

AMAZON QUARTERLY  
Box 434  
W. Somerville, MA 02144



# AMAZON QUARTERLY



Vol. 3 #1

\$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 DIVIDE \$250 AS EQUITABLY AS POSSIBLE AMONG THE WOMEN ARTISTS AND WRITERS WHOSE WORK WE USE. 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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All women who contributed to this issue (excepting the editors) will receive payment for their work. We have divided the money not necessarily according to merit, but according to length and our estimate of the time and effort that went into producing the work.

Barbara Starrett will receive \$40 as will Irene Schram. All our poets will receive \$15 each: Honor Moore, Frankie Hucklenbroich, Margaret Talbot, Judy Grahn, Joan Cofrancesco, and Joan Larkin. Sharon Behrends will receive \$20 for her cover drawings. Valerie Wohlfeld will receive \$10 for her artwork as will Joy Martin and Patricia Wright. Cynthia Carr will receive \$20 for her story.



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Box 434, West Somerville, Massachusetts 02144

VOLUME THREE ISSUE ONE

Editors: Gina and Laurel  
Poetry Editor: Audre Lorde  
Connections Staff: Pat Bass  
and Katie Missett

Send all correspondence to:  
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W. Somerville, MA 02144

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# AMAZON QUARTERLY

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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. Your request will be printed exactly as you have written it, so please be brief. 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.

About 300 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 December 15. Each issue is different, so some of you may want to insert your request several times.

## FROM US:

As we move into AQ's third year, we'd like to focus on who and where our readers are, where we are as a movement of women, and in what directions we are growing. The eight pages of letters beginning on the next page show our great diversity and strength, the incongruous variety of our pasts and our surprising convergence of hopes and visions. The poetry this issue (selected and put in its present order by Audre) speaks of and from the same diversity, the same strength. A directory of the feminist press (pg.65) is included to give us a sense of the current state of the women's movement and to make wider communication possible. Barbara Starrett makes pathways into a future that is our own, shows us directions in which we can consciously evolve, in "I Dream in Female: The Metaphors of Evolution" (pg.13). In an exploration of the same themes on a personal level, Irene Schram traces her own evolution from patriarchal wife to woman-loving-woman ("Woman Becoming," pg.46).

We've begun to trust ourselves and each other enough, to risk enough and care enough, to know some of what women can be, apart from male definitions and values. We've begun to find our own values, to listen to our own dreams--and what are those dreams? What would a women's world look like, feel like? In future issues of AQ we'd like to explore these possibilities--send us your visions, utopian schemes, descriptions, wishes, blueprints, maps--we want to explore both the "utopias" and the possible ways to get to them.

Which brings us to another area we think is of vital importance--just what is blocking the way to that women's world, and is there still time for us to move the world from here to there? Is it too late? If we do have a limited time in which to change the world, in a race against the destructive forces of the patriarchy, what are our most effective tactics? What do we have time for? We urgently need to share our insights in this area.

We'd like especially to hear from women who've had little opportunity to make dreams into realities, to control their lives or even to be heard--women in prison, young women under the control of parents, older women who've had to live out their lives without support for their women's ways, women too poor to feel articulate. We have much to learn from each other.

I'd like to point out here that the \$250 we have available for authors and artists each issue will be divided up as equitably as possible among all contributors (except the editors) to each issue. There is no contest. We're sorry for any misunderstandings that have come up due to our not making this clear.

See pg.44 for information about free subscriptions available for anyone who induces a bookstore to order 5 or more copies of AQ. Thanks to all of you who've done this already.

## Letters

I'm trapped in Biloxi, Mississippi, no culture anywhere in sight. Please send me your magazine... Enclosed is my last dollar.

--Deniz, Biloxi, MS

I am not knowledgeable, have not come out, so finding the Quarterly was an "accident" at a bookshop last night. The change in my attitude since I devoured articles, poems, letters this morning at the bus-stop and in moments between customers at my job is startling.

Suspensions have been popping into my brain that really, women are more attractive to me as friends, colleagues and lovers than men. Being (typically of women in general) willing to see my own needs and wants as indications of some emotional problem in need of "straightening" out, I've tried to ignore the exultation that physically and/or spiritually beautiful sisters give me. Frankly, I'm not quite sure how I rationalized away some very gratifying sexual fantasies involving other women--as lovers, not as O.K., rather titillating male substitutes.

Well, no more. No more thinking that I must want to ball with a man. No more turning off to attractive women. Soon, hopefully, no more living around what I want: to love, and be loved by a woman. Thank you so much for the radiance of yourselves through your words, one and all!

--Gene, Fullerton, CA

Amazon Quarterly has been especially important to me this year, since I had to leave college because I contracted multiple sclerosis and lost my eyesight. While I was recuperating in the hospital, a friend of mine recorded your publication on cassette tapes so I could "read" it. Now I have regained my eyesight, and am re-reading your publication for the first time since January!

--Susan, Indiana

I saw your ad in the September issue of Ms. Although I'm in the military, I have decided that I might as well give in to the urge to write to you and send in my subscription.

Being in the military is really an experience and a strange one at that. I used to guard my ass real well, but I'm tired of the paranoia trip and figure that if they find out they find out.

--Mary, Georgia

A.Q. means how much to me you can't imagine. In my desert life it is oasis. In India til now not grown up of any movement for Women Liberation, Lesbianism or Feminism. Indian women want to get all opportunity from Masculine Society, that is why they cannot revolt against them. In India there are lesbians like other countries, but they are not organized. The Indian Ladies, who are rich and powerful, they do not want any movement. They are selfish. For sexual satisfaction very concealed way they maintain Lesbianism, but they do not want to admit to the society, because still Indian

women are very dependent on Masculine Society. Sometimes few rich society women talk regarding feminist movement, but that is only a fashion like so many other fashions. Even me, a strong-minded Lesbian have to surrender to the Heterosexual Society's uncouth desire. You cannot imagine how much pathetic is my life.

After death of my lover last three years I am leading a desert widow's life. For two years I am trying again but in this middle class area I could not find anybody--even I tried with my housemaid, result is same. I can declare in the market place that I am a Lesbian woman, I have that much guts.

--Kalpana, Chaturbhujkati, India

A beautiful thing just happened to me, and I want to share it with you and everybody:

I just, a few minutes ago, came out to my grandmother. Well, I've been going around yelling "I'm gay!" at her for the last three years, but it took me until now to get around to explaining what I meant.

She asked me a few questions, such as which of my friends are also gay, how could two women make enough money to live together, etc.

Then I said that it was scary sometimes because most people are straight, and that was why Jonathan and I had gotten married, it was a time when we were both scared. (I had been asked to resign as a Girl Scout leader, and he had just broken up with his lover.)

She said, "Just because you're gay it's no reason to get scared." I had to hug her. Then she said, "That woman across the street lives by herself, maybe she's gay."

"Don't ask her," I said, and she smiled for the first time in weeks. (She's seventy, very senile and getting progressively worse in the ten years since my grandfather died.)

"Don't worry, I won't," she said in a voice I hadn't heard since I was a child.

"This is the first time in years you've sounded like that girl who was the first in the county to bob her hair and ran over a mule with a Model T."

"Two mules," she corrected me.

--Martha, Memphis, Tennessee

For the past few months I have been after the Santa Monica Public Library to obtain more Lesbian literature and periodicals. I offered to pay for a subscription to the Amazon Quarterly but they said that the quality wasn't good and it just wasn't to "their" taste. I don't intend to give up there and would like to ask your help. Please mention my project in the A.Q. and ask anyone living in Santa Monica to contact me if they would like to help. The Library Board stated that mine had been their only request so I would like to change that.

--Nancy Clarke

2418 5th St. #6  
Santa Monica, CA 90405

Vicky and I are asking all of you to become involved with "our" struggle which is ultimately every woman's struggle. I am a thirty year old Lesbian Mother with three beautiful children. Their ages are ten, seven and five, and we all need all of you very much. I am being taken into court at the end of September because their

father is complaining that "I am a Lesbian, that I openly admit my Lesbianism, that I am a Public Lesbian, therefore making me an unfit, unwholesome and immoral woman and mother." Needless to say we are going to fight but he refuses to pay support of any kind. There is no group here for financial backing and I am unable to earn a living because of a rare heart disorder. They are even trying to use the heart disease in this court litigation. So we desperately need financial support, moral support, and any and all information and connections any of you have.

--Laraine Townend

Vicky Dickinson  
570 Harvey Ave., #2  
Kent, Ohio 44240

I was doing some serious thinking the other night (about the important things in this life). One of my conclusions was: the price of AQ should be raised--yes, raised. Let's face it, you work damn hard producing AQ--that alone is worth the increase. Then consider the current inflation trend, the paper situation, postal rates, and the great etcetera. You have perfectly legitimate reason--let's call it necessity--to increase AQ rates.

Consider this--they continue raising the price of Volkswagens, and the public continues buying them. Why? For the quality. The VW's aren't getting any bigger--their loyal supporters won't turn away from them. And your loyal AQ supporters aren't about to turn away AQ. I hope you see my logic.

--Sally, Erie, PA

[We'd like to thank AQ's sustaining subscribers, and all of you who've been able to send extra money, for enabling us to keep our price down so that more women can afford AQ. We offer free subscriptions to women who are in prison or otherwise unable to pay, and hope for continuing financial support to offset these costs.]

I was so grateful for your magazine and so hungry for words about Lesbian women and their ways of life. As I negotiate a divorce I find myself unsure and lonely in my familiar world of suburbia (yes, the baby seat in the station wagon) and in the seemingly radical lesbian culture.

I have a particularly strong response to "A Story" by Susan Griffin, which embodies for me the gentleness and tentativeness and doubt which I have known in my relationship. I especially identify with the times when words refuse to carry the true wish and meaning. I like the sense that nothing is simple and that in the complexities and ambiguities and variation of personalities, richness and reversals are possible and probable. I feel I have been both of the characters in the story and wonder if the caring/sharing relationship--minus the guilt and doubt--is not the most essential one and the one connecting with our deepest wishes.

--G.B., New York

"Now, about the Amazon Quarterly...

...it's given me strength. It's made me realize I've got Sisters out there who can really help me grow. We can all help each other and nourish each other... we aren't alone. The stories and essays have clarified my feelings and thoughts. Sometimes I thought I was experiencing something terribly unique, maybe because something was wrong with me; I don't know... and then when I'd read something by a Sister in your magazine it'd be a real release--like I'm not a failure I'm just struggling with some very real problems. Problems that probably would not exist if I didn't live in this society. If I lived within a positive culture (a women's culture).

In the last issue I especially liked the story "A Story" by Susan Griffin. Incredible. Reminds me of Knots by R. D. Laing but more relevant and more interesting. All the insane misunderstanding...  
--Carolyn, Susanville, CA

One day recently I wrote five poems--in between I was dancing around my apartment and rereading all my issues of AQ. I had never quite finished Peggy Allegro's fantastic article; I found Emily Carr's journal quite inspiring the second time through. Impressed by your growth, Laurel, in the two stories you have included in AQ--the second one is very impressive. Also enjoyed the feeling tone of Barbara's view of Anais Nin. In other words I got lost in AQ again as I do periodically. Almost every article bears rereading many times.  
--Linda, San Diego, CA

I especially was wild about the article on parthenogenesis (vol. 2 #3). I read it on Easter Sunday. As a "fallen woman" Catholic I was delighted to conclude that either Mary, Mother of God, was not a virgin, or (and I prefer this one) that Jesus Christ was a woman.  
--Eileen, Olympia, Washington

I treasure your article "Women Without Men" and am struck with the idea that "sperm cannot live in sunlight." Could we replace the birth-control pill with its high cost and dangerous side-effects with a bright light on a tube that is inserted into the vagina after rape or intercourse and left on for the required time to kill sperm? What do you think?  
--Jean, New York City

We just got our latest issue of AQ. It was more of a literary magazine than ever before; and although I am a great fiction aficionado, I think I like the issues with more non-fiction best. My favorite remains the article on grids written by the stoned woman years before ("The Strange and the Familiar: the Evolutionary Potential of Lesbianism," by Peggy Allegro, Vol. 1 #1). Anyway, I found so many stories on the same theme to be boring. It also pointed up which ones were better in an embarrassing way. I liked the woman who could send dreams story the best--beautifully written and with a clarity that would appeal to a lot of different women. The preoccupation story and the rock-woman story were both interesting, but murky in spots--the symbolism seemed too private at times. I still remember Laurel's story of the rain and the church and the two older women picking the younger one ("Asterisk," Vol. 1 #3)--that's what I look for.  
--Elizabeth, Atlanta, GA

Karen Feinberg's "Sender of Dreams" jolted me. How wonderful to see my own fantasy in print. AQ manages always to confront me with another side of myself.  
--Dawn, New Hampshire

Maud Haimson's story, "Hands," so beautifully, fancifully written, speaks more for the warm, highly textured potentials of a woman-loving-woman relationship than volumes written to explain, describe or diatribe on "the phenomena of lesbianism." "Sender of Dreams" giving voice to our ancient ever-present tools--let them try to legislate against telepathy! Now that makes me smile!  
--Terra, Oakland, CA

Tremendously enjoyed AQ, as usual. We both liked "Hands"--for its subtlety, I suppose, or because it expresses an area of the mind, way of perceiving or a consciousness that we look for in women's fiction--hard to explain--I liked "The Sender of Dreams" too and the sculpture.  
--Katie and Patsy, Florida

Praise to AQ for her high literary quality, supportive revolutionary Lesbian politics, and especially for articles on radical reproduction, right "vs." left brain thought, etc. Especially for these last because essays flowing from and embodying Lesbian consciousness and vision are even more rarely presented than Amazon/Lesbian poetry, prose and reviews--and tend to be aimed at straight women (and men) as a repeated defense or proclamation.

My lover, Mary, and I have been buying AQ at Madwoman Lesbian/Feminist Bookstore here in Seattle. Each issue provokes thought and ideas, and gives both delighted moments and a general feeling of joy. It seems that the timing is always right; AQ helps to focus ideas (whole segments of consciousness, sometimes) that we're dealing with. Perhaps it's just that some ideas and issues are now essentially a part of Lesbian/feminist consciousness, and come up like waves.  
--Jennifer, Seattle, WN

In June I received back from you two articles that I had submitted to AQ. You responded to "Lesbians and 'The Art of Loving'" in a way that I find deeply disturbing from women whose ability, intelligence, and just plain humanity I had come to have much respect for. My most serious objection to your response derives from your statement, "There's a legitimization of hetero sex which won't work for AQ." I can only conclude that your stand in fact is opposition to the fact of all hetero sex regardless of quality. As I make quite clear in my article, hetero sex has indeed been generally characterized by relatively rigid roles which prove stultifying to both sexes, but especially so to the female relegated as she usually is to the subservient position. But there is testimony that not all non-gay (or better, non-lesbian) sex is like this. I personally know some few straight couples who have marriages of real equality, and a number of the newer male/female sex books are premised on such equality (see especially a just-published book entitled Male Survival).

It would seem that the ideal to be sought in a lesbian publication of quality is one which admits all variety of well-argued, well-articulated points of view. To impose ideological grids is

only to imitate many of the publications of the straight society we so justifiably oppose on many counts. If an idea is too objectionable or too heretical, let it be AQ's readers who make that judgment. For you to prevent the airing of reasonable minority (perhaps) opinions is a kind of thought control which I'm sure you're quick to criticize when it happens in Russia, in U.S. government pronouncements, or in a Time article on homosexuality which says little about lesbianism. --Donna, Milwaukee, WI

[Since there are more than fifty feminist publications (see directory on Page 65) we don't feel we have to be all things to all women. We have only two definite editorial rules: 1) we will never print work by men and 2) we won't print anything uncritical of heterosexuality. Since not all women's publications have these guidelines, we don't feel "censorship" is a possibility.]

Dear Rosey Rightbrain...

...You are amazing with your antediluvian theories. First the parthenogenesis and now the strange debate/analysis back and forth inside and out via the corpus callosum--and a good thing too it is a lot tougher than the male's.

I am not making fun. You are struggling to verbalize an analysis of something that has remained an opaque vision in, I suspect, many of us who have dreamed--perhaps--the Jungian dream. I think of the search for the other half of the egg too. You've empathy eons long, long before this recent period of mitosis, though I seriously doubt this maze has any ending. But then, I also doubted television and was certainly convinced man would never reach the moon.

Anyway, your essay stirred up remembrance of a verse I'd laid aside years ago and have lifted off the burnt yellow and revised a bit for you. Humor is the great objectifier, darling, so please do not forget to laugh a little.

The specialized man with his specialized brain  
Remarked on the progress of specialized gain:  
"Oh Ho!" he was heard to have said on the train,  
"I see that we're now to have specialized grain  
From seeding the fog with our specialized rain!"  
"Indeed!" cried his neighbor as equally clever  
Who peered through the glass at the specialized weather,  
"The dew that's upon us is hardly the same  
For which we can thank our great masculine brain  
That chopped up the earth for our special terrain."

And deep in the soot that had eaten the heather  
They chortled and chanted and slapped backs together,  
Then popped in their pills for the specialized weather...  
that ate up the iron and ate up the panes  
and ate up the tiles and then gobbled the brains  
that sat on the plush in the specialized trains.

--Lell, Bloomington, IN

Difficulties in speaking, difficulties in writing. Stripping the male-oriented patterns of thought right out my head, and out of all our women's heads: this is what I am after, this is I do believe necessary right now.

I like it so much that you speak of the woman-world. If you and I are thinking like this, then truly it is happening. We are women and indeed "we may be the only people," because we can be now, biologically it is possible.

That is why I urge all women I talk with these days to relate truly and wholeheartedly to the necessity of creating a total strong womanworld. Lesbians, I prefer to call us, can be strong even if scattered around the world. Should there ever be some sort of political upheaval in this USA, we must be ready to handle those real possibilities that sword bristlers may not want us around, so making a strong political reality in our own right is also part of what we are doing, in this process of defining and being ourselves newly all over again.

