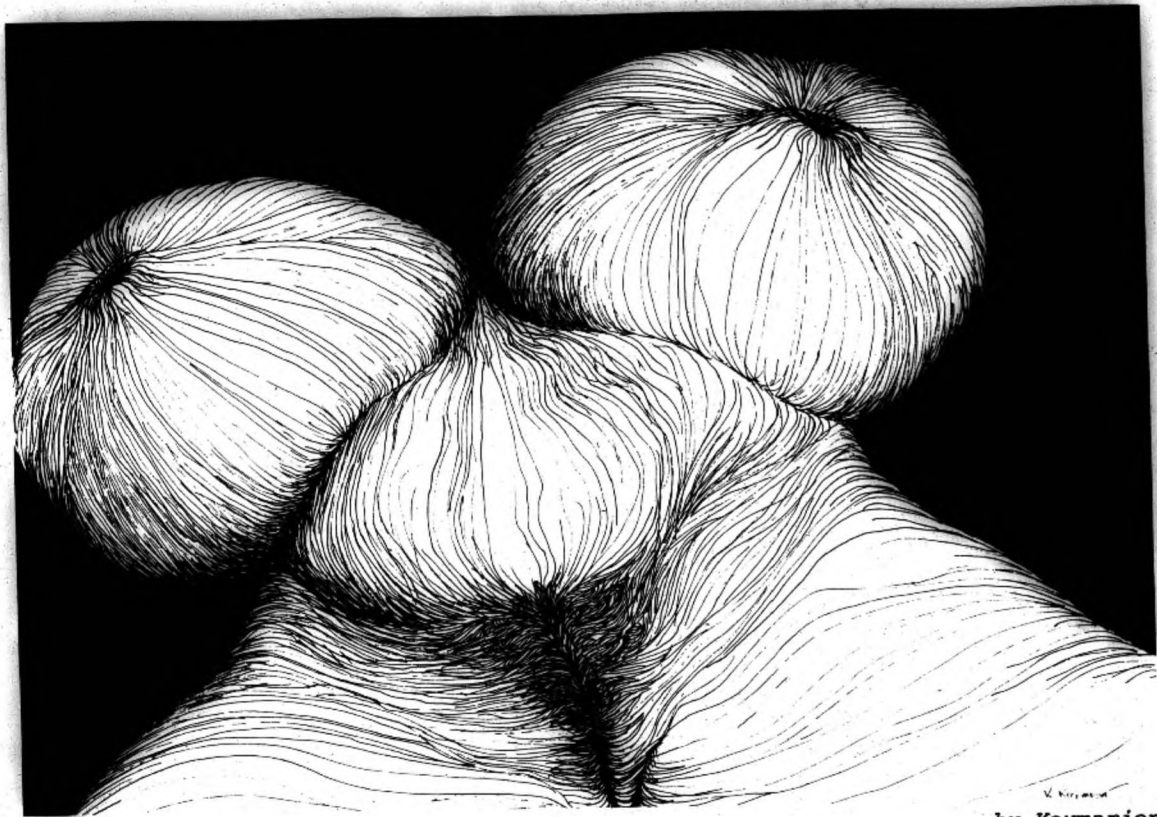
The first row of the audience  
will be filled with Medusas  
who talk like Louise Day Hicks;  
the twenty men seated behind them  
resemble Lon Chaney  
and work for the C.I.A.  
The rest of the seats will be filled  
with young men from the Bronx,  
maybe the Savage Nomads, or the Skulls.  
Finally, in the rear,  
the single reporter assigned to review us:  
an elderly fellow from the Ukrainian Daily,  
whose English would improve  
if he got a new hearing aid battery.

My lover has a black belt in karate.  
She came along, she said, to wipe up tomato.  
Gee thanks, I said,  
as she rumbled me for luck.

The mob was worse than I thought.  
The Gate was wall-to-wall with drunken dykes.  
They booed some woman who sang a tender lyric  
to her man  
and cheered each time I said, "lesbian."  
A world of words -- they wanted only one.

I was lousy in bed that night  
because they smashed a dream,  
a spark that someone tended  
over twenty centuries of stake and ducking stool.  
I wish they'd tried to smash my face instead.

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by Kaymarion

# hands

by Maud Haimson

The woman was walking along the shore, just walking while the waves beat half quietly and half unsure on the sand, catching up pieces of foam and taking them with them as they moved back. The sky sat there, not doing much of anything, maybe waiting for the sunset to come and do something. But the woman didn't quite notice. She wasn't much of one for noticing, unless maybe she got something in her foot, or else every once in a while she'd remember where she was and she'd notice. She noticed now when she came to a cave. She'd always had a thing about caves. She and caves really got a long, at least in her head, as she'd never been in one. First she stood outside a while, listening to the wind and water sounds as they came and left, getting her surroundings organized in her mind so she might still remember directions once she was inside.

She went in. Although the cave started out natural, it turned into a strange cave. Dark and darker until, not being able to hold any light in her eyes, she was ready to turn back except then some strange colored light came. Red and green flashing lights as she moved forward, like the flashes on unfinished roads, if the colors had been right. The ending of the darkness kept her moving forward to see the light's beginning. She forgot to notice that she wasn't her normally frightened self. The light was in little pieces. Bits of rock blinked like Christmas tree lights, unconnected. She moved on to understand. She came to a smaller room, half lit by white rocks, and despite her habit of bumping into things because she'd forget where her body was, everything, the walls, the damp was so much where it belonged, that the woman also moved where she belonged. In the middle of the room stood a heating stove with dimly bright rocks on the top.

She waited a minute until this little woman came in. She wasn't regular little, but smaller than that even. At first, the little woman didn't pay attention to the other woman, instead she moved her looks toward the rocks as though they were a matter of now importance. The new-to-the-cave woman nodded and waited. The cave woman picked up a small rock, touched it all around and brought it to the older woman. The older outside woman took it, touched it and holding it asked the inside woman if she'd been outside. The stone woman shook her head and taking a look at her stove picked up some rocks and put them in her many pocketed clothlike thing going to the ground, pockets in the back too with bulges from stones. She followed the other woman out.



The new-to-the-outside woman stood at the entrance and looked out. Her body changed as she watched the waves come in and out in the distance, not so far from her as they had been inside. As she watched, her arms got longer and farther from her body. Her shoulders moved almost the whole way around her body. Between the motion of the new woman and the motion ever yet calm of the sea, the woman could almost hear the sun going down toward the sea, with the touch softening the sound of the waves. The moving woman would not leave the entrance of the cave.

The sea, sky and air woman took the new-to-the-outside woman's hand and led her out toward the sea. As they walked the woman's hand grew longer and smaller in the other woman's steady hand. They walked. The sun floated down.

"You like it here?" the experienced woman asked.

"Yes, but I have to calm me down." She sat on the sand and her body stopped slowly its unplace-moving motion. She touched her stones to make sure they had stayed in her pockets which had perhaps made sitting down uncomfortable. As the dark came more her pockets lit up slightly.

But they had to go, the taller, now standing-up woman decided, taking her hand once more. "Would you like to come back with me?" she asked.

"Can I bring my rocks?"

"Yes."

So they got in the dark car. The driving woman asked the other if she could make the rocks stop their light and the woman stopped the light, "except one."

"One's fine," the driving woman said, going slow because the woman new to a car kept getting bigger and smaller and moving her head all around the car so she could see out the windows.

"I don't go this way," she said.

"How do you do it?"

"I sit on my feet and they take me along."

They drove and the darkness seemed right.

When they reached the woman's apartment, the boyfriend opened the door. She knew he wouldn't understand the new woman. She had him leave.

They started to live together.

The woman who lived in the apartment discovered the new woman didn't eat. Instead, as she explained, she got energy from the sun and that was good for that was the only thing that got to every place she went. The woman asked her if she had been able to get much sun in the cave. The slowly-moving-in-place woman said, "I get too much sun when I travel and being exhausted I needed the dark." So, often the first woman would come home to find the second woman sitting at the window with her hands stretched far into the sky. She could only catch sun in her hands, she explained. One day she caught a balloon in her hands as it made its way upward. She didn't go out, though she had her own key that she always wore around her neck.

I like to keep it; it's your present to me." The first woman brought her another key--to be used going in and out--she explained. But still the woman with two keys around her neck didn't go out without her friend and that

was later.

The outside woman often brought her rocks and soon they started going to the beach together. And they learned to play together, digging tunnels in the sand until they met underneath, throwing each other into the water, though neither went out far. They stayed close. The one built castles while the other found rocks to decorate them with that she later took home with her. The taller woman hadn't gotten used to thinking herself away from her friend while the other collected rocks; then she would feel her friend's hand stretched out tapping on her shoulder, ignoring the distance to give her a rock.

The first woman felt bad leaving her for work every day, except she had to work. The other woman seemed quite happy at home baking rocks in the oven and hanging them on the wall. Or else, she put the baked rocks all over the house in special places for her friend to discover when she came home. And the working woman learnt specific distinctions about rocks so she didn't rediscover old rocks and hurt her friend's feelings by not having enough rock caring to know the new from the old.

Yet then the working woman noticed her job was becoming easier. Sometimes she'd arrive at work to find all of her morning typing done, so she'd read or call home, once she had taught the strange-to-the-phones woman not to be frightened of it. Though once she was used to it, she decided it was a kind of rock and the business woman returned home one day to discover the phone melted over the inside of the oven.

They started to go to movies together. It helped make things make sense to the new-to-the-planet woman. Though if a movie was sad she'd get littler until her friend took her hand and she'd return to regular size. Which was still small and people would stare at her, but not so much as when she changed sizes.

After the first movie, they sat in the livingroom together under the glowing rocks. The new woman said, "It's better now. I can sort things out."

"What do you mean?"

"Before if I was with other people, all their feelings come into the center of the room, sit there and bump into one another. Too much. Now I can put the feelings back in the bodies."

"You mean you can tell what people feel?"

"Most times."

"Me too?"

"Only when you want me to."

Even understand better her friend stayed inside. The in-and-out-of-the-house woman wondered if her friend wasn't bored. But the stone woman liked being home. She liked to sit at the window and look out, watching the motion of things and sunning herself. One night the woman who was tired from work awoke to find her friend watching the world, kneeling by the window and looking out ever so long. And now her body stood still, ever so still. The first woman slept.

It was good. The first woman, whose work was easier yet and as they

never noticed her anyhow, being in a back room, spent more time at home with her friend. Except she was worried. The new woman started talking about other planets. How one planet was so small you could feel it turn under your feet. And there was another planet with soft rocks that bounced. But the best part was moving from one planet to another, sitting on one's feet as the space moved one along.