Getting into the habit of explaining ourselves (it should be one accepted joyfully and with relief, I'd think) from and within our own context of values, events, desires, etc., rather than in opposition to "what the men are doing" is not easy right off, but vital, and it is vital to begin it right now when you are thinking of it. I, for one, do not want to hear about my history, my future, my hopes, my fears, my loves in relationship to how it is in the male-dominated world. My past and my future life are mine, and are mine only in the context of being a woman with women in the world. This is just a beginning. Now you've got me going and I'll have to sit down and put this all down more concretely, for I think of this idea, this way of being as a philosophy or political theory. After all, I would run for President of the USA just to force women to look at themselves.

Perhaps we all should. Perhaps we should all quietly assume that we are living in a womanworld, and begin to conduct more and more of our lives and daily rituals with this attitude. (But how to be clear about this "attitude" is what is getting at all of us...)

--Janet, Portland, Maine

Circles around the lines, yes Gina. Your Exorcism/Invocation touched me on so many levels, hitting the chronicler, the explorer, the weaver, the scientist, the mystic, the Amazon, the visionary, the artist, the healer and mythmaker... triggering the accompanying hope, fear, confusion, joy, anger... so much easier to make friends of all these aspects when you realize they're shared, even down to the deepest secret fears.

Defining, remembering where we have come from, separating that from what we have been told--So the No's... purge! But--I am wildly curious how you will finally (?) "define art," as only women can define it. Yes, only women can define women's art, but, if define means a literal new Websterism, or some definition we all can feel comfortable with, and if you're expecting it to be some conclusive verbal catalyst, then of course it will be exclusive, like words always tend to be, somewhat empty, or too personal. What I mean is that art is its own definition, a million different definitions from a million different evolving selves. Art is a process not necessarily always involving a product. Having let go these ex-

pectations, I now consider myself my creation. I am creative process, conscious of itself being creative process. I am creating internal sanctuaries, oases of hope, islands of joy, rivers of love, wells of courage and strength, mountains for vision, rainbows for my soul, and in the great gallery of the Unknown, a comfortable seat at the edge of the blackness, a space where I can close my eyes and ears and rest my carpenter, my weaver, my visionary Amazon self and simply be... open, to the blackness, the unconscious, unfathomable mystery that sustains, is, the process I am.

You are an amazing artist, have never stopped being an artist, defining each moment, your life-style, your relationships... your Rosey Rightbrain, your left clavicle, an amazing special creation! I wonder how many cells between us we have brought into being as we have sat together over this? Well, I know you know this, and that you understand that it is OK to follow the tangents, illumine the corners... something to do with consciousness.

I guess my main message is: what have you (not) been doing for two years? Creating a healthy body and sipping in a cup of some amazing fluid that changed, yes transmuted from orange juice into blood all in the last few hours! And this one had a dream which led her whispering to a story and that one built a bookshelf, and that one wove a rug, this one a shawl, of words, or yarn or string or seaweed or pure wonder... I do not mean, please, to demean this verbal method, of course not... just want you to remember--transmutation is creation.

The most important creation is the one you are having to thought-form each morning, "whole days" when you can get them, "dreaming the world into a woman-place" with all the details. Is that not the most important task? Remember the AQ cover, three issues back, the river of life and death? Powerful magic. I believe in thought-forms... given enough shared energy there is no stopping their physical manifestation. No wonder you are not doing "art work." You are giving psychic, creative, emotional energy to the new world, the woman-vision. Stop giving energy to male sicknesses as soon as you possibly can--we all need to hear and share in the new world vision, because, damn it, if 200,000 women could thought-form it, share it, live and breathe life into it, alter and add, tender and grow, we may have a chance of making it a living experience before we die! If you and I can turn orange juice into blood, why can't we all make blueprints become a house, a dream a reality--same process, really. We don't have to understand it with our left brains, we haven't got time. We have enough clues, memories, experiences, to know the power of our thoughts, and the sooner we all begin concentrating, the better. I want to see that the possibilities of transmutation be made woman-public, given credibility. It is a great tool we have, as down-to-earth as breathing, and needs to be even further demystified, accessible.

--Terra, Oakland, CA

# I DREAM IN FEMALE: THE METAPHORS OF EVOLUTION

BY BARBARA STARRETT

We don't know (that is, we have not observed, objectively, in the male scientific way) much about evolution. We think it is the result of mutations which are triggered by the necessity to adapt to the environment. Aside from this cause-and-effect description, we really don't know how the evolutionary process operates or why it operates at all. Some species don't evolve. Members of the same species evolve at different rates and sometimes in different ways. We don't know why. We know that evolution proceeds in the direction of survival, of life. And it appears that evolution results in continuing differentiation, in specialization and in complexity, i.e. in new organs, limbs, and abilities, which enable the species to survive.

In other words, everything that rises does not converge but develops differences. Now imagine a species that has so evolved that its members begin to feel like another species, are aware of their differentness, and have developed a consciousness about themselves that is not explainable in contemporary symbols, forms, mindsets, language, art and culture.

Women are now at this point.

We have lived by our wits, as an oppressed and helpless people, for centuries. But we have not, despite massive and brutal conditioning, forsaken our Mother Nature; and she has not forsaken us. It took four hundred years to wipe out the last large concentration of evolved women (the witches, the wise women) but some of them survived the Burning Time and their genes have travelled through time to us. And we feel it; we know it. We are beginning to see into the past and into the future, to heal and create again, to be aware of our own strange abilities, to energize and communicate with each other in new ways.

We are even becoming aware that we can consciously evolve; that our new "organ" is something which enables us to will our own further evolution. The more aware we become of our own evolutionary process, the more we are empowered to will and direct that process: an incredible evolutionary leap, a macro-mutation on a level with (and having similar dynamics to) the development of language.

We should not be surprised. The psychics we know, the tealeaf and palm readers, the healers and advisors and clairvoyants, aren't they nearly all women? Don't we all have what we call "intuition" and haven't we all read our friends' minds? Haven't we all had hunches and dreams that have come true?

Long ago, women developed a special organ for the sole purpose of sexual pleasure. Men have no parallel organ. Indeed, male awareness of the purpose of the clitoris is so vague that they have largely ignored it, building an entire sexual mythology around the womb and the vagina. If a similar organ were to be developed by

men, we can be sure that women would not be allowed to ignore it. We have all been trained, educated and conditioned in male thought patterns in the same way we have been conditioned to accept male biological patterns: the "standards," the prescribed modes, are given, male-oriented and male-defined. For women they may well be counter-evolutionary, devolutionary.

I want to digress for a minute now and talk about patterns. Patterns are non-verbal, non-pictorial, formless dynamics, deep, deep within our minds. Language, symbols, myths, culture, art, dreams, social structures, thought modes, etc., are all expressions of patterns. (A close analogy for a pattern would be an archetype, but this analogy is limited because we have too many preconceived notions about archetypes and their meanings.) Patterns inform both the mind and the body. Patterns are natural and innate, or they are unnatural and imposed/conditioned. Patterns vary from individual to individual. They may vary a great deal from group to group. There are patterns which have informed society and culture for centuries. I will call them male patterns. There are new patterns emerging, female patterns. They are not the same.

The other night on TV a prestigious male scientist announced that soon computers would be planning and running every phase of life on earth. More than that, he said that the computer was soon to be the manifestation of evolution on this planet, replacing, far surpassing, and perhaps eliminating human beings, to become the final evolved and self-evolving species. The computer is all form, all intellect, all systems and rules. No body, no emotions "hamper" its functioning. In other words, it is non-living. It is dead. But the computer is the direct result of male patterns. It is the final expression of the objectivity/logic/reason/scientific method mind-set, supremely emotionless and bodiless. There was a time when, perhaps, the human race needed these patterns to survive. But now they are counter-evolutionary and anti-life. The old, male patterns are death.

Do you doubt this? The closest thing we know to a "living" computer is the idiot savant. These people are all male. They are all mathematicians. (There are no idiot poets or idiot philosophers.) Their minds compute, with inhuman swiftness and accuracy. In other kinds of mentation they are badly retarded. More and more of them keep cropping up, like the boys who get Ph.D.'s in physics at sixteen.

Male society has limited, devaluated and, I think, devolved its emotions to the point that only the emotions associated with aggressive and sexual activity (activities and emotions which overlap and are often the same thing) are given a positive value. Even these emotions are greatly inferior to the emotionless objectivity that is so esteemed and idolized. They are allowed, in a kind of pragmatic sense, but they are body-drives and therefore separated from the superior intellect.

Nevertheless, emotions and body-drives must be expressed. Our society values, in practice, only the sexual/aggressive emotions for men (though it pays lip-service to other emotions). Combining these two sanctioned drives, objectifying them, and concentrating all the excess of feeling in them that is the result of emotional repression, the male society has made rape the prototypical expression of its patterns. Domination of the other by force: of nature

and land and resources, of "inferior" nations and groups, of women, of money and markets and material goods. Domination by force extends to the intellect. (Note the language: "mastering" the subject matter of a "discipline," "getting it down.")

Sexuality has always been defined in totally male terms. It is no mistake that males define the penis either in mechanical (objective) or pain-inflicting (rape) euphemisms: rod (spare the rod...), tool, prick, thing. Female sexuality has been made to conform to male definitions. The woman-child "naturally" experiences penis-envy, which can be sublimated in wifehood and motherhood but is always present. A woman who does anything is guilty of expressing her penis-envy, but not of retaining it. Freud declared that a "mature" (read invalidated and conditioned) woman had learned, also, to achieve vaginal orgasm, rather than the clitoral orgasm which was natural to her. Even now, men assume that women masturbate with phallic objects (as in *The Exorcist*), and that Lesbians use dildos. Like Freud, they assume that women need penetration, body domination, for sexual fulfillment. And Freud named this necessary female quality: masochism.

The highest form of female fulfillment (and redemption), as defined by men, is motherhood. The male projects himself, through an act of domination, in a child, which the female bears in pain and cares for in a lifetime of self-sacrifice. And she is expected to police her girl-children so well that they, too, emerge as masochists and victims of the death pattern.

Victim: that's an important word. It is the most descriptive noun we have to designate the role women (and homosexuals and the environment and nature and third world people, etc.) must play in order to act out the prevailing drama of the death pattern. For instance, a male transvestite (often and incorrectly thought to be a homosexual) knows how to become the ideal male projection of the woman, and he appeals to other heterosexual men. It is the victim stance, not the sex of the victim, that really turns on the ordinary male.

Counter-evolutionary specialization is concerned with narrowing, with blocking off and out, with learning to set up systems that have their own internal logic but may have no other referents: I remember how annoyed I was in school when my professors insisted I "narrow down" my topic, that I make one small, often inconsequential point and back it up for forty or more pages by a selective process of quoting as many "experts" as possible who agreed with me. One point, unrelated to anything else, repeated over and over in different words, is a scholarly, intellectual performance. This is called objectivity.

The words and other symbols used to support/repeat the original point or proposition or hypothesis are called data, statistics, expert testimony: "facts." It should be clear that a fact is a function of the system it purports to validate. The psychiatric system, for instance, can produce volumes of "objective" facts, all of which validate the assumptions of that system but which have often invalidated our own individual and collective experience, emotions, thoughts, motives and acts.

We all learn to operate within the confines of the self-perpetuating, self-validating fact-system. It isn't hard. But it is a boring, alienating, dishonest process, designed to kill off crea-

tivity, imagination, emotion, experience, relationships and ideas. And in this process of uni-focusing we lose the opportunity (perhaps even the ability) to think in a multi-focus dynamic, to see, simultaneously, relationships and levels, to hold several or many thoughts, fantasies and concepts at one time. The end result of the fact-system is consistent. It has to be: it's all the same thing. But it is often meaningless and dead. Again the pattern is death.

Take a look at male institutions. There is no way to function as a person within them. You are either the victim or the oppressor (most often both) in a vertical and sado-masochistic system. The system, itself, absorbs the responsibility and the guilt. What we have left (besides bread) is whatever emotions are appropriate to sado-masochism, and an objective function.

If something bad keeps happening in a political machine (note the accuracy of language), a hospital, a church, every person in that particular institution can say, "I don't like it, personally, but that's the way it is (reality, realpolitik); that's life; that's the way things work; with all its faults it's the best we have; I'm working for change; we must accept these things; etc, etc." You know. But things continue to go wrong because the system is impersonal, a machine.

Women and men can do or condone or be associated with activities, as a part of their institutional function, which they would never think of doing personally. But one does not act as a person in an institution. The system usurps or neutralizes personal responsibility, absorbs guilt and conscience, through the imposition of consistent, carefully defined roles and functions within its own boundaries. Value judgments, moral action, emotions and personal relationships are destroyed within the impersonal but internally consistent structure of the system's vertical lines of power.

In the same way, social structures (class, caste) also exist as sets of hierarchical role definitions and functions. Conscience, emotions and personal responsibility are relegated to the individual's private life and are not allowed to interfere with the rules, functions and limits of the institutional machinery. Thus "business and friendship don't mix"; we can bomb people we don't know and who have never harmed us. Watergate is only a public example of common institutional practices. The pattern is death, the death of human beings, human emotions, human sensitivity and human conscience.

Never underestimate the immersion of the art world in the murderous, inter-related, institutional web. The artist is not a solitary thinker/creator apart from society's structures. The woman artist may feel she is apart, since her existence-as-artist is usually peripheral, rarely or poorly acknowledged. She may feel she communicates directly with other people, with nature, with the cosmos. Once she decides to publish or exhibit, however, she is either rejected by or drawn into the vertical power lines, and they affect her art and her life. Critics, editors, publishers, exhibitors, media people, agents, advertisers, buyers and sellers of art, converge to enmesh her in the system. Worse, a set of "objective" standards and values for art already exists, into which she will have to fit herself and her work, perhaps unconsciously, and which can kill both art and the artist. It is understandable that so

many female writers have been (and are) into alcohol, madness and suicide. The Romantics, who insisted on subjectivity and the extravagant expression of emotions, were notably attracted to drugs and tended to die young. The few women who have been accepted as semi-great by the art establishment, however patronizingly (cf. Robert Lowell's introduction to *Ariel*), are those women who have died in the process and those who were forced to live double or solitary lives.

Given standards of beauty are imposed on us and regulated for us. "Beauty" consists of a defined set of values: it is measurable. Objective standards of aesthetic judgments are learned. They are defined and controlled for us and we learn them in the usual, authoritarian, mechanical, cause-and-effect ways. Look at the critical terms: "mastering" a technique or a style; balance; structural flaws or brilliance; internal consistency or unity. Aristotle, who invented both the cause-and-effect mentality and the supreme aesthetic values, is still the primary arbiter of artistic and scientific standards of judgment.

I believe that art, as we know it, informed by the death pattern, expressed by imposed values and institutionalized, "objective" standards, is alien to and destructive of the evolutionary patterns, the patterns now emerging primarily from women.

Aesthetic values (judgments as to what is or is not beautiful) are measured, defined, and analyzed. Critics and English professors, who make their livings from this sort of activity, employ the objective, "scientific" method for their evaluations of art. Their judgments are derived from learned standards and they are expressed in emotionless, logical, erudite, technical language. Critics of art, as well as all the other institutional professionals, constitute, through their knowledge of given standards and their technical language, an elitist group of "experts," who perpetuate those same standards by controlling and dominating the public expression and knowledge of art.

One of my graduate school English professors told a class that Dr. Strangelove was an example of the contemporary use of Jonson's humours, thereby separating the social and moral content of the film from its aesthetic considerations and neutralizing the emotional and extra-academic meanings.

A woman who can design and make a beautiful quilt or tapestry is already outside the system and not, therefore, an artist. Crafts is the name given to works and genres created by the poor and the powerless, by those who are the victims of society. Crafts may be admirable but they are beneath the attention of critics and, thus, not art.

Artistic values are restricted, not only to specific genres, but also to what is structurally definable within each genre. A writer like Gertrude Stein has received little critical attention because critics can find nothing to say about her. Objective criticism requires handles: levers to manipulate the language of criticism, analytic tools, methods by which to apply the given standards to any work. Stein cannot be discussed in the context of the usual analytic-aesthetic measuring devices used by critics. Other great women writers are most often dealt with in terms of their lives as victims or in relation to their male relatives and associations. When their work, itself, is actually discussed, we may be amazed

at how often the experts seem to miss the most obvious and most important aspects of their art. Whatever is not prior-defined, in structure or in content, eludes critics. But then, think how long it took the psychiatric establishment to discover that schizophrenic "word salad" had meaning, often profound and poetic.

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Men learn to be centered in themselves. The forms, structures, and definitions of the existing systems are their forms, structures and definitions. Men are comfortable in them because they have projected them from their male patterns. Women, for centuries, have been centered outside themselves, in husbands, children and family, sacrificing their own needs and separated from the knowledge of their own modes, their own patterns. With the advent of the Women's Movement, many women have learned to re-center, to end self-sacrifice, to realize that their needs are good and valid. They have thrown off the roles and definitions given to them by male social structures. Many women have entered, or tried to enter, the male institutions: art, education, science, business, politics, etc. But these systems are essentially alien; they are male-patterned. Some women, at least, have begun to feel increasingly uncomfortable operating within male structures and, at the same time, are becoming increasingly centered in and aware of themselves, their own patterns.

What happens is this: women function in male forms, which many experience as alienating and depersonalizing. But female forms and structures have not yet been created. We have not yet discovered and invented, on a large scale, our own patterns and the appropriate expressions of them. So the alternative to male forms is the experience of formlessness.

We have learned to react to formlessness with fear. The concept of an objective, intellectual, fact-system of definable and inter-connecting parts and fixed limits has, as its opposite, the absence of form and limits and definable parts. We are conditioned to fear the unknown, the undefinable, the formless, with an overwhelming panic and terror which is intended to draw us back into the safe, existent forms: to "adjust." This fear can block our other emotions and intensities, our creative processes, to the point of apathy and withdrawal, or of doubting our rationality.

In these circumstances, a woman may develop a kind of schizophrenic set. She may function efficiently in the male structures and, at the same time, experience alienation toward those structures, as well as a disturbing and "irrational" yearning toward other, as yet unknown, ways of thinking and doing and being. She may feel guilt, as well as the old, learned conviction of inadequacy, as a result of these conflicts. If she does not come to realize the reasons for her feelings and tensions, she may be immobilized, or co-opted.

At this point in our evolution, we cannot avoid the male structures. We must still know how to operate within them and/or deal with them, in order to survive and subvert. Simultaneously, however, we must continue to evolve, consciously. We will continue to live in a schizophrenic style, but one which is understood, willed, and controlled by us.

We need to teach ourselves and each other to face the formlessness, to explore and discover our own truths. Now. We must bear the burdens of our conditioning: the guilt, the feelings of inadequacy and irrationality, understanding that, even as they exist, they are false and imposed. Above all, we must bear the burden of chaos, of formlessness, and welcome it, despite the fear. We must consciously evolve. It will be tricky. We will need each other's love and support.

Our willed evolution will begin where many women already are. If we look within ourselves, we can get in touch with our female, evolutionary patterns. Each insight will give birth to other insights, individually and collectively.

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Male structures are dependent on the concept of duality. The church, for instance, tells us that god is good and non-god is evil; it tells us that we must always choose the good and shun the evil; it then defines what is good and what is evil. The political uses of the good-evil binary, as given, are more obvious than most. If men are good, then women, non-men, are evil. Abortion (chosen by women) is evil but war and capital punishment (chosen by men) are often good. The internal logic of this kind of thinking is consistent and predictable: mechanical.

We are sometimes told that dualism helps us to make distinctions and aids clarity of thought. This is not true. Dualism always poses an ethical choice, an either/or; one opposite is always preferable to the other. There is no room for gradations and levels, for complexities, for paradox, for multi-focusing. Dualities reinforce linear, cause-and-effect, hierarchical thinking. Aristotelian logic, for example, is a series of linear regressions of the true/false binary.

Rules are important in an understanding of counter-evolutionary patterns and the dualities which express them. Since a mechanical, internal logic is necessary to these patterns, limits and boundaries must frame both structure and content. Referents and relationships outside of and beyond those limits are excluded because they can destroy consistency and break down the system. This is why some of our sisters have gone from priest to priest, looking for one who will allow them to practice birth control, instead of claiming this decision for themselves. The rules may vary or change, due to internal or external pressure, but that change or variation must be included within the boundaries of the system and be accompanied by a rationale in the special language of that system. The content of the rule is not, finally, what is at stake, but the existence of the rule, qua rule, and the authority to impose it. Reformism owes much to this concept. When we believe in a system which is defined as good and true and we believe that its binary opposite is evil and false, we try to change the rules within the system. Outside the system is fear and formlessness.

Dualities have an ethical base. Each pair contains two opposites, one of which is "good" and the other "bad." Each pair is a binary, containing, in itself, a value judgment. Each pair, then, is basically the good/evil duality: white/black, day/night, man/woman, beautiful/ugly, strong/weak, rational/irrational, mind/body,

sane/insane, true/false, intellect/emotions, reality/dreams, etc. What is given is not only pairs of pre-defined concepts but also pre-determined value judgments. We always know which one of these pairs of opposites is the "good" one, which one is, at least, preferable. Merely attaching one of the "good" words from a binary to a concept, an act or an attitude predisposes us to its acceptance. Linguistic propaganda is based on this kind of word-association. Obviously, woman and all the words associated with woman are not on the preferred list.

In art, we are not only conditioned in the binary concept of beautiful/ugly. Symbols, too, have connotative and ethical meanings. Not just verbal symbols but visual symbols, too (color, proportion, geometric shapes, frames and boundaries), have their given values. There is also the art/life duality, which separates the two and, depending on the system which is defining them, pits them against each other in terms of the preferred. Therefore, not only the definitions but the very expressions of life and art are given and predetermined. The assumptions may often be unspoken. We may not be aware of them. For instance, when men say that women are "mysterious," or that orientals are "inscrutable," they are saying that women and orientals are associated with the unknown, the irrational, the "bad" half of the good/evil binary. They, themselves, are then associated with the logical, clear, luminous, systematic half of that same binary. The meaning, at least, is clear: women and orientals are, at best, lacking in form and not to be preferred. At worst, women and orientals are people who evoke fear and are associated with evil.

Women have the ability, despite our programming, to think in ways that negate dualities. This is partly due to our social status. We have not been expected to think rationally, like men, and have been "allowed" to develop our own "inferior"\* modes, because they reinforce, through dualistic contrast, the "superior" male system. But perhaps our evolutionary adaptation to social-environmental imperatives has also allowed us to evolve, genetically, some of the very characteristics we have been forced to assume. We have always been accused of inconsistency, of vagueness, of the inability to focus, of flightiness (a marvelous word), of illogic and contradiction. Men claim to be unable to understand our thought processes. And rightly so. We have developed an ability to overlook value judgments (because we have weak super-egos, according to Freud), to move between and amid opposites, to feel gradations and complexities.

To feel. Emotional intensity is one of our greatest advantages. Our intellects and emotions do not always function separately, despite all the conditioning we undergo to convince us that the intellect can only be perverted or contaminated by emotions. For many (most) of us, an intellectual-emotional unity is natural. We can't help it.

We can, I have noticed, listen to Joplin sing "Little Girl Blues," knowing, intellectually, the sexist and masochistic content of the lyrics but responding, despite that, to the music, to something in

\*I find myself, more and more, using quotation marks to express irony. The thought occurs: as my consciousness level rises, will I finally put the entire world-as-it-is in quotes?

Joplin's voice, to her ability to convey feeling, to the strong emotion of grief that we hear. For me it is a grief, a mourning, for all the women who ever lived, for all our unused, misused beauty and power, for our centuries as victims, for our separation from ourselves and from each other. Considering, literally, the words of the song, my response is politically impure, and I know that. (Pure/impure.) But it would require a great deal of questionable effort for me to repudiate my response.

Emotions are one way we have to nullify dualities. When we allow our instinctive feelings to flow naturally, when we respect, welcome and are attentive to those feelings, we can often negate the static, polarized, predetermined values we have learned.

Women are gravitating toward art that has meaning, that is content-centered and women-centered, that evokes both intellectual and emotional responses. The enormous popularity of Feminist graphics, posters, poetry, crafts and sculpture indicates that women relate to art that touches the ideas and emotions already in them, though perhaps unexpressed, that evokes their own feelings and thoughts and extends them. Art for us is a two-way communication in which both (all) participants are active. Instead of a given, objective, mechanical set of criteria, human, personal responses have become the means of our relationship to art. We do not, then, view, analyze or interpret art as a thing out there, separate from us. We engage it, in a process of communicative responses, and we use it.

The distinction between art and life begins, now, to fade. The acts and lives of women we know, women we read and hear about: don't we respond deeply to them? Haven't we found ourselves in a new-old relationship to nature, to which we respond in the same way? Aren't these relationships and processes art, too? We use art in our lives and our lives can become art. We participate in art, which participates in our lives.

Another characteristic of women is the tendency to deal in relationships, rather than with structures. Nearly every structure we know is a means, a function based on roles, rules and limits. It is not strange that we often hear men refer to their work, even their lives, as games or as scenarios. "That's how you play the game." A game is a system of rules played within structurally fixed boundaries. Each player's role is carefully defined. The possibility of chance or change can be mathematically predicted and occurs only within predetermined limits. In this sense, family, church, state, art, sex, interaction, etc. are now correctly defined as games. All we need to know are the rules and the limits. The rules follow an internal logic based on consistency and predictability: cause and effect. When I do this, that or that will happen.

Women, always unpredictable (bad), operate naturally in another way. Women are concerned with personal relationships, with the personal level, rather than with the functional, systematic level. We go beyond, around, the defined rules and roles, to express spontaneous, sympathetic attention directly on people, on nature. We do this because we allow our intuition and our emotions to interrupt and subvert the given, mechanical dictations of the system. Whether a woman loves a person, a plant or a deity, she establishes a direct personal relationship with the object of her love. She wants interaction, a participatory process of giving/receiving,

loving/being loved. Subject/object dualities disappear in an immediate dynamic of intersubjectivity; each becomes indistinguishable from the other.

Emotions and relationship-centeredness can also be a trap. Women have always been done in by our own compassion, by our emotional commitments. Personal relationships have been vehicles of our exploitation, of political oppression, of imposed self-sacrifice. But this ability to deal directly in personal and emotional relationships is one of our greatest strengths. It can be used for us, as well as against us, especially when it is exercised beyond or despite the rules of the systems. We can't afford to lose this ability. It is the basis of our opposition to the computer mentality and of our potential to create new forms, new ways of communication, alternative ways of living, higher levels of consciousness.

At the same time, we must guard and protect ourselves, our lives, from exploitation. We cannot allow ourselves to be dominated, controlled, used or objectified. But we can let our compassion, our emotion, our capacities for direct and personal expression and relationships flourish in situations in which they will expand, rather than harm us. We can go to extremes of active intersubjectivity in such situations in order to compensate for the deliberate blocking of intersubjectivity when it is dangerous to us. And we must direct, first of all, our extremities toward ourselves. I am not suggesting that we indulge in self-pity or egotism, but in strong, direct, willed feelings of love and honoring and well-wishing and support, in a dialog of love with our selves. If we direct these feelings toward our selves and refuse to direct them outward except in ways that do not lessen or contradict or harm those self-directed feelings, we will generate more than enough positive energy to relate extravagantly to others and to nature. We know that we need a strong self-concept in order to relate meaningfully to other people. But self-concept is a rather static term, and the kind of direct intersubjectivity that implies an active process, a conscious and continuous generation and regeneration, is more than a self-concept.

The myths and symbols we relate to and our ways of using them can be of primary importance in opposing the computer mentality and for getting in touch with our own patterns, expressing them and extending them.

Mary Shelley's Frankenstein is not a critical success. It has constantly been ridiculed as a "literary" work, as a work of art, by the "experts." Yet the story, the myth she created, has survived for nearly a century and a half. It expresses, touches, reaches, a pattern deep within ourselves, a truth we already know, instinctively, to which we can't help responding, spontaneously. Mary Shelley's myth deals with the lethal danger of the counter-evolutionary over-development of the computing, cause-and-effect intellect, to the exclusion of (perhaps the atrophy of) the feelings, of direct personal relationships, and of extra-rational thought processes. We respond because, despite our conditioning, we know she is right. She has uncovered our unconscious aversion to and fear of the death pattern. But it is up to us to relate her myth, to connect it with the conditions of our lives and work. If we take our own reactions seriously, we will not only begin to un-

derstand the basic alienation and alarm aroused by her myth of the scientist and his "human" machine; we will also begin to seek our own alternatives and to express them.

Dualistic thinking and the value judgments it implies can be escaped through the discovery and expression of our own myths and symbols. Mary Shelley changed the ethical meaning of the intellect/emotions binary and the mind/body binary. Frankenstein, the embodiment of the scientific intellect, dramatizes the destructiveness of that model and the necessity of human feelings. His "monster" dramatizes the horror of a mechanical man, the forerunner of the bodiless computer now envisioned by our modern Frankensteins.\*

The revival of interest in the Demeter-Kore myth, in the semi-mythical history of the Amazons, in witchcraft and the occult, are manifestations of our search for myths which will change or reverse the male-centered structures. Many of them concern the replacement, by the Mother, of the father and the associated images of the patriarchy. When this replacement occurs, within a patriarchal society, what results is not a matriarchy but a shifting of thought and emotions, and a redirection of our present values. The symbols and connotations of the Mother, as we have learned them, are opposite to and/or less preferable than the learned symbols and connotations of the father.

Our first reaction to the father/Mother binary and the other binaries associated with it (light/dark, conscious/unconscious, sun/moon, heaven/earth, active/passive, generator/nourisher, etc.) may be indignation and the desire to claim the preferred (male) qualities for ourselves. This reaction is healthy, since the preferred qualities, as well as their (female) opposites are all part of the system of stereotypes we have been taught, are part of the closed system of role definitions.

But we can go further. We can realize that the female symbols and attributes are not really inferior; that, in fact, some of them actually do reflect, in part, female patterns, and can be used to discover and reinforce our own forms, styles, self-knowledge and centeredness. They can be used as weapons against the objective, computer modes, against the very dualities that falsely name us.

What actually is evil or inferior about the dark, the moon, the earth, and extra-systematic, extra-rational methods of thinking, healing, creating? We fear these things because they are outside the given system and therefore associated with formlessness and loss of control. But who really loses control? The medical establishment has no control over an herbalist or a psychic healer. Nor can a doctor, immersed in his own technical framework, understand the healer's information. Many women have, for centuries, communicated with plants. Now scientists have begun to hook up electronic equipment to plants and are astounded to learn that plants appear to be sensitive to music, emotions, etc., and react to these stimuli. Now that scientists can photograph auras, they take more seriously the people who see auras directly. But electronic equipment and photographs are inferior to direct perception.

We must embrace the symbols of our evil and inferiority and by embracing, transform them into symbols of evolutionary advance-

\*Interestingly, Frankenstein's monster appears to have more human feelings and sensitivity than does his maker.

ment, symbols of our creative and life processes. We need not relinquish their opposites. We will, in embracing the female symbols, incorporate within them the meanings of the male symbols, nullifying the binaries. When Black people proudly claimed the word "black," they kept many of the powerful old connotations of the word, but they also assumed the "good" and "beautiful" connotations of the binary opposite, "white." The meaning of black/white duality was changed. It could no longer oppress people. This was a political act of language.

When women replace the symbol of the father with that of the Mother, we, too, are committing a political act. The image of the Mother does not lose its old connotations of earth, intuition, nature, the body, the emotions, the unconscious, etc. But it also lays claim to many of the connotations previously attributed to the father symbol: beauty, light, goodness, authority, activity, etc. The Mother symbol, when it is embraced, releases us from stereotypical role definitions, from attributes and attitudes of inferiority; and it reinforces our trust in ourselves, in our own processes and abilities. It can liberate us from the fear of formlessness we have learned, free us to find ourselves and another kind of world.

Not only the Mother, but many other given symbols of the female, can be claimed and transformed. The Daughter and the Sister have begun to take on new and preferred meanings. Intuition, subjectivity and extra-rational processes; our nourishing and sympathetic qualities; our personal and empathic relationship with nature and the earth; our involvement in the processes of life: we must embrace, honor, exalt these attributes and their corresponding symbols, with joy, pride, and the courage of freedom.

We know we can reason. We know we can be active, strong, brave, aggressive, etc. We need not deny these qualities in ourselves, for they will be incorporated in the transformed female symbols. The good, the true and the beautiful are not male; they are attributed to male symbols because male symbols are preferred. When Blacks began to want, to prefer blackness, the word became charged with all the "superior" connotations which had been associated with white. When women prefer the Mother, the "superior" attributes of the father are transferred to the Mother symbol. For Blacks, for women, the binary is destroyed because the symbol's ethical basis has been co-opted.

\* \* \*

The process of choosing liberating symbols through the reversal or the transformation of binaries leads to other thoughts about dualistic, cause-and-effect thinking and possible ways to transcend it. The consciousness/unconsciousness duality, for instance, has an ethical base, though which is preferred depends on the system involved. In the west, Consciousness is generally associated with male objectivity, control, logic, reason, while the unconscious is generally feared and associated with darkness, instinctual drives, uncontrolled emotions, the female. Eastern thought (and western systems derived from it) posits the unconscious as a religious or philosophical goal in which rational consciousness and personality are lost, merged with a cosmic mind or soul. What is significant

here is that the duality, no matter which opposite is preferred, gives us only two choices. We may choose the reasoning, observing, dominating ego; or we may choose the annihilation of the personality. But if we learn to think beyond that binary, beyond the given choices, we can honor, equally, the conscious and the unconscious mind. We need not believe that the only alternative to mind is its annihilation. Both of these choices express a death pattern.

In the same way, we are often forced to choose between individuality and community. But we can at least imagine the possibility that we can choose both alternatives, even the extremes of both. We can refuse to consider one half of the dualism better than the other half. We can refuse to make ethical choices of either/or when it is possible to choose both.\* To hold opposite concepts in our heads, simultaneously and equally, is to generate the possibility of a process, and to emerge with new concepts, concepts which include the two parts but which are greater than the sum of those parts. Not only our intellects are working in this process, but our emotions, our instincts, our intuitive and extra-rational faculties.

The process works with symbols, as well. When the "good" connotations of the father have been transferred to the Mother, and the old connotations of the Mother retained, we have, actually, a third concept, a new symbol which includes both the old meanings and goes beyond those meanings. The symbols have evolved and they have expressed an evolution. For political reasons, we name this symbol the Mother, but it is not the same concept as the old Mother symbol. It is, instead, the symbol of an evolutionary consciousness, of the New Person.\*\* Some day we will have to give Her a new name.

When we find and express our own symbols and myths and metaphors, we must be very careful not to allow ourselves to forget that we are participating in a process. We are beginning to rename ourselves and the universe, but the names we use now may be temporary. They must never harden into absolutes, never become systematized or institutionalized. If they do, they will lose their immediate, experiential relevance, their emotional value. They can even obstruct or halt the process. We must be able to welcome the replacement of concepts and symbols whenever new concepts and symbols aid and further the process. We don't have time for centuries of slow evolution. The specter of computer-rule is all too near. And women have waited long enough.

\* \* \*

I want to conclude with a fantasy, with the beginnings of speculations about what art and life and women would be like in an evolved world based on our own full emotional/extra-rational/spiritual/intellectual capacities.

\*Of course this too is a value judgment. But it is open-ended. And it is our own, not a system-given judgment.

\*\*I am certainly not ruling out the possibility, however, that the new, evolutionary person will be a biological female, that only one sex will evolve as the human species.

I am an old gypsy woman with a deck of cards  
A witch, an Amazon, a Gorgon  
A seer, a clairvoyant, a poet.  
I have visions of becoming and  
I dream in female.  
This is what I dream:

We are communicators, mind to mind.  
The poles and devices once used by men  
Stand here and there  
Relics on the landscape.  
We travel the earth and the stars  
In our heads.  
We are artists, all of us.  
Whatever we do well, we do.  
Whatever excites us  
Whatever we wish to explore:  
That is our art.  
There is no division between  
Our lives, our work, our art.  
Each of us chooses  
The ways she will challenge the limits:  
That is our art, too.  
Beauty is whatever we create  
Whatever we create is beauty.  
We cannot be contained.

We have no need for armies or police  
We have no use for administrators  
Nor for any other kind of regulators.  
We have forgotten what rules were.  
We seek those things beyond boundaries.  
We do not fear violence.  
If violence threatens us  
We stop it with our heads.