The first woman was nervous and worried and didn't know what to do. They went out more, but that didn't seem to help the working woman. The home-staying woman didn't know how to cheer up her friend. It was better for a while when the outside-coming woman returned home with something to show her friend. She took one of her friend's hot rocks out of the oven, put it in the sink and turned the cold water on it. The rock cracked. The rock woman was so happy she grew as tall as the other woman and bounced up and down though she stood still.

It was good for a while until the new woman told her friend about this great planet with sun and rocks that grew from trees in different colors, which changed when they were held in the hand. And if you found the special rock made for oneself you had only to hold onto it to fly. "But mostly it's the feeling between planets I like."

The little woman didn't know what to do about her depressed friend who had stopped looking for the new rocks and no matter how many rocks she cracked for her friend, her friend was still sad. One day after sunning her hands, she collected all the beautiful food in the house. She hadn't cooked for the working woman since the second week, since the eating woman broke her tooth on one of many rocks her friend had put in the casserole. But now she realized that the woman didn't like food rocks. She gathered all the beautiful food she could find: honey, green peppers, spinach, blueberries, pickles, strawberry jam, eggplant, marshmallows, chocolate and put it in a large pot. She added all the pretty spices and some food coloring, wine and some coke, and swirled the colors. Then putting her favorite stone on top she set the oven at 450 and put it in the oven to bake.

She served it to her tired friend. The food woman didn't know what to do. She looked at all the colors, and grey mixtures merging stickily together, hardened, crusted and stuck to the pan.

"It's beautiful," said the newly-arrived-home woman.

"Isn't it," said the proud creator.

"It's so beautiful I can't eat it. Maybe we can put it on the wall so we can always see it," she suggested.

The other woman started bouncing while sitting in her chair.

The just-arrived woman kissed her friend's happy face and her friend touched her eyes with her hand. The new-to-the-planet woman learned touch and they slowly moved together and in the motion of it all they caught up each other's body. Later in the rests between, the new woman told her friend it was better than any other kind of motion.

by AUDRE LORDE

TO MARIE, IN FLIGHT

For women  
perspective is more easily maintained.

But something in my body  
teaches patience  
is no virtue  
every month  
renews its own destruction  
while my blood rages  
for proof  
or continuity.

Peering out of this  
pressured metal cabin  
I see our body patterns  
repeated on the earth  
I hear my blood breath beating  
through the dark green places  
between the mountains thrust.  
without judgment or decision  
a valley rhythm captures all.





LIME ALLEGORY Lime 25" by 9" by 4" 1973.



LIME ALLEGORY (other side)

# new ink

## reviews by laurel

FLYING -- Autobiographical

Kate Millett

Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. (hardcover) \$8.95 546 pp.

Kate Millett's new book, *Flying*, is a long journey into depression, fear, self-disgust, anger, distrust, boredom, excruciating pain, and, finally, passion and some moments of love. Kate records here the life as she lived it during the year following the enormous success of *Sexual Politics*. It is at once a journal and an autobiography, an attempt to capture everything she experienced (including the past) during a one year period. Like a tape recording, a film, but enriched by associations, connections, reflections on the events as they happen.

As Gene Damon (*The Ladder*) would say, this book is "highly relevant." A triple star. Probably no one unless it is Violet Leduc has ever printed so much of her lesbian experience. But it is by no means polemical. The travail Kate Millett associates with loving women far outweighs the joy of it through most of this book.

A single exception is so beautifully depicted that, coming in the last pages of the book as it does, it almost counterbalances the nihilism of her other sexual relationships. Kate's love for Claire and Claire's for her runs like a thread of hope through the book. The descriptions of their lovemaking are unequalled anywhere. Hating passionately, through most of the book, Kate loves equally passionately, and makes the finest poetry of the sexual explicit she reveals.

In general though, in bed and out, Kate's relations with women as she describes them are bitterly quarrelsome ego struggles. Though we can marvel at her honesty in recording her own self as Super-Bitch, showing us the ugliest sides of her jealous, dependent, dominating self in conflict with women, the resultant picture is very depressing and it is hard not to wish that she'd kept it to herself. She trashes at least 2/3 of the women she writes about in a way that will make you wonder how many are suing her right now for slander.

Despite this, it will be a very important book to the women's movement. Kate, while compounding the trouble by publishing yet another book, struggles throughout *Flying* with the perennial problem of her media image. This problem of stars, the media elite, has plagued the women's movement since the beginning. Media power can and does corrupt like any other, and Kate has

courted, used, and abused that power. She is repeatedly called for this, obviously sometimes by women who would like her to give it up so they can move in, but also by women who sincerely question the hierarchy the media so unrelentingly insists upon.

The problem of Kate's fame and power is never resolved in this book, nor, to my knowledge, has she resolved it since the time span the book covers. She has been unscrupulous, self-serving, callous in her uses of fame and has often had to pay the price. Boored off the stage at the West Coast Lesbian Conference last year, and finally, purged by the largest university women's studies program in the country, Kate has not seen the end of the star's sturm and drang which she depicts in *Flying*.

However depressing in its lack of sisterhood, *Flying* is a marvel of a book, carrying the tradition of Violet Leduc on to new heights. Kate has very likely broken ground on a new form of as-it-happens journal writing which will be widely imitated, while adding a confirming voice to the lesbian bare-all tradition of Jill Johnston, Rita Mae Brown, Elana Nachman and others.

*Flying* is a classic you won't want to miss, but, be warned, Kate's mistaken certainty that New York City is a microcosm of the world and that the New York City women's movement is the microcosm of the women's movement, will sneak up on you and send you plummeting into her despair if you're not careful.

Kate's experience is not typical: not typical woman, writer, or lesbian. To hold her as somehow representative, as the media undoubtedly will, is cruel to her and damaging to our own diversity. Kate has tried, in this book, to elucidate on the woman she is beyond the media stereotypes--let us hope that she, by using the patriarchal press to plead her case, has not merely added fuel to their fires.

### THE NEW FEMINIST MOVEMENT -- A Social History

Maren Lockwood Carden

The Russell Sage Foundation (Hardback) No price available 234 pp.

Dr. Carden sets out in this book to "record this particular piece of contemporary social history while its actors are available to re-tell their parts," but, wisely, admits that no single book can adequately describe the complexity of the women's movement. She divides the movement into Women's Rights organizations and Women's Liberation groups and makes no attempt to merge the two under one banner. Her experience has been primarily with the former, and so, many inaccuracies and omissions are obvious to women who've been in the radical women's movement for any length of time.

Particularly limited is her concept of lesbians' position in the women's movement, though we must certainly credit her for devoting a good amount of discussion to it. While Ms. Carden does justice to the lesbian position that "lesbianism is a logical alternative to a male partner's dominance," and approvingly describes women who have chosen to relate sexually to other women, she grossly underestimates lesbian participation and leadership in



the women's movement by saying that lesbians are still, primarily, working for acceptance of their lesbianism. Ms. Carden apparently has not heard that it is heterosexual women now who must most often beg acceptance for their particularly odious contradiction of sleeping with men. She errs in saying that the great majority of women in the movement are straight. A conservative estimate of the lesbian constituency would be 1/3.

Despite its shortcomings this is on the whole a good fact-filled coverage of the new women's movement, particularly the more conservative Women's Rights wing.

#### WOMAN PLUS WOMAN: Attitudes Toward Lesbianism

Dolores Klaich

Simon and Schuster (hardcover) \$8.95 287 pp.

Dolores Klaich's treatment of lesbianism is more disappointing than Dr. Carden's because in devoting a whole book to it she calls attention to how little she really knows. This is a hodgepodge of everything from superficial literary history of Sappho and Radclyffe Hall to the results of Ms. Klaich's painfully limited mail-order interviews.

The credentials she gives for publishing this book are most peculiar: She tells us two things she is not: 1) a member of the gay activist groups and 2) one of the line of social scientists who've fenced lesbians into their inaccurate studies. She, however, like every author of a book on lesbianism (except Del and Phyllis and Sidney and Barbara) does not admit her most singularly relevant credential, that she is a lesbian. It wasn't until I was researching some old *Ladders* that I discovered that Dolores Klaich, the quite removed from it editor on the *Transatlantic Review* who claims to have written this book because she is "interested and concerned" over the public misapprehension of lesbians, has written some very explicit lesbian stories and published them under her own name. When will we learn to ignore the patriarchy's valuing of "the objective outsider" and begin to proclaim that writing from within the movement is, certainly, one step closer to truth if not truth itself.

Dolores Klaich's book is meant as a general overview of lesbianism for "the layman", and as such, it can't really hurt. You might even learn something from her ramblings--women she interviewed did come up with some amazingly good responses--but try not to be depressed by her constant insistence that most of us are still locked in the closet.

#### V. SACKVILLE-WEST -- Biographical literary criticism

Michael Stevens

Charles Scribner's Sons (hardcover) \$7.95 192 pp.

The newest contribution to the current V. Sackville-West revival is this quite scholarly biographical literary criticism. "Taking up where *Portrait of A Marriage* left off," Mr. Stevens has gained access to some manuscripts and other previously unpublished papers through the Nicolson family and uses them to fill in more details about Vita. Some very fine portraits are

included as well as a detailed section listing where many minor works of Ms. Sackville-West were printed.

RIVERFINGER WOMEN -- A novel Excerpt on pp. 6-10 this issue.

Elana Nachman

Daughters, Inc., Plainfield, VT 05667 (hardcover) \$3.00 183 pp.

This novel, in the tradition of *Rubyfruit Jungle*, is a whirlwind picaresque psychedelic nostalgia piece about the author's often ill-fated adventures in the youth and lesbian cultures of the late 60's and 70's. Some early parts are tedious due to an overload of minor characters, but the book does wind all its disjointed episodes into a compelling ending. A breath of fresh air for lesbian literature, it's well worth a warm summer day's reading.

REFLECTION ON THE ATOMIC BOMB and HOW WRITING IS WRITTEN -- Two volumes of the previously unpublished work of

Gertrude Stein, edited by Robert Bartlett Haas

Black Sparrow Press (paper) \$4.00 164 pp. and 161 pp.

Since I honestly can't understand more than 10% of what Gertrude Stein has written, I won't attempt to recommend these for content, but only say that Black Sparrow Press has performed a remarkable service in publishing two volumes of Ms. Stein's previously uncollected writings, and presented them in particularly handsome editions.

#### GULLIBLES TRAVELS

Jill Johnston

Links Books (paper) \$4.95 283 pp.

Not as pontificating as *Lesbian Nation* and more readable than *Marmalade Me*, this new book is definitely a treat from start to finish. Something to offend everyone, as usual, but Jill has gained a sense of humorility that will assuage all but her most ardently jealous critics.