We are all holy  
We are each the mother and the daughter of each  
We have no institutions  
No mediators between ourselves and our  
Experience our perceptions  
We are all singers  
We are all dancers  
We are all lovers and thinkers  
Painters and poets  
We are all teachers all learners  
The nourished and the nourishers  
We are all healers  
We are all builders and growers  
We have no experts no professions  
Whatever gives us the most pleasure  
That is what we choose to do and be  
We all benefit mutually  
From the intensities of each

Our conflicts are not between people  
They exist between each woman  
And the walls she has chosen to transcend  
They are positive  
Creative  
Like the tensions of ions  
But tension is strongest in the risk  
We dont know what it is we gain or lose  
Or whether it may be the risk itself we seek  
The immensity of becoming.

I am a gypsy a witch a seer  
My vision is only the beginning of visions  
A moment in the process of ourselves  
I know this:  
Whatever we can imagine is possible  
Whatever we will to be will be  
I know it is time to dream strong dreams  
And then to abandon them for the dreams to come.

BARBARA STARRETT lives in Somerville, Massachusetts. She has just completed a book of poems, *The Hanged Woman*, and is looking for a publisher.

#### A R T I S T S

The cover drawings for this issue are by Sharon Behrends: "Lesbian, Sapphist, Androgyne, Amazon--learning not only who I am but who we all are visually in the bottom of the mythpile."

Bara Brown: Her drawings are part of a series entitled, "Age 32: Four views of myself."

Patricia Wright: Writes poetry and takes photographs in Eugene, Oregon. She says of her work: "I was first conscious of how roundly erotic the earth is when I saw her stilled and stripped of color in my photographs."

Joy Martin: Works in a feminist studio in Ithaca, New York.

# POLEMIC #1

BY HONOR MOORE

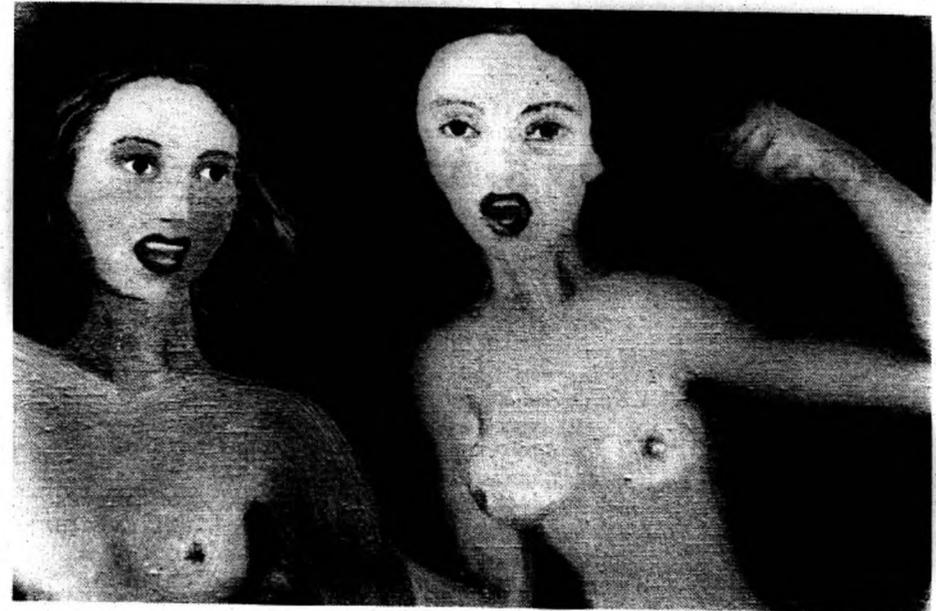
This is the poem to say "Write poems, women" because I want to read them, because for too long, we have had mostly men's lives or men's imaginations wandering through our lives, because even the women's lives we have details of come through a male approval desire filter which diffuses imagination, that most free part of ourselves.

One friend is so caught on the male-approval-desire hook she can't even write a letter. Ink on paper would be clear evidence of failure to be Sylvia

Plath or Doris Lessing, or (in secret) William Butler Yeats. Hilda Dolittle, the poet who hid behind "H. D.", splashed herself with ink just before writing to make her feel free, indifferent toward the mere means of writing.

I would take ink baths if I'd be splashed free of male approval desire. This male-approval-desire filter and its attached hook, abbreviated M-A-D filter and hook, have driven many women mad, could drive me mad, won't because I see all the other women fighting the M Male A Approval D Desire, and I clench my fists to hold their hands, and I am not as alone as my grandmother was who painted, was free and talented and who for some M-A-D reason married, had kids, went mad and stopped finishing her paintings at thirty-five. M-A-D is the filter through which we're pressed to see ourselves-- if we don't, we won't get published, sold, or exhibited-- I blame none of us for not challenging it except not challenging it may drive us mad. It is present in the bravest of us. It comes out in strange shapes, escapes like air through the tiniest hole in the strongest woman's self. It is a slaughterhouse waiting for the calf or lamb-sized art, for the sausage-ready little pig poems which never get to the supermarket: They are lost in the shuffle, or buried as ladies' poems have been in bureau drawers for years. Male Approval Desire is a cog in the Art Delivery Machine: It instructs

--detail from a painting by Joy Martin--



by quiet magic women to sing proper pliant tunes for father, lover, piper who says he has the secret, but wants ours; it teaches us to wear cloaks labelled Guinevere, become damsels, objects in men's power joustings like her; lets us shimmer, disappear, promise to rise like a Lady of the Lake, but we drown--real, not phantom. The Art Delivery Machine is ninety-nine and forty-four hundredths percent pure male sensibility, part of a money system ninety-nine and forty four hundredths percent pure white-male-power-structure controlled. So you may wonder why I write this poem and say "Write your own poems, women!" Won't we be crushed trying? No. We have more now, fifty-six hundredths percent of the Art Delivery Machine. We can't be stopped. So I write this polemic I call a poem, say "Write poems, women." I want to read them. I have seen you watching, holding on and watching, but I see your lips moving. You have stories to tell, strong stories: I want to hear your minds as well as hold your hands.

HONOR MOORE writes in New York City, where her new play on the survival of women, Mourning Pictures, opens at the Lyceum Theatre in November.

## GENERATION GAP

BY FRANKIE HUCKLENBROICH

I am specimen. Survive in no halfway condition. It must be the all of everything or nothing--and from one side of humanity to another. The wheel-creatures spawned our thread; warped and woofed us with sterility. I can have no child born of my mating. That was unfair; allowing this detail to escape down the spokes of the wheels, beneath the rolling. I am old-young. The synonomous antonym. The self-serving brouhaha. (Lie down

to wrestle with a mound of snakes. and call yourself 'charmer'.) If there is any answer, do I really need to know it? Sift your love slowly down on me. Cold me with warm, and then square off the breasts. The more immediate query: Papa, why wouldn't you let me walk with your seeding Polack legs? I would have given you all of the credit that you took, and trundled you around in a nifty, baby-boy blue wheelbarrow, always.

---

FRANKIE HUCKLENBROICH writes in Fresno, California, and has contributed poetry on the Ethnic Tradition to Speaking for Ourselves.

## She was standing on one leg...

She was standing on one leg  
in her overalls  
intensely studying  
a book I had read last summer  
and cried about  
and learned from  
and we exchanged smiles  
across the bookshelves  
and she offered me  
a sip of V-8 juice  
knowing that we  
were both there for the same reasons  
Expanding our ideals  
changing, growing, struggling  
It was a warm, mellow, welcome  
feeling  
Knowing that our dreams  
corresponded  
She stooped to look  
at a book of feminist poetry  
by some obscure sister/poet  
and told me--spontaneously, suddenly  
that she too wrote poems  
Emptying  
her radical, feminist thoughtful  
ideals  
onto endless  
sheets of widerule notebook paper  
I responded breathlessly  
telling her that  
I too wrote poetry  
at night on the kitchen table  
in pools of lamplight  
Exploring my thoughts  
It was great to know  
that here was a woman  
who shared my feelings  
the little bell rang  
on the glass door  
as she pushed it open  
I hadn't yet learned her name  
but  
I was  
glad that our  
lives had touched.

Margaret Talbot: "I am a 12 year old radical feminist woman/poet."

# PLAINSONG

Slowly:

a plainsong from an older  
woman to a younger woman

am I not olden olden olden  
it is unwanted.

wanting, wanting  
am I not broken  
stolen common

am I not crinkled cranky poison  
am I not glinty-eyed and frozen

am I not aged  
shaky glazing  
am I not hazy  
guarded craven

am I not only  
stingy little  
am I not simple  
brittle spitting

was I not over  
over ridden?

it is a long story  
will you be proud to be my version?

it is unwritten.

writing, writing  
am I not ancient  
raging patient

am I not able  
charming stable  
was I not building  
forming braving

was I not ruling  
guiding naming  
was I not brazen  
crazy chosen

even the stones would do my bidding?

it is a long story  
am I not proud to be your version?

it is unspoken.

speaking, speaking  
am I not elder  
berry  
brandy

are you not wine before you find me  
in your own beaker?

do you not turn away your shoulder?  
have I not shut my mouth against you?

are you not shamed to treat me meanly  
when you discover you become me?  
are you not proud that you become me?

I will not shut my mouth against you.  
do you not turn away your shoulder.  
we who brew in the same bitters  
that boil us away  
we both need stronger water.

we're touched by a similar nerve.

I am new like your daughter.  
I am the will, and the riverbed  
made bolder  
by you--my oldest river--  
you are the way.

are we not olden, olden, olden?

JUDY GRAHN writes in San Francisco, and is a member of the Women's Press Collective, which published her latest book, *A Woman Is Talking To Death*. "Plainsong" will be included in *She Who*, to be printed soon by the Women's Press Collective.

## jill's fairy tale

tonight my MOTHER fell over the wall and cracked  
the confused wax wings of the alarm CLOCK  
turned toward the sun  
and melted in their lust for power  
what would we do without THEM!  
i fell through a hole  
alice told me to get lost  
to find another hole  
all the squinty-eyed queens protested  
a kid put his wax finger in a dyke to prevent flooding.  
she nearly killed him while blanketing  
the idea that none could swim.  
my belly soaked up the juices of an indigestible rabbit  
when i stayed for dinner  
alice protested  
the queen offered herself as dessert  
all the kings horses and men stayed home and wept  
all the women advanced united carrying lifeboats  
"we can swim but we don't want to"  
"the rabbit died" said the cheshire cat "i wanted him"  
then he led the crooked army of men bearing real guns  
"there wouldn't be wars if it was up to us" i raved  
they told me to get out of everybody's tales  
so i took the fur foot  
and lewis wished me better luck next time.

JOAN COFRANCESCO writes in Auburn, N. Y.

BY JOAN LARKIN

for the filmmaker Deborah Dickson

## NOTATIONS—THE F TRAIN

Kool I  
Bruce  
Head 155  
Steam One  
Chino  
Gonzo 22

What is scrawled on the subway walls  
is a certain notion of strength.

there is also the strength of water  
that flows (around the rock)  
that flows (over the stone)  
that carries with itself  
leaf and leaf and leaf  
the letters of green lives

The station at West 4th Street  
smells of smoke; I notice it tonight.

It is 2 o'clock.

There are two women with dyed, worried faces  
and hard hair, the color of dolls' wigs  
standing together in coats that mimic fur.  
They are the only other women  
in this night station of men--  
men lounging and watching, chewing gum,  
reading their Sunday paper,  
some with thumbs in their trousers,  
with keys, with umbrellas  
striding the platform.  
One man stands by a post and vomits  
and vomits and vomits.

No one seems to be taking  
notice of anyone,  
except a few whose eyes  
let me see that I am alone here,  
At this hour, women do not travel.

water  
travels  
without stopping  
falls, both hitting the stone  
and flowing over the stone  
making the unstopped

music of water  
its continuous going  
over the earth and through it  
wearing the rock  
the rock the rock  
softening  
everything on earth that is hard  
a certain notion of strength

I may not let my eyes meet  
their eyes, on the train to Brooklyn.  
That is a sort of invitation.

There is a joke the cops in my neighborhood  
shared with certain women  
during the most recent rape scare.  
It was that the victims  
had found the rapist desirable  
and had asked for it anyway  
by being out on the street at night.

Where were you going anyway?  
they asked my sister,  
who was--and this is a fact--  
on her way to a meeting about the survival of earth,  
but who, between 9 and 11,  
was walked to the park at gunpoint,  
raped,  
then told to turn her back at the fence  
where she clung, waiting  
maybe to be murdered,  
while the man who had just raped her  
ran  
into the darkness.

water  
runs  
it is a certain notion of strength  
a woman has revealed in a film  
which she made by allowing the time  
to look at water  
moving  
to listen to the sound of water  
hour after hour after hour  
keeping her eyes on the water  
and holding it with her camera

They were asking my sister  
the tour guide  
Where can I find a woman?  
My home, so far away,  
I have need for a woman.  
What are you doing tonight?  
I have need, have need, have need.  
Where can I find a woman?

On the subway wall, I see the sentence  
I doin' it to death!  
In a red-yellow rainbow of spray-paint.

I,  
I,  
I,

doin' it,  
doin' it,  
doin' it,

to death,  
to death,  
to death,

I am waiting for the F train  
My womb throbs  
when the train thunders.  
The smoke-stench fills my nostrils.  
I am on my way home from the city  
late at night, in a station  
where there is probably nothing  
to be afraid of.

there is a notion of strength  
that is without impact

energy that is still like water  
energy that keeps going like water  
energy that is sustained motion like water

turbulences and falls  
flats deeps

and slow dark passages

go down to the water and look

this space is  
blank as a memorial  
to women  
who wrote poems  
that were not heard  
and ate them up  
and died  
within their poems.



by Sharon Behrends

# Yesterday's Lessons

A REVIEW BY KATHY HRUBY

YESTERDAY'S LESSONS, by Sharon Isabell. The Women's Press Collective, 5251 Broadway, Oakland, California 94618. \$2.50

Yesterday's Lessons is a unique and magnificent life story. Sharon Isabell tells the story of her life in the non-self-conscious manner of the poor, uneducated woman who has remained poor and uneducated. There is little detachment here--the confusion is not cleared, the desperation has no answer, the isolation is not ended.

What amazes me is Sharon's integrity in a world where she has so little support. A tough mining town kid in a public school; abused by her drunk, crazy father; rebellious and lesbian in the army; overworked; witness to friends and relatives murdered and institutionalized; left and betrayed by her lovers and friends; she is continuously put down. Her life follows her mother's words: "Sharon, you are going to have to learn to have some guts! You are going to have to learn that this is a hard life, and no one gives a dam whether you sink or swim. You have to learn to stick up for your self and not let people run over you."

With little more validation than this, Sharon does manage to endure and even to feel. Her empathy for crippled and abused people, her understated pain, her constant anger, her all too brief joy in love-making or freedom on her motorcycle overwhelmed me.

I am comfortable with Sharon's direct style (grammar and spelling mistakes intact). She writes what people said, what they did and how she felt with the concreteness and earnestness of conversation. It is this urgency and immediacy which involves the reader, rather than constructed climax, theme, or resolution. The author has a natural sense of form and interest.

Yesterday's Lessons expands the definition of women's art, coming as directly as it does from our female experience. It is an expression that had no validity in male culture.

I see this book as a beginning because, if it is unassuming, it is also unsettling. It stirs up the unappeased child and woman in me, the memories that demand action and telling. Sharon's self-affirmation reminds me that all our experiences and strengths are significant... I'm sure more women's stories will follow.

KATHY HRUBY: "Just ending my decade as a teenage lesbian, wanting a lot and getting much of it."

# A LINEAR TRIP

A REVIEW BY BARBARA STARRETT

AMAZON ODYSSEY, by Ti-Grace Atkinson. Links Books, New York, \$4.95

On March 4, 1970, Ti-Grace Atkinson delivered a lecture at the University of Rhode Island, which she began with an historical account of the Women's Movement, including the present "wave." She spoke of the President's Commission on the Status of Women; of the first meetings of New York N.O.W.; of the formation, in New York, of W.E.A.L.; of the Conference on New Politics in Chicago, which was quickly followed by the birth of the New York Radical Women; of the October 17th Movement and the Feminists, the Redstockings and W.I.T.C.H.

In March of 1970, I was living in a small, stone-age city in Pennsylvania. There were about eight of us in that city who were openly Feminist. We had worked together for about two years. Our number included Lesbians and married women, black and white women, poor and middle class women, socialist and reformist women, older and younger women. We had no name. We didn't fight among ourselves. We couldn't afford to: we had an entire neanderthal population on our backs. We had no access to media, no money. We wrote, dittoed (secretly, at night, in offices to which one of us could get keys) and distributed (in beauty shops, laundermats, campuses) a newspaper which was as radical as anything then going. We called it Up, and wrote under pseudonyms in order to avoid more threats and harassment than we were already getting. We were too small, too close for formal structures. Most of us couldn't afford the dues, so we never became members of N.O.W. By March, 1970, some of our straight women came out, and we discussed the personal and the political meaning of Lesbianism at length, with understanding, and without dissension. Some of us left our nuclear families at about the same time. We became locally infamous. In the following year, those of us who had jobs lost them. We could not appear in a public place without people stopping, staring, pointing. Clergy denounced us. We had no doubt at all about where the "front lines" were. And all over this country, hundreds of small, isolated and embattled groups fought the same fight against the same enemy and on the same front lines.

So what are we to make of such statements as: "Some of us split away to form our own organization, the October 17th Movement, named in honor of the day both of our departure from the rest of the Movement and our inception." The Movement was largely unaware of this departure. The Movement was busy surviving in Kentucky and Oklahoma and South Dakota.

Or: "Lesbianism became a full-blown facet of the consistency issue in 1972." In 1972, we didn't know what the "consistency issue" was, but we had been through the personal/political meaning of Lesbianism and had acted on our awareness early in 1970. What we learned in 1972 was that Lesbians and straight women were supposed to be at each others' throats. But by that time, retaliation

against us was worse. In one week, for instance, four student women, identified as mildly Feminist and suspected of Lesbianism, were committed to mental institutions, and one began a long, brutal, mutilating program of insulin shock. We were more concerned with dealing with our fear than in debating the "consistency issue."

Reading Atkinson's lecture, I was always reminded of the man's eternal, "History is my history." Surely the women in Kingston, Rhode Island had a Movement history, too, as all of us did. Movement history is not a chronology of the Movement in New York but the living experience of all the women everywhere who were and are fighting for Feminism, in whatever way and on whatever level of "radical-ness."

The point of these comparisons is that, while I do not question the honesty and the struggle of Ti-Grace Atkinson as a Feminist woman, I don't relate to a lot of what she says, and that is partly because my experience has been different. Perhaps, too, I am tired of the undue influence of the New York women on the movement. And I am becoming more and more bored with and suspicious of the linear, analytic, "objective" style as an adequate expression of the Women's Revolution.

One section of Amazon Odyssey is done in black with white print. This section has to do with a panel discussion in New York on violence in the Women's Movement. The first part is the text of Atkinson's speech at this event ("On Violence in the Women's Movement"). The second part is an open letter to the other women who were present during her talk ("Self-Deception.") In the first piece, Atkinson says a lot of things that apparently needed saying, like, "Violence, as surplus energy or 'force,' is available as a tactic only to the oppressor class...." I do relate to that: in Dayton or Baton Rouge, violence and suicide are generally the same thing. She tells us that the Left cannot be counted on as an ally. But she offers us, instead, Joe Columbo and his League. Very few women outside of the New York area have ever heard of Columbo, and his existence has had no effect whatsoever on their lives and struggles. But why would a Feminist trust any male-dominated, male-controlled organization or system, no matter how "revolutionary" or how "working-class" it might claim to be?

The damaging effects of pitting working-class women against middle-class women have been going on long enough, anyway. Women are contingent to the male-instituted, male-defined categories. The class status of women is derived. It is true that middle-class women can and have intimidated working-class women, and within the Movement the opposite is sometimes true, too. But a working-class male has the inherent power to intimidate any woman. All men do, and all men possess more privilege than women. Our job is to make women aware of our essential non-status, except as women, and for all of us to help each other shed the accoutrements of derived classes, to stop defining each other in the terms of male social arrangements. To create Sisterhood, in other words.

"Self-Deception" is a bitter invective against the Movement women who were present when Atkinson delivered her talk on violence. Considering the way she was apparently treated at the panel discussion, this is understandable. No matter how disagreeable her

words were to the women there, Atkinson is a woman with guts, with intensity, and with a long dedication to the Women's Movement that is, surely, unquestionable. There is no excuse for the violence reportedly directed against her there. (For those interested in further details of this spectacle, they are also described in Kate Millet's *Flying*, which is conveniently available from the Book of the Month Club.) Atkinson responds, again understandably but still, regrettably, in kind, dealing out some pretty heavy verbal violence against her Sisters; collectively, and to a few specific individuals. I cannot help but wish that she and Millet had kept the whole event to themselves and that the open letter had been distributed only to its targets and not made public. The effect on morale, I hope, is far less now than it would have been when New York, by virtue of its media availability, was the focus of Movement communication and influence. Nevertheless, the public attack of Feminists by Feminists is still damaging to us.

A few words should be said about Atkinson's style. She uses aphorisms, now and then, with skill. And when she incorporates the real experience of women into her rhetoric (such as the deposition of Joan Bird in "Juniata 1: The Sacrificial Lambs"), she reaches us where we live. But her style is most often a totally linear, analytical, deadly academic one. By far the worst example of this is "Strategy and Tactics: A Presentation of Political Lesbianism," which verges on parody.

When the New Left and Madison Avenue discovered each other, flip-charts (poster-size graphs and illustrations) were one of the first issues of that union; and revolutions have sat immobilized by them ever since. Combined with the old "objective" style of analysis, beloved of Columbia, the Pentagon and the corporation, they enable thousands to encounter reality third-hand in a mental hot-house that precludes action.

The first powerful discovery of the Women's Movement was that the personal is political. This enormously revolutionary notion developed, simultaneously, in little enclaves called CR groups, all over this country, who had no idea what was going on in New York. (Or in Chicago or Washington.) Without "violence," women were soon leaving their families, picketing the male institutions that had been oppressing them, speaking earnestly to any other women who would listen. Some of them were even choosing to live with and love other women. And, like it or not, the start of all this coincided exactly with the publication of (yes) Betty Friedan's book.

I don't think flip-charts and conventional (male) analysis are a threat to the Women's Movement. They are, too much, imitations of the massive and impersonal structures and institutions that rule our lives and condition our heads. At best, they are "handles" with which we try to define our Revolution in customary modes and terms. At worst, they are the ways we use to back off from personal action and commitment, to create the schizo division that Atkinson is well aware of, between the personal and the political. I don't think a lot of women relate any more to this style.

Very early in her Movement activities, Atkinson became a separatist, and she began to run down the political connection between

Lesbianism and the Women's Movement. Her experience of Lesbians who have lacked a strong Feminist consciousness has been seriously distressing to her, as it certainly can be to all of us. But the combination of political Lesbianism and separatism is still the most powerful tactic we have available to us. Without overt violence, it hurts the man in his most vulnerable spot. It does away with a lot of class distinctions: what class is going to claim a bunch of Lesbian separatists? And it seems obvious that no male-run organization, left or right, is going to make Lesbian Feminist Separatism one of its top priority issues. Most importantly, the personal and the political (Atkinson's "consistency issue") are united, effectively, and a real geography of liberated territory becomes possible.

No Sister is due an automatic assent to her views, and all issues, methods and ideas should be discussed, defended and challenged, ardently, within the Movement, if our process is to continue. But first they must be heard. Ti-Grace Atkinson is due the respect and the hearing of a veteran in our fight. More than that, she is due the respect and the hearing of any Feminist who is seriously, honestly, painfully, trying to live and to be the Revolution, in her own way and according to her own terms.

#### BOOKS NEW BOOKS NEW BOOKS NEW BOOKS NEW BOOKS NEW BOOKS NEW BOOKS

*These are new books by women (published Fall 1974) that we feel may be of interest to our readers--we regret not having space to review more of them. Any of these books may be ordered directly from the publishers by pre-paid check (you can find the publishers' addresses at your local library).*

#### FICTION:

- Sarah Aldridge, THE LATECOMER, Naiad Press, \$3.25. Available from The Ladder, Box 5025, Washington Sta., Reno, Nevada 89503.
- Constance Beresford-Howe, THE BOOK OF EVE, Little, Brown, \$5.95.
- Brigid Brophy, THE ADVENTURES OF GOD IN HIS SEARCH FOR THE BLACK GIRL, Little, Brown, \$7.95.
- Willa Cather, OBSCURE DESTINIES, Vintage, \$1.95. Three stories.
- Alice Denham, AMO, Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, \$7.95.
- Zelda Fitzgerald (& F.Scott), BITS OF PARADISE, Scribner's, \$8.
- Ella Leffland, LOVE OUT OF SEASON, Atheneum, \$8.95.
- Alice Munro, SOMETHING I'VE BEEN MEANING TO TELL YOU, McGraw Hill, \$6.95. Stories.
- Jean Rhys, QUARTET, Vintage, \$1.65.
- Susan Richards Shreve, A FORTUNATE MADNESS, Houghton Mifflin, \$6.
- Frieda Singer, ed., DAUGHTERS IN HIGH SCHOOL: AN ANTHOLOGY OF THEIR WORK, Daughters, Plainfield, Vermont, 05667, \$3.80.
- Susan Sontag, BROTHER CARL, Noonday Press, \$4.95.
- Fay Weldon, FEMALE FRIENDS, St. Martin's Press, \$7.95.
- Joan Winthrop, UNDERWATER, Putnam, \$6.95.

#### BIOGRAPHY/AUTOBIOGRAPHY:

- Angela Davis, AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY, Random House, \$8.95.

- Nancy Lee Hall, A TRUE STORY OF A DRUNKEN MOTHER, Daughters, \$3.
- Harrisene Jackson, THERE'S NOTHING I OWN THAT I WANT, Prentice-Hall, \$5.95.
- Hannah Josephson, JEANETTE RANKIN, Bobbs-Merrill, \$8.95.
- Doris Lessing, A SMALL PERSONAL VOICE, Knopf, \$6.95. Essays, reviews, interviews.
- Katharine DuPre Lumpkin, THE EMANCIPATION OF ANGELINA GRIMKE, University of North Carolina Press, \$11.95.
- Margaret Mead, RUTH BENEDICT, Columbia U. Press, \$8.95.
- Mary Jane Moffat & Charlotte Painter, eds., REVELATIONS: DIARIES OF WOMEN, Random House, \$10.
- Judy Sullivan, MAMA DOESN'T LIVE HERE ANY MORE, Arthur Fields, \$7.
- Claire Tomalin, THE LIFE AND DEATH OF MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, \$8.95.
- Eleanor Tufts, OUR HIDDEN HERITAGE: 5 CENTURIES OF WOMEN ARTISTS, Paddington Press.

#### NON-FICTION:

- Victoria Billings, THE WOMANSBOOK, Wollstonecraft, \$7.95.
- Caroline Bird, EVERYTHING A WOMAN NEEDS TO KNOW TO GET PAID WHAT SHE'S WORTH, Bantam, \$1.95.
- Barbara Brown, NEW MIND, NEW BODY--BIOFEEDBACK: NEW DIRECTIONS FOR THE MIND, Harper & Row, \$9.95.
- Mary Daly, BEYOND GOD THE FATHER, Beacon, \$3.95. Now in paper.
- Ann Faraday, THE DREAM GAME, Harper & Row, \$8.95.
- Sally Gearhart (& Wm. R. Johnson), LOVING WOMEN, LOVING MEN: GAY LIBERATION AND THE CHURCH, Glide Publications, \$6.95.
- Elizabeth Janeway, BETWEEN MYTH AND MORNING: WOMEN AWAKENING, Wm. Morrow & Co., \$8.95.
- Herta Loeser, WOMEN, WORK AND VOLUNTEERING, Beacon, \$8.95.
- Andre Medea & Kathleen Thompson, AGAINST RAPE, Noonday Press, \$2.25. A survival manual for women: how to avoid entrapment and how to cope with rape physically and emotionally.
- Hilda Scott, DOES SOCIALISM LIBERATE WOMEN?, Beacon, \$7.95. Experiences from Eastern Europe.
- WONDER WOMAN, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, \$6.95. A collection of Wonder Woman comics, with an introduction by Gloria Steinem and an interpretive essay by Phyllis Chesler.
- WOMEN LOVING WOMEN, Lavender Press, Box 60206, Chicago, IL 60660, \$1.50 (\$1 each on orders of 5 or more). Annotated Bibliography of Lesbian Literature.

## FREE SUBSCRIPTIONS

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# WOMAN BECOMING

BY IRENE SCHRAM

Playing the recorder is something I do by myself. It is also one of the array of things I taught myself, including as well writing, typing, ping pong. I didn't go to graduate school. The tune I work best with is "Blue Skies." I didn't go to college either; will the feeling of inferiority ever leave me? I can do a five minute improvisation on "Blue Skies" that is highly musical. "Greensleeves" too, and even "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring"--I do them simplistically, but sometimes something happens between me and the recorder. The other day on the radio a man used the word 'pianism': "His pianism is superb." Well, with me and the recorder something can happen too, sometimes, especially in solitude. When there is solitude and quiet--but that's very rare--I can make music. Slowly moving down into the different levels of myself, I can think, feel, create. I can, do fill the room with me, my sound transcribed onto recorder. I play music in the night this way, when it's late and quiet.

Then there's the way I've always rocked myself to sleep, too, and comforted myself: my hand on my crotch holding tight, palm pressing on my clitoris and finger inside my vagina, held warm and protected all around--my vagina nurturing my finger, my body nurturing me. "Goodnight," speaks my finger to my vagina. "Don't leave," the cervix, the walls reply, gripping tight. "Oh, I wasn't going to, I'm staying right here," waggles my finger back, "I came here to sleep with you and I love you." "I love you too, good-night," murmurs my vagina to me sleepily, and we fall asleep smiling. My mouth curves in a smile and it longs for a kiss--so it gives one and gets one back, from anywhere on my skin is just fine, perhaps my upperarm is closest--but breasts are so lovely, and I can't reach them with my mouth, so I do with my hand, cupping them, my own creatures to be held.

I am a woman writing a song to a woman. The woman is myself. The woman is another woman. I'm no song writer but I am writing. I'm not so sure I'm talking about myself loving myself, or women loving women. Being a woman loving women...the lines blur. With great beauty though, like undulating lines of sun on the waves, in the middle of the ocean, half-way between one continent and the next, the lines of definition barely existing, at least always moving, never holding still, between being a woman loving yourself and being a woman loving women. Same breasts. Same warm skin. Same softness, and particularly female sense of life and joy, such



by Bara Brown

laughter and nurturing possible. But there's a difference with a lover--I can fall asleep in her arms with my mouth around her breast. "...baby me," I said to her once, and she did, and in the morning I said, "That felt so good, you stroking me, babying me like that," and she answered, "I know it was babying to you, honey, but to me I was just loving you."

But it does make it nice falling asleep--and once, suddenly, waking from a terrible nightmare, I roused her and she said, from out of her sleep, "Oh, let me stroke your brain..."

I love the dark wood of my recorder. Somehow my fingers can find just the right places to touch and create the mellow soft sounds. I love music so, though I don't know the names of too many pieces, just their sounds. They always told me I couldn't sing, and I love to; now I know I can and I do, but I love making these little soft round notes too, these lesbian sounds, these woman sounds soft with my fingers and breath and recorder, and strong too, these notes are, fine and full and free.

I love lesbian. I roll the word in my mouth like candy, like sweet liqueur. I roll it from side to side over my tongue and teeth. Such a good taste. My tongue passes a tooth that needs filling. I make a note to call the woman dentist I finally found.

Walking home the other night, my arm around Laura, hers around me, her curly head on my shoulder, I suddenly see, coming down the street and nearly upon us, practically the entire P.T.A. of my children's school. The school is right across the street from my house, a meeting must have just ended. They know me well; for thirteen years I've been straight and married. Nancy Lesser leads them. As they reach me I see her, very quickly, take in lesbians; then she lets her eyes focus on our faces. Her first look wasn't slow enough to see any features, it was just to determine both

women. Now she sees me and knows me, and I see the shock register, followed by the fast recovery, the friendly smile. But I know her too: matron, at 30, same age, more or less, as I, and I am so young, my life just begun. As a woman who did a CR rap on the radio program on coming out I took part in making said,

I'm fifty years old now and I  
feel my life is just beginning.

At the bar tonight, dancing in the middle of the floor are two women with neat grey hair. One is tall and one short. They're dressed in pastel-colored pants suits and both wear glasses. They're about sixty. They hold each other and dance. They look exactly like the ladies at the bar mitzvahs, all those aunts horrified at someone's unmentionable daughter who loves women. I'm so glad to see them here. Sometimes I look at old couples on the street, and see decades of bitterness in the lines on their faces. Then I'm a teenager again, listening to my mother crying from the thousandth unjustified berating she's just received from my father, and I'm saying to her, "Why don't you leave him? You could get a divorce."

"Oh, but Irene, I love him," she sobs pitifully.

"But how could you love him, the way he treats you all the time!" I feel furious remembering it, but at the time I think I felt mostly frustration.

"I know he treats me like that, but underneath he loves me. You don't know, you can't see it, but underneath he loves me very much. And he needs me."

"But what about you? He treats you like garbage!"

"Oh, you don't understand, I could never leave him." And she never did.

Early morning; the alarm just rung. Jennifer, six, creeps into bed and snuggles against me.

"Mommy," she whispers, "between me and Laura, who do you love best?"

"Who do you think?" I answer.

Practically inaudibly, she says, "I think Laura."

I hug her. "No, honey. I love Laura a lot but I always love my children first."

"Oh." She pauses. Then, still very much whispering: "What would happen if you said that in front of her?"

"What would happen if Laura heard that I love you better than her?" I answer in a normally loud voice. She nods. "She'd say she knew that."

"Oh."

Laura opens her eyes and smiles at Jennifer. Jenny burrows under the covers.

Nicholas is twelve. I came out to him a month after his father and I separated. I did it because knowing, finally, what I was, and having been invisible to myself for so long, I couldn't be invisible in any way any longer. I had to be out, especially in my own home; and I thought it would be okay with him.

I asked him if he knew about homosexuality, and he said sure he did. Living on Christopher Street, it would be hard for him not

to. It's mostly men he sees though, so I said could he tell me what it meant, and he said it meant men loving with other men, or women loving with other women too, except that was called something else, wasn't it, lesbian or something? I said right. Then I said I thought that's what I was.

The first thing he said, a good number of seconds later, was, "Oh, but you're not sure yet, right?" So I told him actually I was, that had just been a way of saying it. We talked about women loving women and then I gave him the lesbian section in *Our Bodies Our Selves* to read again--he'd read the whole book when I first got it, I'd forgotten that. He reread it and then I asked him if there was anything he didn't understand, and he said he didn't understand why some people thought it was sick, because people should be able to do what they want, other people shouldn't tell them what to do, he hates that. I said some people just listened to what other people told them, and tried to explain how the culture put that label of sickness on us. But I told him things were changing now, too, and that made him happier. And I said I'd needed to tell him because I couldn't be in the closet any more, because it felt terrible to be there, and he said that was right but he thought he would stay in a while himself...that threw me. But it turned out he meant he didn't think he was going to tell all his friends his mother was a lesbian right away.

Then he said he didn't like the idea of strange women coming to our house, maybe even living here, being close with me, because he'd be embarrassed and uncomfortable not knowing them. I said he'd get to know them, and besides, wouldn't that be the same if they were strange men? Then I told him my worry: he might think I didn't like him any more, because he was a male, and I wanted him to know that wasn't so. I said I didn't dislike men because they were men, but because they were sexists, but I wouldn't dislike men who weren't sexists, and that mainly I was a lesbian because I loved women. But that he, my son, would remain my son, and I'd continue to love him.

When I told Daniel, Nicholas' father, that I came out to Nick as a lesbian he said that was sick and perverse and I should not have laid such a heavy thing on an innocent child.