"A Life on a Cloud" in *The New Yorker*, June 3, 1974

Janet Flanner

A fine remembrance of Margaret Anderson by a longtime friend, Janet Flanner who writes for *The New Yorker* under the name Genet.

All the books reviewed in AQ and most other books by women can be ordered from FIRST THINGS FIRST, a fe-mail order house. Send for their free catalogue and details about ordering the books you want: 23 Seventh St. SE, Washington, DC 20003. They would probably appreciate postage to cover sending the catalogue.

# JACKIE

*Jackie, who we taped an interview with in California last June at the beginning of our lesbians around the country expedition, speaks very candidly of the emotional and sexual complexities of her relationship with Sharon, and offers especially good insights about lesbian motherhood. Marvelously eloquent about everything, many of her statements read like feminist aphorisms. For more interviews, see the Special Double Issue of AQ (Fall, 1973) devoted to the women we met and interviewed on our 12,000 mile journey through the U.S. and Canada. We've also printed one interview per issue since then, and are working on a book to include them all.*

Laurel: When did you first understand that you loved women?

Jackie: About a year after I was married, I met a woman who took a lot of interest in me...very warm toward me in a very powerful way, and she acted as a therapist for me to dump a whole lot of guilt. I had a really puritanical background, and I sort of had to go through confession. She listened to me, she was very therapeutic, and I fell in love with her. It was an impossible situation. That's the first time I actually had a physical experience with a woman. It was dreadfully unsatisfactory, and I still wasn't thinking of the term 'homosexual'! I finally realized that that applied to me.

L: This first woman you had a physical relationship with, why was it impossible?

J: She had a great deal of psychological power over me, and it was like a crush and she used it. She seduced me, but she never, ever loved me. It just wasn't equal and she wouldn't discuss it.

L: After this, how much time elapsed before you recovered and went on again?

J: Another woman who I got to know and like pointed out to me that it was an unequal relationship, and I got over it gradually. I can't emphasize enough that she was a very powerful woman, with a strong personality. She actually influenced me in my thinking about roles. She was really into roles, so that kind of set the tone of my marriage...and so it was another couple of years before I could get away from her influence personally. It took the Women's Movement four years to counteract the ideas that I'd acquired. That wasn't a significant lesbian relationship, that was a kind of playing around. I guess we went to bed only three or four times. Though my husband said he loved me, I wasn't loved by him either, and

there was something deep in me that said I had a right to be loved. When I did meet a woman once at a party, there was just an instant liking, and we had an affair for a year and a half while I was married, secretly. We really loved each other. It was wonderful. It was a very positive experience. But we didn't have a consciousness about what we were doing. She especially felt guilty. And we both assumed that this was just something that we were doing because we really loved each other, that our futures were really going to be with nice men. She was looking for a man, and I was struggling with a bad marriage...this was before the Women's Movement.

L: Could you tell me a little bit about your relationship now. What's important in it?

J: (laughs) That's really big! (They've been together three years.) We met at a Woman-Identified-Woman Workshop, and we were instantly attracted to each other, and got together. It was very happy, wonderful falling in love and getting to know each other. It was really exciting. Soon she left her husband and came here to live. I was already divorced, and after the divorce I went through a kind of sexual exploration with men, seeking satisfaction and had given up on that.

I was developing a gradual acceptance of preferring women. I was in therapy, with a woman after my divorce, because I needed support in order to do it. Even though she was straight, and she believed that homosexuality wasn't as satisfying as heterosexuality, she did give me a lot of support. I finally ended it when the relationship became equal. But I'm avoiding your question.

L: What do you think are the important reasons you're together?

J: Oh, we love each other! Deeply! We feel that there's a very special deep love that is so amazing, so remarkable. We're so right for each other. This love that we feel for each other seems to go beyond our understanding. We have this really strong feeling between us, that we're really right for each other. We even have the feeling that -- it sounds like a cliché -- that we're made for each other. Something very magic is happening between us. That comes from a respect for each other, too. We feel our love is rooted in the most positive kinds of human feelings for another human being. The exchange of our love seems to really build in us.

Like her love for me has been the most positive help in my life, I think...for my liking myself and feeling good about myself. And I think she always did feel good about herself, but she really gets a lot out of my feelings for her. It's a hard thing to talk about. It's free space. If you want, just for a second to compare it to what happens between a man and a woman, there isn't a free exchange there. I mean I felt my love was ripped off. But I can have the most open feelings about love and have these really giving feelings and they make Sharon feel love for me. The love that I feel for her comes back to me, through her love for me.

Well, anyway, besides that romantic level, we really live well together. We've learned a lot about each other and the problems that we have. The



differences in our attitudes about things have often been sources of irritation, but we've learned how to deal with each other's personalities. I like that. It's like a changing relationship, and it takes courage. But I'd say basically the dynamic is one of generous good will. It's not like confrontation and stuff...we're basically nice to each other. And we respect each other's needs. There are some problems, do you want to hear about them? L: Yes.

J: Well, the problem for me is that I go through cycles of losing my identity. When I feel rotten about myself, I need her reassurance. Sometimes I feel pretty dependent. It's like when I get close to her, well, for instance, in making love, I find I am my true self. I get close to who I am and it's a really good feeling. And the other aspect of that is losing myself. Sometimes I get a little shaky about having lost myself. And I know that she has the power to make me feel good. I know that I respect her opinions so much that I really need reassurance from her sometimes. This is coming out of many years of doubting myself, so...sometimes I feel like a dependent. It comes out of my situation, too. I have more responsibility for the kids than she does. She has work needs, she goes to work every day. I don't so I have to struggle with that feeling of being a housewife. We're dealing with the situation pretty well...

I guess the problem basically is that I feel inferior sometimes. I don't know if she knows that this is a kind of problem to me.

L: You see this pattern developing. How do you think you can change things?

J: One thing I do sometimes is to start making demands on her. I demand that she be sensitive to my emotional needs and that she reassure me, even though she is engrossed in her work. I sometimes get my feelings hurt because if I'm feeling depressed and she's looking at her books to get ready for work the next day, I get hurt. And this can build up for a day or two where I'm resenting the fact that she doesn't know I need her. So I finally tell her: I feel hurt. So we have a big thing.

And the other thing I do is try to meet my own needs a little more. It's not always satisfactory. That's pretty good. The situation is that you're staying home too much, so you've got to get out and do some work so you can feel good about yourself. But if the problem is why doesn't she realize I need her now, well, that's a hard one. There's been two or three major, like, fights over that. (laughs) You're really making me introspective.

L: Has there ever been the issue of monogamy or nonmonogamy?

J: Only academically. Well, maybe that's not quite true either. You know what we do sometimes, which is funny? We'll use it. We'll make a reference to another woman who we're really attracted to. Sort of an 'I'll make you jealous' kind of thing. But we've talked very seriously about how we'd feel about that. How I feel if Sharon were with another woman, how she'd feel if I were with someone else, and so we understand each other on this. And we're in a secure place. We understand what would be terribly hurtful to the other person and we understand what wouldn't be. We can't

help but realize that our actions might hurt the other. We have a good understanding about this. It's hard to know how you'd really react. I'd be hurt, and I'm not saying that my reasons are rational. I feel very irrational about them.

Her reactions are practical. Like she doesn't want to feel that I might have to pay attention to someone else when she needs me. Her feelings are less possessive, but more that she needs me, and she wants to know if she really has to be with me that I'll be there for her first. And she's also said that if I made love with another woman that she knew and liked, it wouldn't hurt her as much as someone she didn't know at all.

The way I feel -- God -- it would just hurt my feelings. I would feel that I was inadequate. And I'd also feel -- I know that this is irrational -- that something special, our total giving of each of us to each other would change. I don't know how she could totally give herself to more than -- in fact, we agreed on this -- that we can't give ourselves to more than one person. So it would be a passing sexual thing. If she explained to me, I would be open to hearing it, what it meant to her. The love is deepening and growing and it's getting so it's just more important than any passing attraction to another woman. We realize that that's a realistic thing, that you're attracted to other women.

L: How do you feel about relating to men?

J: I don't want to have anything to do with them. I don't even like them. You see I know too much about the psychological dynamics between a man and a woman, and I don't like that.

I also know what I prefer aesthetically. I prefer women. I don't want to submit myself to a male...it's a kind of pride I have. I want an independent life. It's no great thing. It'd just be disappointing all over again. And yet I feel at some basic level we're all open sexually. I mean it is a disgusting thing, most of the time but (smiles) who knows?

L: Generally for you, what would you say the benefits of being a lesbian are?

J: A very deep liberation of myself. I've gotten back in touch with myself, who I am, the core of my being. I've experienced this because I am loved by a woman, unconditionally. And because I can be myself. So it's like psychologically liberated territory.

L: What problems are you having with the children related to your being a lesbian?

J: I can't think of any related to that.

L: Could you describe how you let them know or how they found out?

J: What actually transpired when we started going together? Well, you see, they're innocent. They didn't take note of the fact that there was a lesbian relationship going on. It was just my friend moved in -- I told them that she was going to. It's been a gradual process of their getting to know her. There have been conflicts, of course. I'm not as available to them. She's kind of harsh with them sometimes. They resent that.

We discussed our relationship with them, in terms of sitting them down and saying 'We love each other and this society doesn't think that's all

right. They're against women loving women and men loving men.' We never told them 'Don't say anything.'

They have a pretty good awareness of the fact that we're different -- they come home and make fun of the kids of the street, because they think taking clothes off is nasty. We have this kind of constant awareness of differences of life styles between us and other people. They pick up on that.

L: So it was fairly easy.

J: Yes, but I don't think it's finished! I don't know what will happen when they get to the point of trying to discuss these ideas with other people.

L: Do your parents know?

J: Mine do. I presume that my husband's parents can kind of tell. So I think the problem may come when they have to make a choice about whether to come out or not, in a classroom situation or with a friend making an antihomosexual remark. That's when they'll need our support. And they'll probably need to discuss this a lot more in the future. But now, they're getting more of a consciousness about the fact that we are lesbians. And we're using the word more. Before we were individuals and we love each other and it's cool. But there's been a whole lot of company lately since the lesbian conference, you know, and we're really liking calling ourselves dykes. They're pretty aware of some of the basic issues.

L: How would you feel if your daughter should choose to be a lesbian?

J: I hope she does.

L: Do you see any ways that you might influence this?

J: Well, I certainly know one way not to do it is to insist that she do that. I couldn't help it, but when she starts getting, ugh, friends, you know, getting into a sexual relationship, my attitude would reinforce that. I'd appreciate the good feelings she has with another girl. I would just feel like giving her a whole lot of understanding and support.

L: What about your son?