Nausea was almost one of the first things I began to find out about in therapy. Every time I'd really begin to talk, I'd experience nausea. Oh, not just any talking, but talking that had a lot of meaning and depth. Then the images of my father and mother, brother and grandmother and aunts and uncles all appeared like cut-out paper dolls, folded in the right places to sit on the hills of my brain, my father swinging his legs nonchalantly, his eyebrows raised, my brother standing growing taller and taller until I couldn't see his head any longer, my mother perched in there right in the middle of my forehead, looking down at me and laughing. Then the nausea would come, and I'd ask how I could ever rid myself of their spectres haunting me and never giving me anything.

Blend thoroughly in blender:

8 oz. Tomato Juice  
20 Valium 5 mg.

20 Cafergot with PB  
25 Ornade Spansules  
4 Nembutal  
9 Percodan  
2 bottles Aspirin

Various cold tablets, Midol,  
1 Darvan, 2 Librium, anything  
else available

Splash Tobasco

Chill and serve.

Until they drive me to that. But thinking about dying, thinking of ways, everyone goes through that. I've been through fantasies of self-mutilation and of sleeping forever; it's only a part of everything there is to tell. It takes a long time to tell about everything, and frequently it's confusing to think at all because the threads are too many and intertwined and tangled, the thoughts and relationships, like white worms in your brain, your brain made of white worms, tangled and twisted around each other so tightly one never moves without moving another, and also they get hungry and eat their brothers and sisters, but they're so twisted around and look so exactly identical that they can't tell, when they try to fill their hunger, whether it's a sister they're biting or themselves, until they feel it and scream and stop, but then it's already too late. But they're so hungry...

The poster reads: I Am A Woman Giving Birth To Myself. Births are seldom easy.

Coming out is no single thing, just as, it seems to me, primal therapy is not one great all-releasing scream, but a long series of screams, possibly exactly equivalent to the number of screams, rages, hurts and pains sustained and repressed throughout one's life. My coming out was, is a series of happenings threaded in different ways through time and space, a lot of time and a lot of space; a lot of happenings that are each exhilarating, each time make me feel I'm totally out--and there's always one more to go.

I came from a place where the word homosexual, or any of the slang terms signifying it, were never pronounced. Not in my home, among my friends, or in any classes I ever attended. I don't think, in Queens at the time I grew up, kids were using the words 'queer' or 'fairy' or 'fag' the way they do now--and I don't think 'dyke' or 'butch' were even heard of. A friend of mine from Nebraska once told me she never knew there were any real live Jews until she grew up and left home. She'd thought they existed only in biblical times. That's how conversant I was with homosexuality.

I was born in 1941. In the fifties and early sixties, from when I was a teenager through my mid-twenties, there was no women's liberation, no gay liberation. Gays were all in the closets and women in the kitchens--and behind typewriters and sales counters and teacher's desks and a few other places, but still in essence in the kitchens.

I remember one single mention of homosexuality ever: when I was fifteen or sixteen and my father made a slight aside, half a sentence long, about a third cousin of mine who was a 'fairy.' Of

course I knew what he meant, and I should have been curious to hear more. But the whole concept was so repressed that I can't recall experiencing any curiosity about it, either the cousin or the idea. I never thought of it.

So I had no exposure to homosexuality through my whole life; but a pull to it, so deep inside me I could only feel it, never grasp it with my mind enough to wonder what it was. A flushed anticipation when I'd be going to a girlfriend's house; that was all. And all the closeness I ever had with anyone with two or three friends, whom I know now I must have really loved. Then, it never crossed my mind that that was possible; it never occurred to me. Sex and love relationships were with boys. So there were only my close, pregnant friendships, and an occasional book: The Well of Loneliness, The Songs of Bilitis. Reading them, the yearning that I had no way to recognize for what it was, but clinging to every word and loving the women loving the women in them. But only inside me. Don't mistake me. I didn't know then, only now.

I began dating boys. Starting at thirteen I necked: in movies, doorways, the back seats of cars, once on the grass at Forest Park with a boy I'd never seen before, for hours, me fighting but letting him kiss and kiss me, but resisting the whole time, until he gave up and there on the ground under the sky with the trees all around finally relaxed his tense body and just held me, not trying to reach, touch, or insert anything into me any more, but just held, and the moment he did I relaxed, and let myself be held.

At seventeen a boy convinced me to let him make love to me--or else I might lose him. So I did, we did. What did I feel? Pain and disappointment; and confusion, I thought it was supposed to feel good. Days, weeks, later, still fucking, no more pain, still no feeling. Or rather, some--when he'd finish and drop down beside me and hold me. Then I got a little pleasure, the tiniest relief at getting held. It wasn't sexual pleasure, but I figured it was all there was.

At nineteen I married, and at twenty-one had a baby.

At twenty-two I had a crush on a woman in the subway. I was coming home from work. She had shining red hair, combed straight back from her forehead, and her forehead was broad and white and perfectly smooth. Beneath it her eyes were warm brown, and I gazed into them and a wave of shock hit me--not that I knew what it was. I was only twenty-two, still ten years away from knowing. I saw her on the train for three weeks, almost every night. Shortly she saw me staring. I don't know what she felt, but I'm sure we played a little game: I gazed at her and she at me, all the way home, three or four times a week for those weeks. I wanted her so, and had no idea that I did. I'd get home and deal with my husband and son. I'd get home and deal with dinners and tempers and tense or tedious evenings, and at night perhaps I'd dream.

From then on, every year after that, I'd become friends with a new woman. The friendship would deepen; I'd feel such warmth for her. My cheeks would glow, I'd be so excited at seeing her, thinking how pretty she was, even saying so to others...isn't Dawn pretty? Don't you love her hair, and her eyes? Sometimes there was playfulness close to flirtation in the time spent together, but never out in the open, into actions, words or even thoughts. But I could list the women for you: Dawn, Maggie, Sara, Karen,

Jessie, I think I loved all of them--until I couldn't bear being with them any more, and found some reason to break off the friendships; and grew older and more entrenched in my marriage.

In the idea that I loved the man I was married to, because that's the way things were. I couldn't even break from that pattern enough to think about what I said I was feeling. I'd remember my mother and father; people stay married. I had no right to stop loving him for no reason. I had to love him, isn't that what women did? And as men went he wasn't bad, and he was my man, my possession, so that made it all right that I was his, and must be what I wanted. He was kind of cute, and sexually adequate, that's what you call a stiff prick battering at you all the time, isn't it? He had no trouble. I'm sure he'd appreciate my testimony of this, he never lacked for a big stiff prick, out of nowhere anytime to wield like the weapon it was against my body...entering openings it "belonged" in, trying to enter openings it did not belong in. Trying to convince me of openings it did belong in, while I cried no, no, for years--for thirteen years--cajoling, begging, seducing, and attempting to force entry. Forced entry, is that grand or petty larceny? Or neither. But against the law? But here's his affidavit: a sexually adequate man.

Really, I shouldn't go on so. I was supposed to love him, and I was sure I did. I left it at that, I dulled all but my most adverse reactions, dulled my senses and learned to accept.

But I was so cold. I was always alone. I felt I was inside a tunnel, way at the other end of a tunnel. No one could reach me, they could hardly see me there. I was all squinched up. I grew smaller and smaller at the end of the tunnel. The other end was the wide end, and I was so far down the small end there was no way for them to reach me, touch me, they could just see me. I couldn't feel anything, though I thought I could. I think what I felt was what I understood with my mind feeling was supposed to be like.

Then a friendship came that remained: Jeanne. We were friends for five years, warm and close, very mutually protective. Recently she said she thinks it was a symbiotic relationship. It was very loving and of course non-sexual. Then she became ill and spent a week in our house.

That week I actually felt my feelings for women out loud in my mind for the first time. I felt them for only a very little while before I safely buried them again, but for a day or two, beginning small but growing, the feelings were out. It began with just their edges, rising into my mind so I kept frowning and then smiling little amused smiles at myself and saying, "What are you thinking? My goodness," until finally they culminated. She was in the bathtub and asked me to bring her something, a book or soap or a washcloth, I forget what, but with it in my hand, I opened the door.

At the time we lived in a beautiful apartment consisting of one room and one lovely bathroom. The bathroom had the most exquisite green linoleum floor, smooth and cool under your bare feet and almost the color of those 16th century Bruegel paintings, a special 16th century green that artists can't really find any more. The bathroom big and square, the side of the tub covered with wood paneling, and Jeanne in the water, small, so small, and soft,

her narrow shoulders and small beautiful breasts. She sat in the bathtub and I handed her, say it was a washcloth, and quickly went out and back into the living room. I remember her looking up, startled, when I came in. Maybe she expected me to just pass it in through the door. I didn't even see her that well, she was half-turned away from me, but I remember her small body and I think surprised face and I handed her the washcloth and went in the living room and sat down and said, "Whew! What am I feeling?" And from then on, through the rest of the day until I went to bed that night, my woman-feelings were more out than they had ever been before. All afternoon I thought only of her. Amorphous thoughts, though feverish, her body, her small face, her skin, she in the bathtub, our caring for each other--but no action thoughts, and no connective, sudden-comprehension type of thoughts at all--impressions.

When evening came and bedtime approached, the thoughts were still there, steadily growing stronger. Naturally she was sleeping on the couch. My feelings were so intense I couldn't sleep, and when they both did, he next to me, she across the room, I got up and grabbed a piece of paper and a pencil and very quickly scribbled a poem, not letting myself listen to what I was saying, just writing it, some eight or twelve lines of how I loved and desired her. I practically wrote it with my eyes closed. I couldn't face the fact that I was writing it. When I finished I really closed my eyes and held very still, even held my breath for a little time, then slowly opened my eyes and read the poem.

At first, when I saw what I had written, I didn't know how to react. I did the only self-defensive thing I could think of: quietly laughed at myself. When I stopped that I just smiled, letting myself continue to feel amused that I should think such thoughts, and, so protected, buffered by my amusement from the reality of it, allowed myself to read it over and over, maybe fifty



by Bara Brown

times. At last I couldn't stand it and took the page and tore it up, destroyed it totally and went to sleep. In the morning both the feelings and the poem were gone, and my only conscious dealing with my lesbianism so far in my life was over. I was 28.

Jeanne moved away, and I returned to my pattern of forming and breaking close relationships with women. There are many kinds of closets; this is the one I was in. Different from the lesbian who knows she's a lesbian but never acts on it; different from the lesbian who knows it and acts on it but keeps it a secret from the rest of the world; but mine a closet too, and probably the deepest and darkest, so secret I could hide in it from myself.

All the feelings I'd thought I had for Daniel, and whatever their motivations--mostly my own needs--the feelings were gone. I resisted knowing it, pretending to myself and him that they were still there, but they were not. I pretended for at least six years of the thirteen, perhaps even seven, eight, nine. But please understand I pretended successfully to myself too. For all but the last two years I had no idea it was pretense. But it was. Aside from finally understanding I'm a lesbian, I don't think I ever really loved him, and he didn't love me. I 'loved' him because he promised to fill my need, to be loved for myself, and he didn't: he loved a me that wasn't me, a new fabrication (and a nineteen year old one that he never wanted to see change) superceding the old fabrication my parents had said they'd love (be this way, be that way). And he loved my need to be loved. He saw my need when he met me, and chose it for his wife, marrying my need. He wanted someone, found me, to be dependent on him for emotional survival. Almost from the beginning he used the threat of withdrawn love as a weapon. One month after we were married, for example: I was nineteen. I'd been writing poetry for several years, and had gone to the first session of a poetry seminar that was very important to me. The class was longer than it was supposed to be. I ran the whole way home--ran to the bus, paced when it didn't come, ran from the bus stop to our building--knowing it wasn't going to be good when I got there.

I opened the door. He sat across the room, scowling down at a drawing on his lap, and didn't look up. I said hello. He still didn't look up. Finally he did, with total fury and coldness.

"Where the hell were you?"

"But the class ran late, I didn't want to leave before it was over."

"Oh, shit, The class ran late? What was I supposed to do, sit here twiddling my thumbs waiting for you?"

"No, you could, I mean what do you mean..."

I stopped, frozen into silence by the cold rejection on his face. For the rest of the evening he didn't speak to me, and I followed him around the room with my eyes, silently or with stumbling words pleading with him to speak to me, please not be angry any more, please relax his face and stop being that way to me.

But he didn't. Not that day, or the next, or until the punishment was over. I remember it as going on for a long time, though I suppose it was only a day or two. It was his weapon: withdrawal of love. Some parents use it on their children, and he used it on me, an emotional child, the child I still in many ways am now, but then, I was nineteen but truly nineteen months old,

and he punished me that way, though I had done nothing wrong, and all through our married life continued to whip me with this most effective weapon. I'm just remembering how the hero in 1984 is punished for his nonconforming behavior with the thing he fears most, which they know about because they know everything: they let rats at him until he learns how he should think. When I read that book I thought, with me it's cockroaches, and in that world I couldn't ever let anyone know because that's what they'd do to me. But I was wrong. It wouldn't be cockroaches at all, the threat of cockroaches seems insignificant before what Daniel used on me.

And Jeanne was away; and I went on with my series of short intense relationships with women I couldn't let myself love. I remember how with one woman in particular my whole attention was focused on her beauty. When I met her she had a young baby, and would go rushing home from work to nurse him, her breasts so beautiful in her sweater, small, full, bursting breasts. Her skin, her coloring, everything, I felt so strongly about her, and still couldn't let myself know it.

Perhaps if any one of these women had herself been a lesbian, or wanting to come out, and she had approached me, I could have been saved years of waiting. But it never happened. Maybe, for safety's sake, I picked only the straightest women I could find to have crushes on.

The children have just gone out the door; Laura has gone out the door. I'm alone. Waking this morning was so beautiful: she was singing to me, a funny song. Early, too early to be woken up. "What?" I mumbled, wanting to sleep more. "I'm sorry. I just felt like singing to you," she murmured, sleepy herself, and closing her eyes went right back to sleep, curly hair on my pillow, soft baby cheeks, lovable mouth; I take such delight in seeing her in the morning. I wake more. My hand creeps to her cheek and begins to stroke it; muttering she turns over, sleep more, she says, need more sleep. So I curl my front to her back and we fit so well, crevice to crevice, and I creep my hand over her side to her front and stroke her, up and down her soft body, cup her small breast and then down over her belly to her legs, loving her. She smiles and goes on sleeping, and my waking is beautiful.

Then the hassles with the children began, and by the time they were out, off to their father's, I was just as happy that Laura was going out too, so I could have a little quiet and private and free stretched-out space to lie in, to feel nothing but me, some sun, some air, some space in the room, to breathe in, some nothing to do, some time to think, some space and place for me to feel whatever there was to come up from inside me. Whenever I think there's nothing to come up from inside me I'm wrong. Every time there is. I never lack for things to think and say and write about and delight in, it's the time, space, place, and stretch to be able to do it.

It's quiet now.

I've just put screens in the windows. It's spring at last, and I want the air to come in. One of the screens is all metal, everything here is a hand-me-down and this was handed down from Ginny who didn't want this particular kind of metal screen because it

has a green cast to it and it's thick, so not quite enough air comes through, and I agree, but I love the green cast. I have it in the window with four plants lined up in front of it, a fuschia, one with spotted green and white leaves, a ludicrous cactus with four small sorry cacti growing out of its very top, and a plant from a citrus seed, I forget which kind. The screen makes the light come through green and truly beautiful. A philodendron on my desk spreads its leaves everywhere.

Before Daniel left this place was different. There was no space. When he left I made one thing: space. I dislike clutter. Possessions, things. When he left and took all his things and was gone suddenly there was space. My living room is space. It's a big room, and my bed, couch, and small low table to eat at are all that are in it. A green rug. Green is quiet. An indian bedspread on the wall. Quiet, space, peace. Then up a step and you're in my study, which was meant to be the dinette, but I've made it my workroom, and here it's warm and a little crowded but that's all right. My funny black and red desk, my plants, a rocker and another chair, a rug, bookshelves and piled books, a busy, bright indian bedspread/curtain dividing this workroom from the kitchen. I write here: poems, stories, books. And I type to make my living. I think of it as manual labor. It is as right as planting the earth or baking bread:

I swear it to you  
I swear on my common woman's head  
The common woman is as common  
As a common loaf of bread...  
and will rise.\*

When Daniel was here there was clutter. I am trying to tell you how it's different now. When I was married there was always clutter in my head. When I wanted to write he'd be here, making noise, wanting me, my attention, another child to deal with. There was the physical clutter he made, and also the clutter of him in my mind, his demands and expectations and the ocean of unsaid things. But things unsaid remain; they stayed in my head and didn't leave me alone. Free to say whatever I please, whatever I want to or have to now, my mind has the space my living room has. When I step in the living room my mind and the room greet each other as sisters.

While Jeanne was away we wrote letters frequently; we visited back and forth at Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, and in the summer; and instead of our friendship suffering because of the distance it became even closer, and we missed each other very much. Daniel began to balk and be upset at my letters to Jeanne, and sometimes hers to me, saying in disgust, "These almost sound like love letters!" I'd reply that was ridiculous--I thought it was--but at last our feelings began to seem, even to blind-deaf-dumb me, to be physically loving as well as loving in every other way. And maybe I let myself remember how I'd felt four years before when she'd stayed with us. Finally, just when she and the man she

\*Judy Grahn, The Common Woman. (Oakland Women's Press Collective)

lived with were about to return to New York to live, I found myself maneuvering and arranging and seducing, writing letters and talking like mad, and ultimately convincing everybody that we should all make love together--I think this is the way it was, I didn't understand it this way then--still not ready to know that all I wanted was to be with Jeanne. The other three, Jeanne and her man and Daniel, all in their different ways resisted, but I finally won them over and there we were, in this very living room, ladies and gentlemen but oh most especially ladies, to your right and down the one step to the living room there we quite finally were, four of us, making love. Every one of us self-conscious; and then Jeanne leaned over and kissed me; and--I'm a writer. Naturally I put it in a story:

When she made love with Jeanne everything she knew about her own feelings changed. She felt so much stronger things than she'd ever experienced with Daniel or anyone else. Her cheeks began to burn the moment Jeanne touched her, lightly, with her small hands, looking into her eyes with such loving, seeing her, bringing her mouth close and starting to kiss....