J: That's a harder question. I love him. If I could say what I want for him, I'd want him to be open to both sexes. Because I think something that happens with a person of your own sex must happen between men, except that men have been socialized to be emotional cripples. I want my son to have the benefits of an emotionally rich relationship. Now, it's up to him, he's going to have to choose. I don't want him to oppress a woman. Now that comes down to whether I believe fucking between a man and a woman is -- oh, it's so confusing! (laughs) It always was!

L: The actual act of fucking, do you think it's possible for it not to be oppressing?

J: The way it is now, that's all there is to it. But in the context of a full relationship, an equal relationship, and one that's generalized sensually and not just specific to a guy's penis, it has the possibility of being equal. Now I'm saying this as I think about my son. Before, when I think about a man relating to me, I just say no, I don't want that.

L: It's a difference in a generation.

J: Yes, that's true. I guess, though, as a parent, I'm really working on not being so invested in what they do. I want a good relationship with them, and I'll tell them my values and I'll guide them best I can. At some point, they're just going to have to do their own thing. In fact, I'm going to have to withdraw those wants to an extent so that they won't feel oppressed by my wishes for them.

L: Was your lesbianism an issue in your divorce or custody? Did your husband know?

J: He did. But he didn't want to take care of the kids. To him it isn't a big moral issue. Actually it suits my ex-husband's psychology just fine. Now he can say: 'My ex-wife is a lesbian, and she had to do that.' And he doesn't have to feel that he was inadequate.

L: What about the grandparents? Are they concerned?

J: No, they just sort of assume that the mother gets the kids.

L: Do you ever feel that you have to be careful about the custody with social workers or any kind of government ...

J: I've never heard of agencies stepping in and taking children away from a mother who's doing an okay job. And my lawyer assured me that they'd have to prove this. The period between the separation and going to court, I got all kinds of advice, 'Be sure to keep my nose clean.' I'm not really worried about that in my case, because there's no one else who wants to take the kids full time. And my ex-husband's parents get to see the kids once a week. So there isn't any problem for me, but there is for Sharon.

(As Gina was taping a separate interview with Sharon, I didn't go into this.)

L: How many of your friends would you say are lesbians?

J: Most, most of my friends.

L: Do these women pretty much know each other too?

J: Most, not all of them.

L: Is there a sense of community developing with the lesbians?

J: Well, there is, you know. It's really nice when you see somebody and three days before you were drinking beer with them. That kind of thing. But there isn't a sense of community that we really rely on. We certainly don't feel that we can put our energies into this community, they have almost no consciousness about kids. Our situation's different. Most of them are kind of freewheeling independent and there aren't too many couples. There is a sense of community, it's starting to grow. I wish it were more. I feel very isolated.

L: How do you see you and Sharon being different?

J: We're quite different from most of them, not some, in that I think we're more serious. And we are dealing with economic reality...we have a different situation. Having kids is really different. We feel how serious this business of living is. Also we're older, that gives us a different attitude. (Jackie is twenty-nine and Sharon is forty.) The ones who are older tend to be the ones with similar interests, wanting to get together, for instance, and talk about an article from *Amazon Quarterly*.

L: These younger women, what do they have that's different?



J: Oh, they have totally free schedules! They don't have any commitments. Once in awhile they say: 'Aw, shit, I gotta go out and get a job.' (laughs) It's weird!

L: How do they do it?

J: One of them's collecting unemployment...one sells flowers. They don't need much to live. Some of them live together and that cuts down the cost. But the children make the whole difference.

L: Do you ever feel put down because you've had children?

J: No. Just a lack of support.

L: Are they supportive of childcare, if you ask?

J: Yes, if we ask.

L: How do you feel lesbianism is related to feminism for you?

J: I really agree with Jill Johnston. It is the solution. So many women who want to be independent are tied into men. It's called contradictions. They need to be loved, of course. We all have a pretty big need for that -- if they could just overcome their barriers to loving a woman, so many of the problems they are having would be changed.

I think that it's important to be a lesbian, for your own psychological freedom. I think it's at the core of the nature of human loving. That's how I experience it. And I think it's a pity that some women will never experience that. That's a big question!

L: Personally, how do you relate to straight women?

J: Well, I work with straight women at the Women's Center. There's a staff of six or eight, and (smiles) I like them. Most of the time I don't look at them as straight women, because they're feminists and I feel their love for women. I can feel it the way they work. It hasn't been a very deep split here. We had a gay/straight dialogue and some splits were coming out in feelings in the room because they felt as if we were really angry at them, and that we were saying that they oppressed us. Actually, I don't feel that way, but some of the lesbians did feel that way, that right across the boards, straight women are oppressing lesbians.

L: Doesn't Jill Johnston say that?

J: I understand what she says about that. That a straight woman is channeling all her natural energies to a man. I think she's getting ripped off. And I don't like that she's perpetuating his power position, and supporting him emotionally, in his privileged position. And yet I think I can certainly understand the mother situation.

L: How do you feel about the title, *Lesbian Nation: The Feminist Solution*?

J: It really hits a strong cord in my guts. It's not practical (smiles) I mean, I'll support the feminist revolution. I'll have to think about this, okay? Even Jill says that her struggle is with women, so I don't feel she has totally wiped out the possibility of working with straight women. The question has come up recently whether our group should work with the gay men and the gay social services or stay within the Women's Center. And the predominant feeling, which is my feeling, is that we should stay with the Women's Center, and in the Women's Movement. I really iden-

tify with the Women's Movement.

I was a straight woman once. And I understand how you get there, and I understand how hard it is to get out, so I don't insist that they leave their husbands right now.

I have a strong desire that women become free in their own individual life, not just through a whole huge movement, and that women's rights be recognized and that the female principle be raised in the world. But I really wish that each individual woman could break away from her own personal oppressor. And I think straight women are oppressed, even by the nicest guy.

L: Would you call them the enemy?

J: No, I don't believe that, that Man is the enemy and if you collaborate -- I don't like to make that kind of distinction. The problem has to be leaving their husbands. Nobody would share the responsibilities of raising a child the way the man does. I really think that they all secretly want to leave their husbands. I really feel that all women should be lesbians. This seems to be basic to one's existence. It's arrogant almost, but I feel that!

L: Is heterosexuality, then, inherently oppressive to women?

J: It seems to me that a man is equipped to oppress a woman sexually. He can fuck her. He can rape her, and she doesn't have to enjoy it. But she can't fuck him, she can't rape him, because he has to have an erection for this to happen, and that means that he'll enjoy it. If he isn't enjoying it he won't have an erection and she can't do it. So it seems to me that there's something very disturbing about that act. Maybe because it's Nature's demand that it happen, without any regard for an equal relationship.

I used to think that there was a certain something that could happen between men and women if the relationship wasn't oppressive. But now I realize that as Sharon and I develop, that sexually we have experienced a unity that has gone beyond what could even theoretically happen between a man and a woman.

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THE COOKBOOK POEM

by PATRICIA HAMPL

The writers of cookbooks come out at night,  
the phantom cooks and their phantom recipes:  
"Think about food, listen to us."  
The no-nonsense compendium,  
reeling with utensils,  
with too many ideas about hamburger,  
knowing everything there is to know  
about how not to curdle, handing out  
lists of government regulations  
on butterfat content, diagrams  
of cows, pigs and sheep.

Then the gourmet cookbook  
written by the fat man who says,  
"Eating is a way of life."  
The lists of unnatural unions  
between chicken breasts and chocolate;  
reasons why, ultimately, sirloin is more  
economical than pot roast;  
why every efficiency apartment should have  
a copper salmon poacher.

The New England spinster who can tell  
at 3 yards when you're going to die  
has also written a cookbook:  
the lady who says both Kennedy and Oswald  
were "sanpaku", the whites of their eyes  
showing between the iris and the lower lid.  
And think of the public officials with B vitamin deficiencies,  
the mashed potatoes and the gravy consumed at state dinners,  
the teenagers who, unnoticed by their mothers,  
are gradually beginning to walk with their toes pointed  
outward, victims of poor vitamin D assimilation.  
Envy the lucky British!  
All those teeth with all those open spaces  
just because they had enough cod liver oil.  
And the meat-eaters!  
The eaters of muscles,  
the silly old muscle-eaters--  
there's scorn in that laugh.  
"If you eat meat, let it be liver."



These are the people who say  
any child given brewer's yeast  
at an early age in a natural,  
simple manner, will grow  
to love it and will have no tolerance  
for Hershey bars and Coca-Cola.  
These are the anti-whipped cream people,  
the no pie, no cake group,  
the people who hate the fat man.  
They are serious.  
They are going to live longer than us.

The Quaker ladies have a cookbook too,  
embarrassed and full of casseroles.  
Recipes from Mabel Lockyer and Jeannette Coote,  
Brazil Nut Sensation from Evelyn Dane  
to go with Avocado-Chicken Surprise.  
The moral cookbook with paragraphs  
from A. J. Muste set between  
Baked Chicken with Orange Rind  
and Helen's Baked Lima Beans.

Literary cookbooks  
with meals constructed  
from scenes in *War and Peace* (Borodino Borscht)  
and *A Farewell to Arms*.  
The recipes by famous people:  
Stravinsky stew, an asparagus souffle  
Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis enjoys  
when dieting.  
Authentic recipes from countries  
that eat dumplings regularly,  
places whose whole interest lies in their kolatches,  
paella, Buddha's Delight.  
Earnest books that tell you not to be afraid  
to sprout your own beans,  
nervous books that never begin a recipe without  
telling you to wash something.  
Books against unbleached flour, books for.  
Books that think you're dumb: "Take an egg,  
break it."  
Books that say coriander and vanilla bean are staples.  
Books that bicker at each other,  
at their positions on butter and oleomargarine.

If you read long enough  
the books themselves disappear.

Just the food remains, brilliant  
as yarn samples.  
The harmony is amazing--  
you see wheat germ and whipped cream  
meeting on frozen desserts,  
mortars for mashing garlic,  
apricot tarts, carrots and roast beef  
together  
as if they were meant to be that way.

They pass majestically by;  
your eyes bulge.  
Listen! It's not the food,  
this is like traveling on the Continent.  
Suddenly you're humble;  
you want to memorize all the recipes for mayonnaise you can find.  
You want to do everything they tell you,  
never leaving out an herb or  
deriding instructions to "chop finely."  
You make rash promises to bake bread  
every week, to make your plates "picture pretty,"  
to balance nutrients, color, texture, to grow  
your own parsley  
You realize what a fool you've been.

It's hard to sleep on these nights  
after reading the cookbooks.  
Ambition almost chokes you,  
desserts especially.  
You fall asleep wanting to be perfect.

Symbionese women,  
you fingered frustration  
over and over  
like rosary...  
memorized pain.

Cameras pant  
over your incinerator,  
coverage personal  
like a home movie,  
they bring home  
truly  
they bring you home.

Your worst lullaby is over.

A billion blue ties  
walk our planet,  
careless and arrogant.

Make fists  
explode like birth  
anger is common  
everyday gritting  
of teeth...hot dude sucks  
at you from a stop light  
besides rape and murder  
it's the irate husband  
expecting dinner  
and all the dead trees.

Symbionese women  
fingered frustration  
over and over...  
water torture drips down  
on foreheads methodically:  
the little death  
in the supermarket,  
red muscles of animals  
quietly packaged  
snarl and black flag...  
each foot of concrete  
poured for a safeway floor  
claimed the home of insects  
weeds flowers birds  
roads cut the hearth of earth,  
the way i live is slaughter

by BOBBIE BISHOP

and i finger frustration  
over and over.

Symbionese women,  
your worst lullaby is over.

My father drove me  
to a friend's. i  
belched in the car.  
he said, "that's  
pretty bohemian,  
isn't it?" i said,  
"i suppose so." he  
said, "well, i'm  
not bohemian." and  
i said "nobody's  
asking you to be."  
quietly i said,  
"nobody's asking you  
to be." and i finger  
frustration over  
and over,  
no woman remains  
unmade by man.

Chant blue teeth  
marks on our bodies  
all marks come down  
to each sister,  
no woman remains  
unmade by man.

Sing you songs, sisters  
sing you songs  
marks came down around  
as you fingered frustration  
burst on fire and bullet  
all around the murder bush  
they chased...

And we'll scrape your bones  
and start again.  
Your worst lullaby is over.

JET magazine, 6/27/74:

Last week, New York City policeman Thomas Shea was acquitted on charges of murdering 10-year-old Clifford Glover... Shea's story was that he and his partner were out looking for two robbery suspects and came across Clifford and his father on their way to work. Despite the fact that the two suspects had been described to the cops as being around 24 years old, nearly 6 feet tall and weighing 180 and 155 pounds respectively, the cops decided to stop the under 5 feet tall, 90-pound Clifford and his 5 feet, six inches tall father for questioning. Shea said, "We were approaching them when they broke and ran. The smaller figure then turned and fired at us. I returned the fire, hitting the smaller figure." Clifford was shot in the back... the gun he was supposed to have fired has never been found.

[When questioned about how a 10-year-old boy could have looked like a 24-year-old man, the cop replied, "I didn't notice the size, but the color was right."]

by AUDRE LORDE

THE SAME DEATH OVER AND OVER  
OR  
LULLABIES ARE FOR CHILDREN

"It's the small deaths in the supermarket" she said  
trying to open my head  
with her meat white cleaver  
trying to tell me how  
her pain met mine  
halfway  
between the smoking ruins in a black neighborhood of Los Angeles  
and the bloody morning streets of childkilling New York.

Her poem reached like an arc across country and  
"I'm trying to hear you" I said  
roaring with my pain in a predawn city  
where it is open season on black children  
where my worst lullaby goes on over and over.  
"I'm not fighting you" I said  
but it's the small deaths in the gutter too  
that's unmaking us all  
and the white cop who shot down 10 year old Clifford Glover  
didn't fire because he saw a girl.





# THE SENDER OF DREAMS

by KAREN FEINBERG

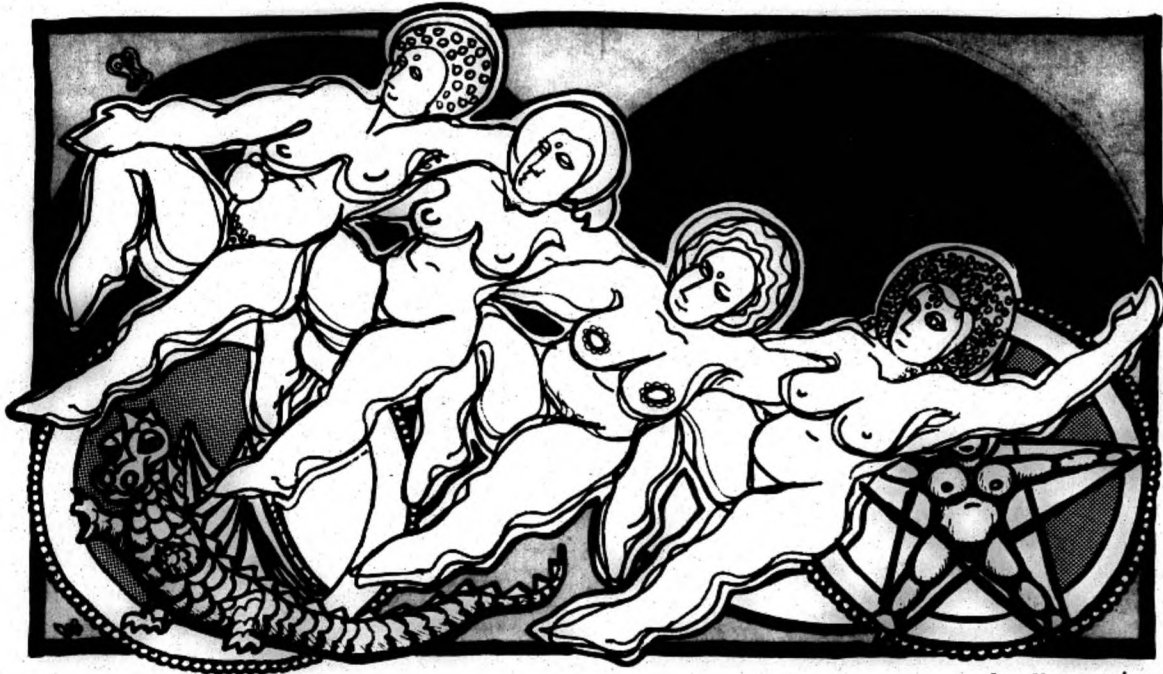
Susan Rutledge had a gift from her mother's eldest sister, the gift of fashioning dreams and sending them to anyone she wished. It was within her power to visit a sleeping enemy with a nightmare, or, if she cared to do so, to show herself invitingly to the one she wanted as a lover. The gift was in the family; it passed to one woman in each generation.

Other powers, similar but not the same, descended through other families in that part of the country. There were households whose daughters could send their minds to travel for hours in the bodies of birds, or men, or bears, while their own bodies rested on their beds. There was rumor, too, of a family in which the women had the gift of planting thoughts. These women, it was said, could place a desire, an image, an intention, a recognition, a piece of knowledge in another person's mind, and make it seem as if that person had conceived it. But the Rutledge gift of sending dreams was neither so abstract, so much a spectator's affair, as that of the mind-travelers, nor so direct, so telepathic, as the act of planting thoughts. A dream, unlike a waking thought, might be disregarded or forgotten.

All who possessed these gifts, the senders of dreams and the others, used their powers sparingly and in secret. They first learned caution from the witch trials; in later times, they found themselves unwilling to incur the suspicion and the bad feeling of their neighbors. Susan's aunt recalled with pride that none of their ancestors had ever been suspected of witchcraft.

When Susan was sixteen, her aunt came to her in a dream and declared her the inheritor of the power. The older woman died soon afterward, leaving Susan to test the gift.

More from curiosity than from malice, she tried it first on somebody she despised mildly, a spoiled girl who shrank from all crawling things. On a camping expedition, Susan sent the girl a dream in which one, then two, then four grey spiders crossed and re-crossed a blank wall, multiplying until they filled the dreamer's vision. But as Susan lay in her sleeping bag, listening



by Kaymarion

to the screams and sobs, she had to brace herself against the awareness that suddenly descended upon her, like a cloak flung from above: she, and no other, had caused this chaos. She used her power again barely half a dozen times, and then only after careful consideration.

When Susan's father died, her mother sold their house and moved south; but Susan, who wished to stay near home, found work in the next town. She rented half a house in the remote town she worked in, far up in Vermont, nearer Montreal than Boston. Like others with certain powers, Susan wanted to live quietly. She had a garden; she watched birds; she kept to herself. People liked her well enough, but regarded her as rather colorless. Nobody paid much attention to her.

It was not that she was displeasing to see. A second look showed that she was slender and upright, that the bones of her face were faultless, that she had fine dark eyes in which there was nothing of the cow or the spaniel. She could have enticed men through their dreams, but none appealed to her. In a vague way, Susan connected this indifference with her gift, and accepted it without question, having learned already to live with one unusual quality. She was not given to unnecessary brooding, once she had acknowledged something.

At the end of Susan's third year in the town, Louise Dulac finished her nurse's training in Connecticut and came home. She opened the family house, which had sat empty, awaiting her return. The rest of the Dulacs were scattered, or dead. Susan heard that Louise would be working at the local hospital. The word was that even though she was still very young, younger even than Susan herself, she preferred the country, that she had had enough of the city in her years as a student.

One morning, about a week after she returned, Louise came to Susan's office to see an old school friend of hers, the same woman in fact who had spread the news of her homecoming. The friend made introductions.

Susan noticed that Louise was only a little shorter than herself, rosy and round in the face, with a certain quickness of manner. She pushed aside her papers and said, "How is it, coming home after all this time?" From there the talk flowed easily enough. Susan, who kept secret even her secretiveness, was skilled in this kind of conversation.

She found that she was still thinking of Louise that evening, and the next day as well. The discovery surprised her, but she put it down to curiosity, the simple desire to see the other woman again. For fear of pushing herself forward, she decided to leave the next meeting to chance, even half-hoping, with sudden, unaccountable shyness, that the feeling would vanish and leave her in peace.

But the curiosity, as she called it, grew daily, unrelieved by any chance meeting. At last, after a week, Susan yielded to an impulse and took an unfamiliar way home from work, along a road that led past the Dulac house. It was a rather small white frame house with green shutters, that stood back from the road on a slight rise. Between house and road lay an expanse of wild grass, full of daisies. As she drove past, not so slowly as to draw attention, Susan felt that the house somehow represented Louise, and that

to enter the house would be to know Louise more completely. In this condition, she imagined that the neighborhood was filled with Louise's presence, and that soon (with a leap inside) she might meet Louise herself. At the same time, she understood that this viewing was a private act, not to be mentioned.

The road, Susan discovered, opened onto the main highway that swung around that side of town. At the junction there stood a diner of glass and metal, a stop for those passing through, for truckers and carloads of hunters. Susan had never gone there; it was out of her way. But she wanted to stop driving now, to concentrate wholly on her thoughts.

She sat in a booth, ordered coffee from an inattentive waitress, and drank slowly. Her old belief was proved wrong: it was not her gift, but a leaning toward women, that left her indifferent to men. Next to the marvel of Louise herself, the greatest surprise was her lack of surprise at this revelation. It lay at ease in her mind, perfectly simple. Yet she suspected that this was the simplicity of a hinge, which would set her future life at a still-unknown angle to the past. She was gazing into her cup, and speculating, when Louise Dulac walked in, with a raincoat over her uniform.