It was so different it made her weep. After years of constriction, her feelings restrained by weights, hundred, thousand pound weights imprisoning them always, so they only came out now and then, in no more than little spurts, their sudden soaring made her weep.

But then everything went wrong. The relationship with Jeanne didn't work; I had no understanding then of why, but now I'm sure it was because she certainly is bisexual, but she isn't a lesbian, and so she didn't feel the immense awakening I felt; instead, its immensity frightened her. And Jeanne didn't want me, so I gathered that great hurt and despair around me for my blanket and went back deep, deep in my closet. When I could think at all I thought I was bisexual too and just a very unhappy person. And by then I must have known I didn't want to be with Daniel, but I didn't know what to do about it, I didn't think I had the right to do anything. Spring came and found me sitting on my black couch up front in my apartment, near the windows, unable to move. For two months.

I moved to go to the bathroom. I wanted tea very badly but could hardly ever move to make myself cups of tea. I moved to feed the children and get them to school and let them in the door when they came home and feed them and get them to bed. The rest of the time I sat on the black couch and stared in front of me. I didn't talk or read or write, it was too much effort. I just wanted to sit and stare, and that's all I did.

Finally I began to feel a little better. Making my last effort to adjust to the life I was in and didn't think I could get out of, when early summer arrived I was on my feet again.

I wasn't there, because I wasn't a free woman yet, but Laura told me how at a women's march in 1972 a woman gave a speech about

being a feminist and this is what she said, approximately: "I would like to thank my husband for his help in freeing me...if he wasn't such a male chauvinist pig I wouldn't be here today."

In addition to my husband I would like to thank Marlon Brando for his help in freeing me.

The end catharsis began with a night of hysterical crying following an evening of Brando, in *Last Tango in Paris*, brutalizing a woman through two hours of pig glorification. He ended up sodomizing her (having first forced her to get a stick of butter from the refrigerator, with which he lubricated her). She got the butter sullenly, started to scream and cry when she understood what he was going to do, but wound up whimpering sensually. Throughout the scene he kept saying he'd show her; or if she'd shut up she'd like it; I tell you I can't remember too well, it's too painful for me. I felt her degradation as mine, as all women's. I remember his face though, triumphant and malicious above her, and her face crying and helpless but by the end liking it, because that's what Bertolucci had her do, come to like it, while Brando humiliated her and asserted his dominance over her...and I think she'd begun by saying she wanted to stop seeing him. He sure showed her. As in the Joni Mitchell folk song I heard a woman singing the other day:

Oh you're a mean old daddy  
but I like you fine.\*

I wanted to leave very badly, but I couldn't get up because I was too upset to move, and because getting up meant more than just leaving the movie. I didn't and finally it was over. Through most of it I was in anguish, which grew greater and greater, and really her shooting him in the end relieved very little for me. What she, I had endured was too great for his death to begin to make up for. Nothing could make up for it.

When we left, Daniel asked me what was wrong, and I couldn't tell him. We'd been together thirteen years, and he had no idea of the immense despair and rage the film roused in me. He insisted I speak to him, but I couldn't. I knew he wasn't there to hear me--he didn't know me. At home, finally, my crying began.

On August 26th, 1973, lifting a heavy breakfast tray off my low table, I sprained my back. It got better and worse and better again, but in mid-September I found myself in bed and told to stay there and move as little as possible for two weeks.

I lay in bed with a manuscript, the book I was currently working on, balanced on my belly and propped against pillows so I could write in it. I was supposed to stay flat and still, so I couldn't even raise my knees to rest the book against them, but somehow I managed and for eight days worked on the book. Around the ninth I slowed down, then bogged down and just lay there and began to allow myself to think. And think and think...and slowly the realization came to me--I mean approaching me slowly, as though I could see it coming from afar, moving and moving toward me, slowly and unceasingly until it hit, very hard: I had to get out; and I wanted to love women. It hadn't worked with Jeanne, so somehow

\*Joni Mitchell, "Carey," Blue, Reprise Records.

I'd have to find my way into the community of women and see if there were others I could love, in other words, if I wanted to be a, was I a, oh my, a lesbian? And when I finally did understand that I was, when at last that information really reached me, the strongest emotion I felt was surprise.

On the 10th through the 13th day of my confinement I did two things: stopped speaking to Daniel, and wrote a story. Well, I still spoke to him a little, but less as the days went on and the story grew, and only about the most necessary things; and meanwhile I wrote. I began with line one, and just kept going; I named it "Breaking." It was the story of me telling Daniel it was over.

It was a shock to him (in the story, as in reality); it had been clear on a non-verbal level for a long time, but not a word of it had been verbalized before. Now I was saying it. I went through it all, the initial scene, my fear, his shock, the following days, the fighting and hassling, his moving out. When I finished I read it over and saw what I'd said, and that's how I broke the pattern. The pit of my stomach disintegrated. My eyes ceased meeting his, and after a day of that, the last, 14th day of my confinement, he said this not talking to him was very bad, it was getting him very upset, I had to tell him what was wrong; and I did.

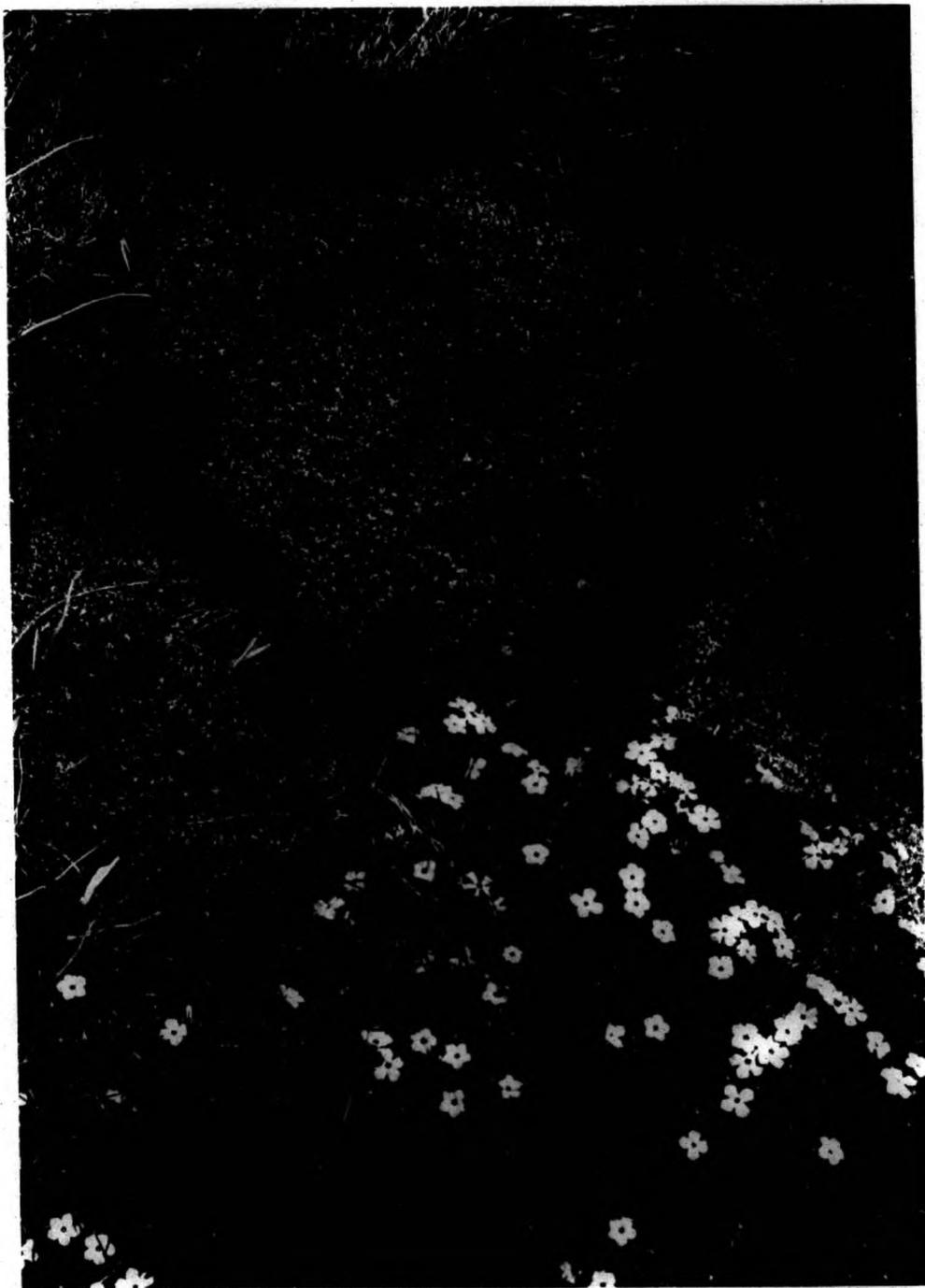
Shall I describe how he reacted? What followed? Why? It's not necessary. It was very painful; it's over. One thing though: I understand now that really for at least two and possibly as many as six years I'd wanted to leave him, but was so sure I didn't have the right to, because he wouldn't recover from it, I hadn't been able to even think it. But it wasn't true: he survived. Not only survived, he's probably happier now not with me. For months I kept waiting for the other shoe to drop, for him to freak out, kill himself, or kill me, and he didn't. But he hadn't been able to end it any more than I had. We stayed together thirteen years. If we'd been honest or strong, or something we weren't, some better thing, it might have been six or seven. Or if really strong, maybe none at all.

But I wish to speak only for myself.

It took me so long; it didn't have to. He survived, I survived, and this is what I realized: I put the box around myself. To some degree at least, it was me who put me in a box. Now I wonder how much of that I did throughout my life, and try to guard that I never do it again.

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IRENE SCHRAM lives in New York City and has worked with WBAI's Women's Department producing "Current Themes in Women's Literature: Masturbation" and "Lesbiana Way: Come Out, Come Out, Whoever You Are." Her novel, *Ashes, Ashes, We All Fall Down*, was published by Simon and Schuster in 1972.



by Patricia Wright

-----NOTES FROM ROSEY RIGHTBRAIN-----

"Rosey Rightbrain's Exorcism/Invocation" is continued this issue by some of the sisters who've responded to Part One (printed in the July issue)--their letters begin on page 10. Barbara Starrett's article, "I Dream in Female: the Metaphors of Evolution" (page 13), was also sent in response to Rosey Rightbrain. Though it was written last spring, before my article, it continues the exploration where I left off without missing a single footstep. I'm pleased and very encouraged that so many of us are dreaming the same world-changing dreams, and I'm excited and inspired by the many directions suggested by the responses printed in this issue.

And what about my own 'Part Two'? I can say this: that my writing has expanded beyond the limits of a magazine article, in scope and size, and will appear in its own form and time. Or I can say: I have not, these last few months, found the hope necessary for risking an exploration into the woman-vision and have found myself going further and further into the No's when I write. Either/both of these explanations present good reason for printing continuations of our collective vision by women who are energized by hope, now. Your responses to this issue's explorations will carry the cycle of communication/transmutation even further. *-Gina*

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# She Lived in a Shoe

BY CYNTHIA CARR

Then the old woman sat up in the bed and saw that in the grey light her children had gathered there and not a clean face among 'em. And when, like a door thrown back, would Death enter?

"Tell a story, mum," children whispered.

They did not believe in a Death but she knew His ways and His signs. The pale-eyed blackbird who flies before Him. The wings that call out and sigh low with hard comfort that you're worthless on earth now -- how like a feather!

Her frowzy head sank back to the rags. She said they made her sick with their not believing. A whole life in a shoe and they would not believe. Did they love it as she? She loved the oiled walls -- the beautiful blue-brown glistening walls curving from shingled upper to the toe where the childrens' beds huddled like a heap of old hose.

"Tell again about the giant, mum."

"No, I must tell o' that dreadful cobbler."

So they carried their benches to the bedside and made a rough circle of shaggy heads, wide sleeves and calm eyes. The grey cat jumped to the table to listen amid the wood plates and the crucibles where he'd licked up a drop of the turtleneck soup and he'd licked up a drop of the mead.

"Even a cat would believe," said the woman.

"When does the story start, mum?"

"Old cobbler couldn't talk without a twist in each sentence and a tying on a bow at the end of each. All pretty packages and empty ones. Pah!"

"Say 'Once Upon A Time,'" sighed the children.

Old hands fluttered once on the quilt and lay still. The shoe squeaked softly as though chewed by a puppy but it was really the furious wind. A child barred the door at the heel and sat again.

"Once upon a time," said the old woman, "I wanted a window. No ...It's this way: once upon a time...a woman lived in a house with leather walls and they were fine smooth walls and she bought a burnished icon with every copper what she ever saved just for something to put a gleam on the soft dark walls but she knew that a window was the better thing and she wanted a window before she died." Breath came hard to the woman, her face washed in sadnesses.

"But what did the old woman do, mum?"

"Aiii...what didn't she...she went...no, it's this way." The woman closed her potion-bright eyes. "Once upon a dark and thunderous night..."

"Like tonight?"

"Once upon a fragrant and secret night..."

Hail, twigs, blossoms thapped the walls like timid strangers wanting shelter. But it was the wind. The cat pounced from his perch to stalk the sole, purring.

"I remember watching me eldest die," said the old woman. She was feeling the breath of that night again, its vision weighting her eyes like coins. She saw the clattering cart once again climbing slowly toward her secretful house, the driver just singing his way, while inside a child lay still in his winding-sheet.

"But...once upon a time...there lived a cobbler, MacLem," and he entered her mind and her story, limping. With the broken metallic face she still recalled. Sulphur in the hair. Quick-silver in the hand.

He spent all his time on alchemical manuscripts. He burnt up his whiskers with flaming elixirs. He was crooked, brown-coated, like a claw.

"I walked out o' mornin' then when sun be first lift up. I run like a scream to the coast o' day. I run to the blastin' cobbler's door. There he's thirstin' for gold an' he's findin' him none an' he's drowsed an' he's cursin' the gods. Cobbler, I says, make a window in the shoe."

"Be tellin' your tale to the reeve, woman. He's for window-makin'."

"An' you're for shoes, hobblin' man. There's evil humours in the place an' they killed me own child. Can they out with no window now?"

The blotchy face turned away from her. The blue nose and red eyes and the pallor turned away. "I wouldna do it for a paltry sum," the cobbler said.

She put a little pouch on the table and he spilled it out there into the leather scraps, the threads and cracked vials. The cobbler promised her then. He took the coins, and he swore by the clan of MacLem and the saints.

Then days and nights went by each other winking, for they passed so quickly.

And MacLem stacked unended shoes beneath the table each day. They made a little wall of scuffed heels and broken toes, while he sat there with a single candle and tears of wax ran away from it.

Brimstone, Salts of Ammon--they be right, aye, aye, he thought--and he made a new note on the mercury and looked up as a shadow stepped into the door. And the shadow put its hands on its hips...

"'OD'S BODKIN, MAN!"

"An' what will ya want as the sun's sunk his head an' he won't peek out till the dawnin'?" He pushed the splotched papers together to hide their secrets.

"My window! window! window!" She pounded her fist on the table. "Ya swore by the bones of a hundred men and took coin."

"The morrow, then."

"Will ya?" She settled back, arms folded, and her lips pursed into a scowl. "If you aren't there... 'od's BODkin!"

"So have me by the screamin' neck."

On the next day it was autumn.

Trees dropped their leaves and feigned death, and everywhere frogs lay wedged in their bogs. The woman pulled dead leaves from around the shoelaces and then she stood on the toe to keep watch.

And watch and watch. And wild silent children circled the shoe until dusk.

The old woman took up her shawl then and her switch and marched into the village and up a crooked street to the cobbler's door. It was open. He was gone. A twisted shoe lay on the floor.

A fat baker with floury ears told her how the cobbler had left with a great pack early that morning and had walked like a man who would never turn back. He sought the Philosopher's Stone.

The old woman's eyes marched to the end of the yellow path to the hilltop where the path met the sky and then dropped down out of the world. She pictured him hobbling along it, and in her picture she saw him crippled, then crippled more.

And so it was that when she grew older than old, and lay beneath quilts, and thought of her story, she didn't know surely if he'd been a lame or a limping man.

And now she could but wish to be kilde with kindnesse, growing feebler there. She could not tell the story that she had to tell. Of how she thought she'd been trapped by her own peculiar goodnesses.

Death began to stir the images in her brain, to set them whirlwinding. She dreamt she'd slept in a common enough house... "Windows! One a penny!" To see all that passed. To see the beggars and the mountains...

As she died inside, the shoe walked away. It walked through grass thick as gods' hair. Through hills that whispered its tales in their dales. To a land that's never heard a footstep in the night.

"Do you die then, mum? Who calls you, mum?"

"When I die, a ghost is born."

"Do you die?"

"So many wings. Inside me."

Then the old woman raised her wrinkled eyelids to shriek with wonder at what she saw.

CYNTHIA CARR lives in Chicago, Illinois.

# THE FEMINIST PRESS: an annotated directory

This directory is current as of October 1974, and lists all the feminist periodicals we know of in the U.S., as well as some English-language periodicals from other countries. Newsletters are not included unless they have a definitely more-than-local scope. We encourage feminist groups to reprint this directory, with credit given to AQ. If you know of additions or corrections, please tell us. --Gina

AIN'T I A WOMAN? Box 1169, Iowa City, Iowa 52240. The lesbian collective that makes up the AIAW staff no longer publishes a newspaper--they are printing provocative pamphlets and booklets at irregular intervals (the latest was a new look at the issue of lesbians and childcare). Contact AIAW for prices and subjects.

AMAZING GRACE Box 6013, Tallahassee, Florida 32304. \$4/yr., \$1/copy. --a new quarterly magazine of poetry, songs, interviews, articles, photography, by Tallahassee women.

AMAZON 2211 E. Kenwood, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53211. \$3/yr., \$10/inst., 35¢/copy. This monthly journal features interviews with Milwaukee women, plus fine poetry and fiction, satire and some local news.

AMAZON QUARTERLY Box 434, W. Somerville, Massachusetts 02144. \$4/yr., \$5/in sealed wrapper or outside U.S., \$6/inst., \$1/copy. --national lesbian feminist magazine with fiction, philosophy, poetry, visual art, reviews, interviews; \$\$ for contributing authors and artists. Also sponsors "Connections" newsletter for isolated sisters.