As before, they spoke of neutral things; of New Haven, where Louise had trained; of Boston, where Susan had family; and again of Louise's return home.

"I'm making curtains for the house," said Louise.

Susan was alert at once. The house meant more than she cared to discuss. "What kind of curtains?" she said.

"I tried burlap, but it wouldn't hang right. So I'm using sailcloth."

"I've always had good results with sailcloth, myself," said Susan. She stirred her coffee, deliberately.

"I hear you have a garden," said Louise.

"Yes, I'm growing vegetables."

"I'm thinking of doing that next year," said Louise. "Tell me what it's like." She leaned back in her seat.

Afterward, Susan remembered very little of the conversation (was it beets or radishes that Louise liked best?), but she knew now that Louise's eyes were greenish brown, with a dark circle around each iris; not blue, as she had originally thought.

That night, she sent Louise a dream that was little more than a greeting: a glimpse of herself, smiling and waving across a room.

Her dreams always fulfilled their purpose; she expected to see Louise again soon. She began to stop at the diner every afternoon.

After seven days had passed with no response, she caused Louise to dream that they walked together through the woods on the northern edge of town, out beyond the Catholic cemetery. They were laughing; their faces, like daisies, caught the sunlight that came through the leaves.

The silence continued. Susan became watchful, hoping to meet Louise wherever she went. She lost the pleasure of moving easily and disinterestedly through her surroundings, a pleasure not perceived till it had vanished.



She despaired; only her pride, or her shame, kept her from passing through the neighborhood of the hospital at a certain hour of the afternoon.

She sent a third dream, a dream filled with food and wine, in which they feasted throughout the night.

On the following morning, a Saturday, Susan met Louise Dulac in the grocery store. She greeted Louise with the right degree of cheerfulness, hoping to hide the jolt and flutter she felt upon seeing her. She imagined that Louise looked startled. They praised the weather; complained about the prices; Susan inquired after Louise's curtains; Louise admired Susan's sandals. Very pleasant, thought Susan afterward, replaying every word in her mind, but nothing that might not have passed between any two acquaintances. Uncertain of her position, Susan had shown restraint; but did Louise's geniality reflect, or mask, her true feelings? Susan's gift did not include the power of reading minds.

For two weeks she had no word or sign from Louise. Then one day at dusk, as she saw a pair of young girls walking along the street with their heads together in conversation, Susan was struck by the ambiguity in the relations between women, the existence of a spectrum, of which simple friendliness was only one extreme. A smile, a compliment, a confidence might have its place anywhere on this scale. She began to fear not that Louise ignored the three dreams she had sent, but that she misunderstood them. Women walked together, talked and laughed together, shared food and wine in waking life: acts full of meaning, or with no meaning beyond themselves.

She did not know whether Louise had the capacity to reach the other end of the spectrum.

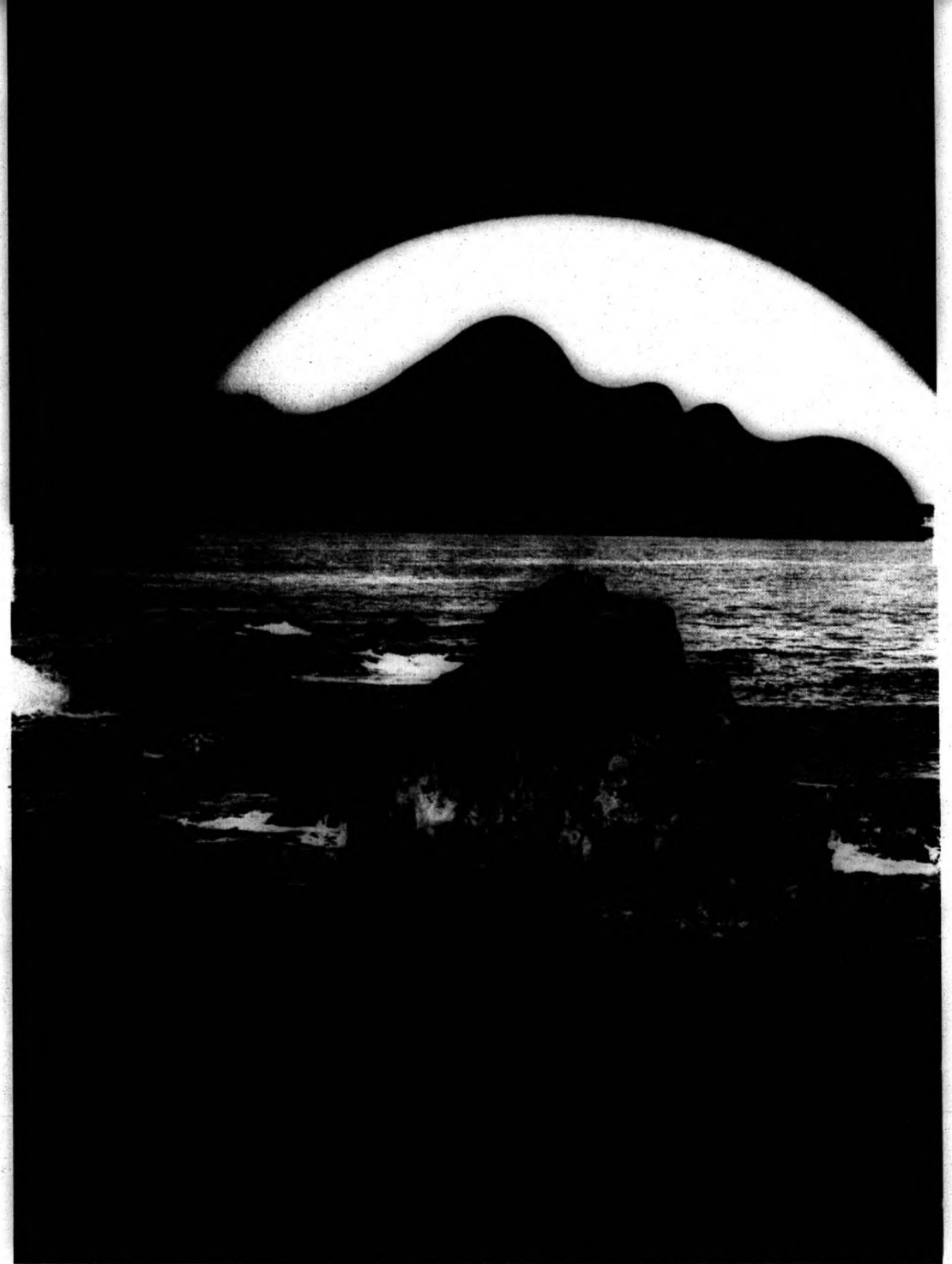
Susan struggled for some weeks longer against an urge to send another, stronger dream. At first she hesitated to invade Louise in this way, possibly to frighten or repel her. But alone one midnight, she acknowledged at last that any dream would appear to the dreamer as the product of her own mind; that there need be nothing, even in this dream, to reveal that it came from another source. The sender of the dream ran no risk of being identified, for even the notion of such a person was beyond those who knew nothing of gifts and powers.

Susan then fashioned a dream that was not at all ambiguous.

They swam naked in a lake, in the middle of a forest, and let themselves be contained and stroked by the water. As they came to stand afterward in the shallows, they joined hands and ran up on the shore. There they embraced, though without kissing, each warmed by the other's body. Susan clasped Louise along the back, and held her by the shoulders, lightly, but with authority. (She trembled as she created this detail.)

At first, for lack of experience, she did not know how to end the embrace. Then, contemplating further the nature of dreams, which admit the random and the arbitrary, she decided to conclude the embrace, and the dream, with the vision of a small token, a dream-souvenir of the encounter. Arbitrarily she chose to display at the very last a small grey stone, hardly more than a pebble, that glinted beneath the surface.

On the day after Susan sent this dream, she went as usual to the diner,



by Nicole

and sat at her usual table.

Louise entered in the next minute, as if by design. Full of triumph, Susan waited for her to speak.

"Let's have some coffee," said Louise.

Susan looked over at the waitress, who was at the far end of the counter, her back toward them.

"I'll get her." Louise's face went perfectly still for a moment. The waitress turned rather quickly, came to the table, and took their order.

Sharply observant, attuned to cause and effect, Susan sank and dissolved with shock. She watched as cups were filled and brought to them, unsure what mask covered her confusion. Louise looked tranquil.

They drank.

"The dream you sent me last night," said Louise.

"That I sent?" In panic now, Susan thought of flight. She was exposed, and so broken; everything was finished. She would have to leave this place to bury her disgrace.

Louise reached into her coat pocket and brought out a small grey stone, hardly more than a pebble, that glinted beneath the surface. She studied it, turning it in her fingers, and finally looked up at Susan.

"I'm glad you said what you meant."

"What else was there to say?"

"It was so hard to reach you," Louise continued. "You resisted me for a long time. I was afraid..." She spun the stone slowly on the table.

"You were afraid!" At once the sense of reversal righted itself. In sudden relief, Susan felt herself swept into a dance, a moving pattern in which leader and follower constantly changed places. She could no longer separate will from response, the thought conceived from the thought implanted; and to do so no longer seemed necessary, or even important.

Louise looked calm again. Her moments of uncertainty, Susan sensed, would be rare and short-lived. "Come home with me," she said. "You haven't seen the inside of my house."

As Louise had intended, Susan heard the emphasis on the word "inside." Was there any action, however small, however private, outside the pattern? Still caught up in the dance, she rose and led the way to the door.

## HOW TO MAKE A MAGAZINE

PART TWO ===== BY LAUREL

Last issue we covered the basics of typesetting and layout. Now we can go on to the mysteries of the print shop.

Depending on the number of copies you intend to run, the quality desired, and how much you can spend, you will choose either a paper/plastic plate process or a metal plate process. As there's nothing to the former, I'll concentrate here on metal plates. These must be used for any page you want to print with a half-tone photo.

### The Copy Camera

Most commercial printers have a huge wall-model camera that takes pictures (later to be transferred onto metal plates) of both straight-line copy and half-toned graphics. This piece of equipment is at least a \$2000 investment, so many people who have small presses go to big printers to use the camera and plate-making facilities.

The camera pictured here is a Brown 2000. There are many different kinds of copy cameras with various handy features, but, basically, it is just a very large model of your own hand camera. Half of the camera, where the controls are (shutter, lens focus, exposure timer, half-tone screen rack, etc), has to be in a darkroom and the other half should be outside, in another room.

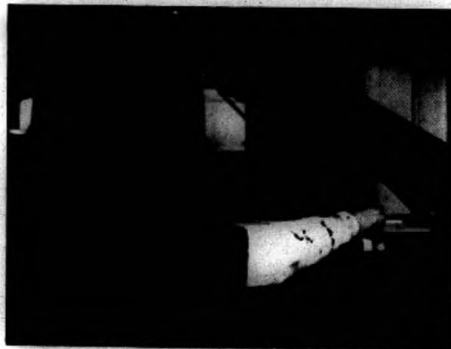
The copy camera can reduce or enlarge what you've laid out. Generally we reduce by 10%-15% depending on how many good submissions we want to fit in. This issue is reduced to 85% of the original size.



### Graphics

Reductions and enlargements are especially necessary for graphics since you rarely find a picture just the size you need. Your printer should give you a reduction wheel (or pick one up at a photo supply) which will make it easier to calculate how much a picture needs to be reduced or enlarged.

Once you've calculated the to-be-printed size of your graphic (to the nearest 16th of an inch), you make a "window" for it on the appropriate layout page.





The "window" is made with Rubilith, a red translucent film that can be cut with a cleaner edge than something like construction paper. It is very expensive, so we use red construction paper and border it with red lithographer's tape to get a clean edge. Your window material must be either red or black in order to leave a clear window on the negative produced by the copy camera.

#### Negatives -- Regular and Half-toned

The copy camera exposes film just like any other, but the objective is to make a negative only, not a print. The negatives will be used for the next step, burning the metal plates. Line negatives are shot where only words and line drawings are on the layout page, or a "window" for a to-be-reduced (or enlarged) photo. Half-tone negatives must be shot for any graphics with shading (all except line drawings). If you look at any magazine picture, you'll see that the image is made of tiny dots -- the larger the dots, the darker the image. (We like to use a very fine screen for most of our photos, so that the dots are less obvious.)

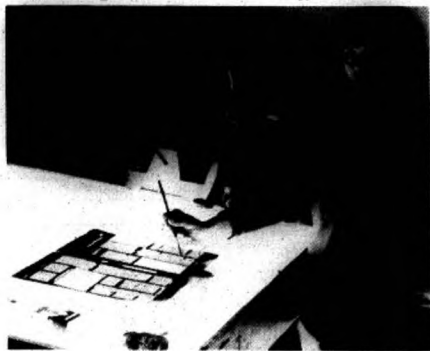
The copy camera is made so the operator can easily slip the screen (a glass panel with dots on it) inside the camera where the dots will be photographed over your photograph. They will be larger or smaller depending on how much light is being reflected off the photo you have on the easel.

Line negatives and half-tone negatives are essentially treated alike after this: they go into a developing bath, a stop bath, fixer, and a final wash. It definitely takes practice to do good half-tones though, as there is magic required in getting the right exposure, developing time, chemical strength, etc. The next step after the developed negatives have dried (they're just hung up with clothes pins to drip dry) is the opaquing and stripping process.

Though you wouldn't have to know about opaquing with most commercial printers, some small press people will ask if you want to do it yourself to save money. Any monkey could do it with a little practice. Extra care in the darkroom reduces the amount necessary, but there is always some opaquing to do. Essentially, you brush on red or black fluid to cover any scratches or bubble spots on the negatives. This almost has to be done on a light

table. It's time consuming and a certain pain in the neck, but you may be saving \$10 an hour if you do it yourself.

Similarly, some press shops will allow you to do your own stripping. This is a little more difficult than it sounds, but basically, this is fitting your half-toned negatives into the appropriate "windows" and taping them into place with red or black litho tape. There's an art to this--ask for instructions at the print shop.



Opaquing

#### Making the Metal Plates

The next step in the process is burning the plates. The negatives are laid on top of what looks to be a sheet of heavy aluminum foil (the metal plate) and put into a vacuum suction glass compartment. The vacuum assures perfect contact of the negative with the metal plate (no air bubbles, slips or slides). The vacuum easel tilts to face an extremely powerful arc lamp which is some distance across the room. For me, visions of the electric chair and shock treatments accompany the extremely high voltage zap necessary to burn the metal plate. It's frightening at first. There's a timer which allows you to leave the room, or at least to turn away while the blinding light is on.



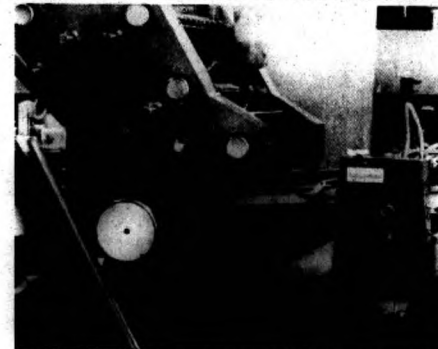
Next the burned plates are developed and fixed, a very simple process which anyone can do with a bit of practice. It doesn't require a darkroom as developing the negatives does, just a couple of chemicals and a flowing water tank for rinse. The metal plates are hung to dry, awaiting the next step, going onto the press. Your original copy or pictures are readily visible, exactly as they will print, on the metal plates now.

#### The Press

If you've ever used a mimeo machine you have a simplified but helpful picture of how the press works. The metal plate clamps on like a stencil and curves around a roller. Sections of the metal plate (depending on your image) are water soluble and others repel anything water-based. The water-based ink slides off the parts of the plate which are to be clear white space on your finished page, and sticks to the type and image area in photos.

A really big offset press can print both sides of 8-10 of your pages at once. I don't want to get into the presses here--there's too much to learn --but, if possible, you should find a printer with the most economical press for your needs. The more press operator's time you can save, the better. We've been paying about \$14 per hour, so it is an important consideration.

Another consideration will be ink color. Generally your inside print will be black. If you want a color ink on the cover you'll have to pay for a washup charge on the press. It takes a half hour or so to clean up the mess whenever the pressperson changes the ink color on a press.



Some large presses can run 2 or more colors at once, but, of course, this adds to your cost.

Before the presses start to roll, you must have decided the quality, color, and weight (thickness) of paper you want. Your printer usually can order in bulk, so unless you spot a super deal, it's best to order through them. Same with the cover stock. Choose your color and weight from the printer's samples. Coated stock is usually the most expensive, and it is also more difficult to fold if you're planning to do that part by hand.

Your book will roll off the press either on pre-cut sheets or parent sheets which will later be folded into signatures and collated.

#### BINDING

There are many different ways of collating, stapling and trimming your books -- all of which, taken together, is called bindery.

We collated the first two issues of *AQ* by hand...an incredible thing to do, but our only financial choice at that time. We picked up the 18 separate bundles of pages and the printed cover from the printer and brought it home to a waiting band of women who licked their fingers and began the production-line strut. It took 6 women about 5 hours--30 women hours altogether--to collate 1000 copies. Then we had to staple, fold, and trim them.

When we began printing 3,000 copies we made an arrangement with the printer to let us use the print shop's automatic collator. With a little training and a lot of trial and error, we were able to collate 3,000 in 30 woman-hours.

We stapled by hand for the first 4 issues --not really by hand, but one copy at a time on an electric saddle stitcher. Easy enough--but boring! Then we had to use real elbow grease to fold each issue flat.

There is another kind of binding, perfect binding, which is much more expensive. This provides a "spine" on your book. The pages are cut and glued together instead of stapled.

*AQ* grew and the printer's facilities too. We learned how to use new machinery as it came, particularly the automatic

stitcher and folder. Now, since moving to Boston and going up to 5,000 copies per issue, we are using a mammoth commercial printer and bindery with automatic everything. It's expensive, but it's a relief to turn over at least part of making the magazine to someone else now. Their super machinery can collate, fold, and trim all in one graceful motion...an elegance we're willing to pay for.

After trimming off the uneven edges caused by folding, your books are ready to spread to your sisters. Next issue we'll finish up with some advice on distribution, the long finger of the IRS and the U.S. Post Office, applying for grants, etc.

(continued from pg. 19)

istic of white men throughout the patriarchal era, and the equation of sex with violence characteristic of all men, combine to form a classic patriarchal body state that has been (with variations according to culture, time period, even individual differences) the normal way of experiencing for men through all the centuries of the patriarchy (are you tired of that word?).

Here I am still talking about men. What happened to art? Seems it's always easier, and safer, to tear down than to build up--and tearing down as a way of life seems to be addicting. I really didn't set out to do what I've so far done. I didn't mean to attack the man with his own language--I want to write for women for whom I have nothing to prove. And most of all I didn't mean to box myself into categories so tight I can't live in them, yet I can't squeeze out or just forget them either. To describe the left brain I took on its language--to describe the dualism male thinking made possible, I divided the universe into good and bad, women and men. Another chicken/egg--who causes opposites to exist, the patriarchal value system or Gina who uses it to describe how bad it is? I'm so tired of this. I wanted to bring in brain specialization because it is a useful analogy and the same for body states, and after I'd briefly described them I could refer back as a shorthand.

I know though, why I go on writing facts and theories, generalities applicable to all men through all history--I've become my subject-matter, or more likely I started writing this because already I very often inhabited, I'll admit it, the "classic patriarchal body state." I know the boxes I've been constructing all these pages don't work, because I myself don't fit them. I can't ignore that, can I? And yet neither can I ignore the sense the categories of class, sex, race, etc. make in my life. I catch myself thinking wistfully of my seventeenth year, hitchhiking around California perfectly willing to flow with whatever situation the next ride might bring, unformed and category-less--and then I remember some of the actual situations, how I learned quickly to generalize men into one category so I could make the snap decisions necessary to keep from being raped, or from compromising myself, or even from just being bored. All through my three years at a posh art school I couldn't understand why, no matter what I did, I continued to feel isolated--til I began to think in terms of class, and realized I had cut myself off in both directions--no one from my home town could relate to me since I'd gone off to this fancy art school, of all the useless things, and the upper-middle class college community couldn't relate to where I'd come from. Then and now my hurts and unhappiness in relationships come from not understanding quickly enough differences in needs and perceptions--the faster I can identify the boxes that fit, the less pain and confusion. Less friends, too. As I get clearer and able to act more on my perceptions, I recognize more quickly a repetitive or destructive or somehow not-growing pattern in a situation or relationship, and if there's no movement toward understanding I get out. Where I'm at is that I've learned to say No better than I've learned to say Yes.

That's what my difficulty with this writing is about: it's easy for me to



point out that the patriarchy is not only murderous and horrible but ridiculous, that it defines our lives in every way from art to brain structure, that for our survival we women need to stop looking for the exceptional male and start seeing men as the individual agents of the patriarchy they are, whether willing or not--you see, I get carried into it, and by the time I finish I'm saying things I only believe on alternate Tuesdays. It's much harder for me to write about the new-women's-culture building process that may be possible. I know what I say about the culture-that-is holds true, but I risk failure in writing vision, possible failure both of the vision to become reality and of my hopes to hold up in the meantime. Sometimes I can hardly stand to read those few rosy paragraphs at the start of this article because I feel I must have lied if I don't believe it always.