APHRA Box 893, Ansonia Station, New York City 10023. \$4.50/yr., \$1.25/copy; in Canada and Mexico--\$5/yr., \$1.50/copy; overseas--\$6/yr., \$1.75/copy; inst.--\$7.50/yr. In its 5th year of publication, Aphra is the oldest feminist literary magazine--it shows a distinct bent toward academia and heterosexual (male-identified) values, but does publish some very good (true, validating, woman-centered) fiction, poetry and essays.

AURORA 24 DeBaun Ave., Suffern, New York 10901. \$4/yr., \$8/inst., \$1/copy. --a quarterly journal of fiction, poetry, and a wide variety of thoughtful articles (the latest issue included "Feminism as Anarchism," "Women in Communes," "An Alternative to Therapy," and more).

BLACK MARIA 815 Wrightwood Ave., Chicago, Illinois 60614. \$4.50/yr., \$1.25/copy. Black Maria is publishing again after almost a year of staff reorganization--each issue has short stories, poetry,

and interviews and/or articles pointing out directions the women's movement is taking.

CHOMO-URI 506 Goodell Hall, University of Mass., Amherst, MA 01002. \$4/3 issues, \$1.50/copy. --a new magazine of women's writing and visual art, published by the Feminist Arts Program of Everywoman's Center.

COUNTRY WOMEN Box 51, Albion, California 95410. \$4/yr. (6 issues), \$7/inst., 75¢/copy. Each issue of this fine magazine has articles, personal views and experiences, photographs and letters, organized around a theme (recent ones have been Older Women, Spirituality, Structures, The Women's Movement in the Country, Children's Liberation)--along with a large section of practical information (bee-keeping, barn-building, self-defense, tips on chicken feed and goats, etc.)

DESPERATE LIVING Box 7124, Baltimore, Maryland 21218. \$3/6 issues in plain wrapper. --a newsletter published by Baltimore lesbians.

DETROIT WOMEN'S PRESS Box 27004, Detroit, Michigan 48227. \$4/yr., 25¢/copy. --a monthly newspaper with sketchy news coverage, lots of personal views and reviews, and interesting interviews with community women (a recent issue had one interview with a local midwife and one with a Detroit woman wrestler). Lesbians don't seem to exist in this publication.

DISTAFF Box 15639, New Orleans, Louisiana 70175. \$3/yr. Distaff is a monthly paper providing thorough coverage of women in Louisiana politics, women's health issues and information on the women's movement in the South. One article each issue is printed in Spanish.

FEMINIST ART JOURNAL 41 Montgomery Place, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11215. \$4/yr., \$5/inst., \$1/copy. The Feminist Art Journal is a valuable resource in bringing to print the lives of many unknown women artists--coverage of current events, though, tends to be reaction to the male art establishment more than attention to women's alternative structures.

FEMINIST STUDIES 417 Riverside Dr., New York City 10025. \$6/yr. --a quarterly journal of academic papers relating to feminism.

FOCUS 419 Boylston St., Rm. 406, Boston, Massachusetts 02116. --news and poetry published monthly by Boston Daughters of Bilitis.

GRAVIDA Box 76, Hartsdale, New York 10530. \$3/yr., \$5/2 yrs. --a quarterly poetry magazine published by the Women's Poetry Collective of Westchester County, N.Y.

HER-SELF 225 E. Liberty St., Suite 200, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48108. \$5/yr., \$10/inst. --a monthly newspaper for Ann Arbor area women.

LAVENDER WOMAN Box 60206, Chicago, Illinois 60660. \$4/yr. (6 is-

sues), \$8/inst., 65¢/copy. Lavender Woman is a lesbian/feminist newspaper, now in its 3rd year, growing out of Chicago but now including all the Midwest in its scope. Each issue contains 1st-hand reports on midwest lesbian events, news and comments on national issues as well as Chicago information, music and book reviews, poetry.

LESBIAN CONNECTION c/o Ambitious Amazons, Box 811, E. Lansing, MI 48823. Free subscriptions. --a new continent-wide newsletter, for, by and about lesbians, Lesbian Connection promises to provide a great improvement to the grapevine--send your news and ideas.

THE LESBIAN TIDE 373 N. Western, Rm. 202, Los Angeles, CA 90004 \$7.50/yr., \$10/inst., 65¢/copy. --monthly magazine with news and views of lesbians in the Los Angeles area, and some national news as well--also poetry, occasional fiction, humor.

LESBIAN VISIONS c/o the Lesbian Collective, Box 8265, Stanford, California 94305. Free. --Palo Alto area lesbian newsletter.

LIBERA Eshleman Hall, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720. \$1.50/copy--no subscriptions. --an irregularly published journal of women's writing and art.

MAJORITY REPORT 74 Grove St., New York City 10014. \$5/yr., 25¢/copy. --a bi-weekly newspaper primarily covering events and news of interest to N.Y.C. area women.

MARIN WOMEN'S NEWS JOURNAL Box 1412, San Rafael, CA 94902. \$4/yr. --a monthly offering of news, reviews, etc. by Marin County women--with a decidedly heterosexual emphasis.

MEDIA REPORT TO WOMEN 3306 Ross Pl. NW, Washington, D.C. 20008. \$10/yr., \$15/yr. for men and inst. --a monthly newsletter of "what women are doing and thinking about the communications media" --focuses more often on women in male-controlled media than on women's alternatives.

MOMMA Box 567, Venice, California 90291. \$3/yr., \$4/inst. --a monthly newspaper for single mothers--heterosexual orientation.

OFF OUR BACKS 1724 20th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20009. \$6/yr., \$7/Canada, \$13/overseas, \$15/inst., 45¢/copy. One of the oldest feminist newspapers still publishing, off our backs provides thorough and honest coverage of national feminist issues and events--a good example of the beginnings of a distinctly feminist journalism.

PAID MY DUES c/o Woman's Soul Publishing, Inc., Box 5476, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53211. \$4/yr. in U.S., \$4.50/beyond. --a quarterly magazine of songs, musical herstory, news and articles on women in music.

PLEXUS Box 3119, S. Berkeley Station, Berkeley, CA 94703. \$5/yr., \$2.50/6 months, 50¢/copy. This Bay Area newspaper carries a fine

cultural-political blend of news, reviews, articles, poetry--gives an accurate and exciting sense of the many alternative structures--music, businesses, healing arts, etc.--that women in Northern California are developing.

PRIME TIME 232 E. 6th St., Apt. 5C, New York City 10003. \$5/12 issues, 50¢/copy. --monthly newspaper by and for older women.

QUEST Box 8843, Washington, D.C. 20003. \$7/yr., \$12/inst., \$8/Canada and Mexico, \$10/overseas, \$2/copy. --a new quarterly journal of political analysis; emphasizes the (questionable) value of building formal structures and hierarchies, and official ideological positions, within the women's movement.

THE SECOND WAVE Box 344, Cambridge A, Cambridge, Mass. 02139. \$3/yr., add 50¢ outside U.S. and \$4.50 airmail overseas, \$1/copy. The Second Wave publishes consistently intriguing and informative topical articles, as well as fiction and poetry, for a national audience. It's an especially good magazine for women just coming to feminism as it gives an overview of general feminist issues.

SISTER Box 597, Venice, California 90291. \$5/yr., \$12/inst., 35¢/copy. Sister newspaper is published monthly by the Los Angeles Women's Center, and includes national as well as local news of the women's movement, reviews and general articles, most written with awareness of lesbianism as an integral part of feminism.

SISTERS 1005 Market St., Suite 402, San Francisco, CA 94101. \$5/yr., 50¢/copy. Sisters is the monthly magazine of San Francisco Daughters of Bilitis. They print articles, poetry and reviews by their members and other area women, as well as some local news and a calendar of events.

SO'S YOUR OLD LADY c/o Lesbian Resource Center, 710 W. 22nd St., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55405. \$4.50/yr., 75¢/copy. --poetry and commentary by Minneapolis lesbians.

THE SPOKESWOMAN 5464 S. Shore Dr., Chicago, Illinois 60615. \$7/yr., \$12/inst. --monthly newsletter focused mainly on national legislative issues and opportunities for women in business.

THE SPORTSWOMAN Box 7771, Long Beach, California 90807. \$3/yr. --quarterly magazine about women athletes.

THIRTEENTH MOON Writing Organization for Women, Rm. 152, Finley Hall, City College of N.Y., 138th St. and Convent Ave., New York City 10031. \$2.50/yr., \$3/foreign, \$1.25/copy. "13th Moon is a women's literary magazine publishing work by women--whoever and whatever those women choose to be. We hope that by making conscious the special relationship women have to themselves and to the world we will discover literature that is unique, that is female, that is ours." --embissert, editor.

TRIPLE JEOPARDY from Third World Women's Alliance, 26 W. 20th St., New York City 10011. \$3.50/yr., \$8/inst., \$2.50 additional out-

side U.S., 30¢/copy. --a bi-monthly paper with news by and about Third World women's struggles around the world--some articles in Spanish.

UNION W.A.G.E. 2137 Oregon St., Berkely, CA 94705. \$2/yr., \$5/inst., 25¢/copy. --monthly newspaper of Union Women's Alliance to Gain Equality.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN PAPERS IN WOMEN'S STUDIES Women's Studies Program, 1058 LSA Building, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48104. \$8/yr., \$15/inst., \$2.25/copy. --a quarterly selection (about 175 pages) of academic papers by women and about feminism, in areas from sociology to herstory to science to art.

UP FROM UNDER 339 Lafayette St., New York City 10012. \$3/5 issues, \$5/inst., 60¢/copy. --a quarterly magazine of practical articles, letters and personal accounts of work, poverty, racism, in women's lives.

US (UNITED SISTERS) 4213 W. Bay Ave., Tampa, Florida 33616. Us has changed from a monthly magazine format to an irregularly timed variety of publications. For 1974 they offer The Odyssey of Katinou Kalokovich, a novel by Natalie Petesch (\$3.95), The Best of Us, a collection of poetry (\$1.50), "Motherhood, a Tribute and an Expose" (75¢), and "Rape, Guilt, and the American Way" (\$1). United Sisters also runs a typesetting service.

WOMAN BECOMING 6664 Woodwell St., Pittsburgh, Penn. 15217. \$1.25/copy. --a semi-annual feminist literary journal with poetry, fiction, drawings, occasional non-fiction, by women of Pittsburgh.

WOMANSPiRiT Box 263, Wolf Creek, Oregon 97497. \$6/yr., \$7/Canada, \$10/overseas and inst., \$2/copy. WomanSpirit is a new quarterly magazine of women's spiritual explorations. The 1st issue (Fall Equinox 1974) contains poems, stories, personal accounts, journals, letters, drawings and visions from more than 40 women.

WOMEN: A JOURNAL OF LIBERATION 3028 Greenmount Ave., Baltimore, Maryland 21218. \$4/4 issues, \$6/Canada, \$7/overseas, \$10/inst., \$1.25/copy. One of the oldest feminist magazines, Women: a Journal has lost some momentum and is currently publishing at a rate of a new issue every 6 to 10 months. Each issue has a theme, the most recent one being "International Women" (vol.3 #4). The current issue presents women in different parts of the world in the context of national liberation struggles rather than in the context of a feminist movement--a direction that's followed every issue.

WOMEN AND FILM Box 4501, Berkeley, CA 94704. \$3/yr., \$5.50/inst., \$3.50/yr. outside U.S., \$6/inst. outside U.S. --seldom published (the last 2 issues have been double ones, \$1.50 each) but packed full when it does appear with interviews, criticism, analysis and reviews on feminist films and filmmakers throughout the world. (Some editors and contributing authors are men.)

WOMEN'S FREE EXPRESS 1929 21st Ave. S., Nashville, Tennessee 37212.

\$5/12 issues, 50¢/copy. Each issue of this magazine has reviews, poems and articles around a theme (the August-September issue's was "Women and Religion") as well as lots of information for women in the Nashville area.

WOMEN'S PRESS Box 562, Eugene, Oregon 97401, \$3/yr., \$3.50/Canada, \$4/other foreign, \$7/inst., 25¢/copy. --news of women's events and concerns in Eugene and the Northwest, along with poetry, reviews, personal experiences, interviews, etc., every month. Momma, a novel by Alta, is carried in the paper serially (now in its 7th installment).

WOMEN STUDIES ABSTRACTS Box 1, Rush, N.Y. 14543. \$7/yr., \$12/inst., \$3/copy. --a quarterly compilation of abstracts of articles about women from journals of history, psychology, sociology, etc. and an occasional feminist publication--a useful resource for libraries.

WOMEN'S STUDIES NEWSLETTER from The Feminist Press, Box 334, Old Westbury, N.Y. 11568. \$5/yr. --quarterly newsletter of current developments in women's studies courses and programs.

WOMEN WRITING c/o Polly Joan, Dandelion Hill, Newfield, N.Y. 14867. Women Writing is a newsletter grown out of the 1st National Women's Poetry Festival held this spring in Amherst, Mass. Though still in planning now, the newsletter is meant to become a national "clearinghouse of support and information for women who are writing."

#### ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PERIODICALS OUTSIDE THE U.S.:

BROADSHEET 48 St. Andrews Rd., Epsom, Auckland 3, New Zealand. \$4/yr. --monthly feminist magazine.

THE CIRCLE Box 427, Waterloo Quay, Wellington, New Zealand. \$4/yr. --lesbian/feminist magazine.

THE OTHER WOMAN Box 928, Station Q, Toronto 7, Ontario, Canada. \$2/yr., \$3/U.S., \$10/inst., \$12/U.S. inst. --bi-monthly feminist newspaper.

REFRACTORY GIRL 25 Alberta St., Sydney, New South Wales 2001, Australia. \$3.50/yr. overseas, \$7/overseas air mail. --feminist quarterly.

SHREW 38 Earlham St., London, W.C. 2, England. --newspaper.

VASHTI'S VOICE 16 Little La Trobe St., Melbourne 3000, Victoria, Australia. \$2/yr. --bi-monthly newspaper.

WOMEN CAN. 804 Richards, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. \$3/yr., \$3.50/U.S. (in Canadian funds), \$4/overseas, \$10/inst. --Canada's oldest feminist newspaper (formerly called The Pedestal).

WOMEN'S LIBERATION REVIEW 14 Argyll Mansions, London, W.14, Eng. --erratically published journal.

## HOW TO MAKE A MAGAZINE

PART THREE=====BY LAUREL

In the first 2 parts of this article we've shown how to typeset, lay out, and print your own magazine, book, or newspaper. All that remains is how to distribute it. There are generally 5 major outlets: 1)subscriptions or single issues sent to individuals, 2)library and other institutional orders, 3) bookstores, 4)wholesale distributors, 5)feminist distributors.

Subscriptions: To build up your subscription list you'll have to advertise either by exchanging free ads with other magazines and newspapers or by purchasing space. Off Our Backs, Majority Report, and, of course, Ms. reach a larger audience than the other women's publications and are usually the best places for ads.

As the subs roll in you'll want to set up an efficient system so you can tell when they have expired and track down change of addresses. Before we changed over to a computer system, we typed the subscription information on carbon set addressing labels (4 or 5 copy sets are available.) Usually it's best to say with what volume and what issue the sub expires (Vol.1, issue 4 for example) since you may get behind sometime and a date might be confusing. We clipped our sub labels to 3 x 5 cards and filed them under states, alphabetically by last name. Eventually, when you have enough, you'll want to file by zip code order (if you mail 2nd or 3rd class).

The post office will give you booklets on how to wrap, address, label, and bundle the books for mailing. Be sure to apply for 2nd class status--it may take a year for it to come through, but it saves tremendously on postage. Meanwhile, you can use either special 4th class book rate or 3rd class, depending on the weight of your publication. The PO is an ironclad bureaucracy. Save yourself a lot of grief by doing everything exactly as they specify...and remember the tolerance level of the gentry in your town when you design the cover. AQ has not been censored in Oakland or Boston, but you may have problems in a small town.

Library subscriptions are a substantial source of income because there are so many libraries and because they usually renew automatically. Try college and university libraries and major city's public libraries remembering to address your inquiry to serials or periodicals as the case may be. Most women's magazines charge an institutional rate higher than regular subscriptions.

Bookstores: Building a bookstore list takes time. Try to get lists of likely bookstores from other women's, gay, radical publications, and visit the stores in person whenever possible. Almost all our bookstores work on consignment, i.e. we send the books and wait till they're sold to get paid for them. The bookstores can return unsold copies for full credit. (We give a 25% discount, 75¢ to us and 25¢ to them, but some stores demand a 40% standard large-publisher discount.)

Non-payers will always crop up. Since most women's publications have similar bookstore outlets, we can work together to blacklist a store until it pays. At the moment we have only one definite candidate: we're asking that our sisters not buy anything at Oscar Wilde Bookstore in New York City until they've paid all the

women's publications they owe, and particularly the \$155 they've owed us for almost a year.

Wholesale distributors usually aren't interested in small press ventures, but there are a few who are trying to be alternatives. Write women's publications around the country for the addresses. Our cut with these folks doesn't even break even (50¢ to them and 50¢ to us) but more women see the magazines and some may subscribe.

Feminist distributors: We long for the day when there will be a widespread women's distribution system. There is First Things First, a national fe-mail order house, and there are a few local networks, but this fantastic opportunity to both create jobs for women and spread women's culture has not been explored very thoroughly to date. Anyone seriously interested in this should contact us for further details.

In addition to distribution there will be paper work similar to any small business. You'll have to buy city (county, state) licenses and set up your bookkeeping to meet IRS approval. Consult a feminist lawyer about the advantages of incorporation, non-profit status, and the best ways to get around fattening this country's "defense" budget. Get whatever pamphlets you can on starting a small business from the small business administration (or ask your librarian). Remember to check with other women's groups in your area: you may be able to "use" their non-profit status to funnel a grant or to pull off a mailing using their permit. Don't forget that N.O.W. and the more conservative women's rights organizations can be very helpful too since they may know more about "the system" than our more radical sisters.

We'll be happy to answer specific questions about publishing a women's magazine if you'll send us a stamped self-addressed envelope. Good luck, and let us know how your venture goes so we can include yours in our next directory of women's publications.



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