What I want most to write about, what motivated me to start weeks ago, was the possibility of re-defining art into the vital, powerful unifying process I sense that it can become, once taken out of the patriarchal context. I've gone two years without working as an artist, except for occasional bursts of activity that leave me feeling uncomfortable and ambivalent--ambivalent because I'm doing this work in the context of patriarchal "art," with its definitions that don't mesh with my perceptions in any way. In the context of this Culture, practicing art was effete and powerless for me, an empty privilege I could not afford. I want to define art as only women can imagine it, so that the written words can be encouragement and support for me to begin acting out an art process again, in a newly emerging context to which other women could add their experiences and dreams. The risk this involves for me, after planning a year ago that I would write the exorcism/invocation this particular summer, that then (now) I would be ready and articulate enough to not frustrate my attempts, that this writing would mark the beginning of a new fruitful cycle of art work for me--the risk tightens my stomach as I write the words. I risk blowing my own mythology; I risk the possibility that the exorcism/invocation won't work, and I'll find myself a-drift in old ambivalence with no inspiration; the I-risk list could get very long but won't.

I feel that to exorcise the patriarchy from my body/mind enough to breathe a little around its cancer, I have to reject every detail, going back to the beginning of the patriarchy and the ways men's brains and bodies work. I feel that every exaggeration I make is more than warranted, is helpful, as part of the process of restoring balance in the world. My experience has always been that I've needed to say No many times, to clear a space, before I could say Yes--and so I'm doing with this. And there's more No still to come.

Next issue I'll continue with patriarchal body states and their connections with the role of art in the patriarchy. I'll focus on art of the last 1,000 years and especially the last 100 years, including the present feminist art scenes--and wind on through ways we can use art now for spiritual survival and for building a new culture--eventually getting to possible evolutionary paths into that new world. Sources for this first installment will be listed next time.

## Letters

As Amazon Quarterly begins her third year in print, we would especially like to have your views about her growth. Many of you send us love letters after each issue--support we cherish and need. But we would also like specific responses to articles, poems, graphics, etc. We'd like to know what new directions you would like to see AQ take. Also, we'd like to hear how "Connections" has worked for those of you who've participated. Letters can be printed with or without names--just let us know. We do our best to personally answer all correspondence.

Really happy to see that AQ is being printed on recycled paper. I hope that other women send a little to help. (I'd send more, but I'm not working now.)

And hear! hear!! on Laurel's Radical Reproduction article. I've been wanting to see something with info on the subject published -- also it made me realize that being sure of a female conceived isn't so hard as I'd thought, right now.  
--Karen

The woman who wrote in issue 3 (volume 2) that there was nothing like this in England was so right. I too am English and am returning there now after a year here in the States. We have so little good stuff to read there. Maybe I can spread the word of AQ to my friends back home.

--Alison, England

I am enclosing \$5 to cover subscription and "brown bagging" for AQ.

I am now living in a small very straight/sexist town in Alabama and have had very little to do here but go to school and think. I've been here 3 months, and 3 months worth of thinking has led me to a lot of realizations about myself as a woman. The most difficult thing for me to have become fully aware of was that I am a Lesbian. And the most difficult thing about this is I have no one to rap with about it. George Wallace, a cow or a chicken just won't do! I'm finding it rough as hell to adjust and am looking forward to getting your journal.

If anyone would like to write to this sister or could tell her about Lesbian groups or individuals near Selma, Alabama, please contact us and we'll put you in touch.

I was most impressed with the double issue--all about your travels and conversations. I was particularly moved by the account of your visit in Chicago where several women were afraid you would not like them because they had never slept with a woman, etc.

That all made me think back on my experiences late last spring and early summer when I began to experience my love for women and all the accompanying joy and hope.

I wish so badly that I could have read AQ then or an article (such as the one I mentioned).

It was a lonely struggle sometimes for me because there were many women who could not put any energy towards me because my awareness wasn't where theirs was. It seemed like being 29, married for 8 years, mother of 2 children, living in suburbia (complete with station wagon with baby seat in back) made me seem hard to believe. I certainly didn't seem to have the qualifying credentials. On the one hand, I was so happy when I was with women--becoming a new person rejoicing in this wonderful love, but very few women took me seriously.

Almost a year later I am a month away from a divorce, I am beginning to live my life and my love for women grows more beautiful each day.

As I read the account of the Chicago visit, I could almost feel those women's relief and happiness at being accepted and cared for by you. They must have become stronger because of the experience.

I can imagine that there are lots of women--like I was last spring--taking those first shaky steps. I hope they are reading AQ. Please keep the doors open--you are helping

so many women.

--Diana, Indiana

Thanks so much for AQ--especially for your section on "How to Make A Magazine." About a year ago we went to having our newsletter printed, but there is so much we don't know. This particular series of articles should be very helpful to women throughout the country.

--Nancy, Missouri

Gay consciousness in Germany is not yet far enough to really produce its own culture. I translated Judy Grahn's poem, "A Woman is Talking to Death," into German to be able to share it with some friends. Finally some poetry to identify with! I translated it one night after I found out that a friend of mine had just gotten raped. I was so angry that I had to put my hate into some work and thusly turn it into something constructive. I am grateful to Judy Grahn for having given me such a constructive outlet to canalize my anger. I got such a good feeling from the poem.

--Barbara, West Germany

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PLEASE WRITE FOR  
COMPLETE INFORMATION

Adrienne Rich won the National Book Award for her book of poetry, *Diving Into The Wreck*. When she accepted the award (April 18, 1974) she read the following statement which she has asked us to print:

The statement I am going to read was prepared by three of the women nominated for the National Book Award for poetry, with the agreement that it would be read by whichever of us, if any, was chosen.

We, Audre Lorde, Adrienne Rich, and Alice Walker, together accept this award in the name of all women whose voices have gone and still go unheard in a patriarchal world, and in the name of those who, like us, have been tolerated as token women in this culture, often at great cost and in great pain. We believe that we can enrich ourselves more in supporting and giving to each other than by competing against each other; and that poetry--if it is poetry--exists in a realm beyond ranking and comparison. We symbolically join together here in refusing the terms of patriarchal competition and declaring that we will share this prize among us, to be used as best we can for women. We appreciate the good faith of the judges for this award, but none of us could accept this money for herself, nor could she let go unquestioned the terms on which poets are given or denied honor and livelihood in this world, especially when they are women. We dedicate this occasion to the struggle for self-determination of all women, of every color, identification, or derived class: the poet, the housewife, the lesbian, the mathematician, the mother, the dishwasher, the pregnant teenager, the teacher, the grandmother, the prostitute, the philosopher, the waitress, the women who will understand what we are doing here and those who will not understand yet; the silent women whose voices have been denied us, the articulate women who have given us strength to do our work.



**SAVE THE TREES**

TREES  
Amazon Quarterly  
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In the Fall 1973 Special Issue, we asked for women to help us with the extra cost of using recycled paper. We were especially concerned since the trees AQ is printed on are cut down in Canada for use in the U.S. A very kind sister from Canada made it possible to print our last issue (vol.2 #3) on recycled paper by sending the extra \$300 dollars we needed. We hope that her example will lead other women's publications to want to save the trees, and that you will want to send a contribution (however small).



## CONTRIBUTORS

AUDRE LORDE: I live in Staten Island (the most southern part of NYC) and my new book, *New York Head Shop and Museum*, is coming out by Broadside Press in November. [In case that's not enough you can take your pick: I am Black, Woman, Poet, Mother, Teacher, Friend, Lover, Fighter, Sister, Worker, Student, Dreamer, Artisan, Digger of the earth, Secret; also Impatient, Beautiful, Uppity and Fat.] Additional references upon request.

BOBBIE BISHOP: I've recently been published in *Country Women* and *Mosaic's* woman issue (local poetry mag) and am faithfully and falteringly trying to print up my own book of poems this summer. Title: *Voice From an Unknown Woman*. Writing poetry is a lifeline into my spirit, and hopefully connects with other women's.

DIANE DERRICK: Has just returned from a small town in England where she's spent the last 2½ years sculpting. She's now on her way to West Coast adventures in her VW Van. Her sculptures are for sale: contact her through AQ.

ELANA NACHMAN: Lives in rural Massachusetts. Her first novel, *Riverfinger Women*, will be available shortly from Daughters, Inc., Plainfield, VT.

GINA: I'm beginning to enjoy New England after several months of culture shock (I'd always lived in California)--looking forward to romping in the woods once this magazine's out.

KAREN FEINBERG: Lives in Cincinnati, Ohio, and has contributed stories to earlier issues of AQ. Of "The Sender of Dreams" she says, "This story is private fantasy, converted into fiction."

KAYMARION: I read somewhere that the dragon is the Celtic symbol of wisdom. Makes you wonder what St. George was up to.

LAUREL: I'm currently exhausted with all political categories, and looking for new light on the womanvision.

MARTHA COURTOT: Lives in New Jersey.

MARTHA SHELLEY: Lives in NYC where she does a radio program on WBAI. A book of her poetry will soon be published in Berkeley.

MAUD HAIMSON: I live in Oakland, California, and have been working on a novel for three years that I hope will be done by the Fall of 1975.

NICOLE: Just finished school and I'm ready to get going. Freelance right now, but have hopes of working for a women's magazine in the near future. (Would really like to get together with other women who are into photography and/or writing to work on ideas! P.O.Box 4863, San Jose, CA 95159.)

PATRICIA HAMPL: I co-edit *The Lamp in the Spine* (P.O. Box 3372, St. Paul, MN 55165), whose next issue will have excerpts from journals by women writers. I keep a journal myself and find it more and more a valuable companion when poems won't come or when journalism (which I do for a living) comes too much.

SUSAN GRIFFIN: Is 31 years old and lives in Berkeley with her five year old daughter. She teaches writing and literature at the University of California Extension. She has published two volumes of poetry, *Dear Sky* and *Let Them Be Said*. "A Story" will appear in her collection of short stories, *The Sink*, to appear from Shameless Hussy Press in the Fall of 1974. She has just completed a play in poetry for radio with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, in production at KPFA (Berkeley), and is presently at work on a cycle of poems called "The Tiredness Cycle."

## SUBSCRIBERS: IF THE MESSAGE RENEW

HAS BEEN STAMPED ON THE COVER OF YOUR MAGAZINE, THEN PLEASE DO---THIS IS THE LAST ISSUE OF AQ YOU'LL RECEIVE 'TIL YOU RESUBSCRIBE. AND IF YOU CAN, PLEASE SEND \$25 OR MORE TO BECOME A SUSTAINING SUBSCRIBER.

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