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WOMEN  
POEMS  
LOVE  
POEMS



susan  
sherman

drawings  
MARIA  
LUISA SEÑORET



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*women women surround me  
images of women their faces  
I who for years pretended them away  
pretended away their names their faces  
myself what I am pretended it away*







WOMEN POEMS  
LOVE POEMS

SUSAN  
SHERMAN

drawings by  
maría luisa  
señoret

out & out books





A POEM UPON AWAKENING

Can you understand

what is in my heart

even in this season

when winter frosts the air

There is no death in love only a  
waiting I have heard of an image  
no one can touch & not  
be warmed

I have known this image as night before sleep

How sharp  
How fair

grasping the covers

waiting

Asleep we see only echoes

There is no dream

but the one

that is lived

I have seen this image upon awakening  
I have heard its call

Softer than all winters

These poems appeared in:

*IKON, The Wormwood Review, Intrepid, El Corno Emplumado,  
Light, The Eastside Scene.*

SECOND EDITION

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476 Second Street  
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11215

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## POEM TO A WORD UNSPOKEN

You pull me toward you  
You fill me My body reaching  
toward yours

So full of you

I cannot breathe

It is the best part of us that loves Yet we love with  
our whole selves The night filled with sleep

Only once I touched my fear Named it To this I dedicate  
my poem To this And to you Remarkable to me as my own  
hands As I touch them Recognize them as mine

Would I destroy my tongue Pull the lips from my mouth  
This presence once existing ordering the rest  
My world

The answer is here It comes  
silently Like a word never  
spoken

Hanging suspended

A small green thing

## CHATTER

Almost legendary your name has become  
Heavy and embroidered with detail  
Many faceted Like a diamond

Where are you I remember touching you  
Looking into your face What was  
your name How faint it seems  
How distant I could touch it  
But my ears seem troubled  
What is it they do not wish to hear

Like a diamond No Not quite like  
that I reach out my hand Breathe in  
Stamp my foot Is there nothing  
I can do

So I lost As I suppose I always knew  
I would As one knows those things  
To forget for a moment And fall

Knowing birth How much must one also know  
of pain These hours are mine Not yours  
These hours As we are always and never  
alone

In every doorway you are behind me  
And always before me as I move Always  
toward you In every word In everything  
I touch as mine

And so I set my hands upon these words These  
strange and heavy words This chatter And so  
I breathe in Stamp my foot Heavy and  
embroidered Many faceted

Except the desire Except the love





## JOURNEY

Entering The house is pale A stillness  
Many times I have walked in this strange

land I see you Your presence beside me  
You define the length of me Like the windows

of my house you open the world to me  
My thoughts center on you The love

of you Your hands your arms the periphery  
of my being Holding you

Somewhere in this love That which can grow  
and nourish and be borne



A POEM

for you alone  
built word upon word  
like years  
like time people share  
together  
deepening  
growing into meaning  
word  
upon word  
meaning  
upon meaning  
for you alone a poem

I know your need for form  
for things to be  
concrete  
the way grass moves & light  
the borders  
of your shoes  
the mountains  
of your home  
all these things  
a kind of boundary  
a definition  
a name

if I could offer you the salt taste  
of the sea  
if I could turn your home  
into a glance  
a gesture  
of the eyes  
if I could look at you as home  
speak to you as sea

there is nothing on this earth  
that does not change  
that does not deepen or drift  
away

there is nothing on this earth  
more concrete  
than this feeling  
I have  
now  
for you  
nothing  
is more  
real



LOVE POEM 12/16/71

if I could hold you  
if I could wake up in the morning  
and see your face  
if I could touch you  
if I could see you as you go to sleep  
if I could feel you close  
beside me if I could reach out to you  
touch you in my need

time drifts endlessly like water  
like this afternoon  
the breeze as it drifts  
through my window  
surrounds me as thoughts of you  
as breath of you  
as I see you  
as I wait for you  
the inevitability of you  
as I am surrounded by you  
by my love of you  
as I waken into life

my words in silence  
my love in silence  
the quiet of the afternoon  
the curve of your face  
your features the way  
you talk the way you drift  
in my thoughts endlessly  
like time

if you were to ask me what defines me  
how I place myself in the world  
I would say this poem  
is the center of it is the core  
that I reach toward the world  
as I reach toward you  
as one who wants to reach out  
endlessly who wants to open out  
endlessly who wants to feel  
endlessly that question  
that is our lives





## ILLUSION

Figures move through the heat  
You see my knuckles  
at the edge  
of each shadow

Empty  
The wind flakes night in your palms

Empty  
Your bed too hard  
for your sorrow

You touch the pavement  
press its softness  
to your eyelids

I too sit  
watching shadows

## END-POEM

Dry silk is the color of winter  
One barely shattered petal Here in my  
hands How your face feels As I stroke it  
Hold it gently close to mine The feeling of  
winter And brown As I hold it Like what  
a hundred words fail at The street as  
cold dark form The heaviness of  
rain How it is in front of me Inside  
me How things shouldn't be like they  
But they are

Abundance forms the poem But what that is  
is not our choice I would rather leave  
once than leave a hundred times I would rather  
leave once and have it done it Proud  
and even utterly wrong

## WORDS

I am trapped  
by words  
The ones I speak  
The ones I never say  
My head stuffed full of dreams  
My body of memories  
I flounder  
between two worlds  
The future and the past

I wanted to write a poem  
more full of passion more full  
of love  
than any  
I have ever  
written

How does one measure years  
What standard does one use  
to weight them

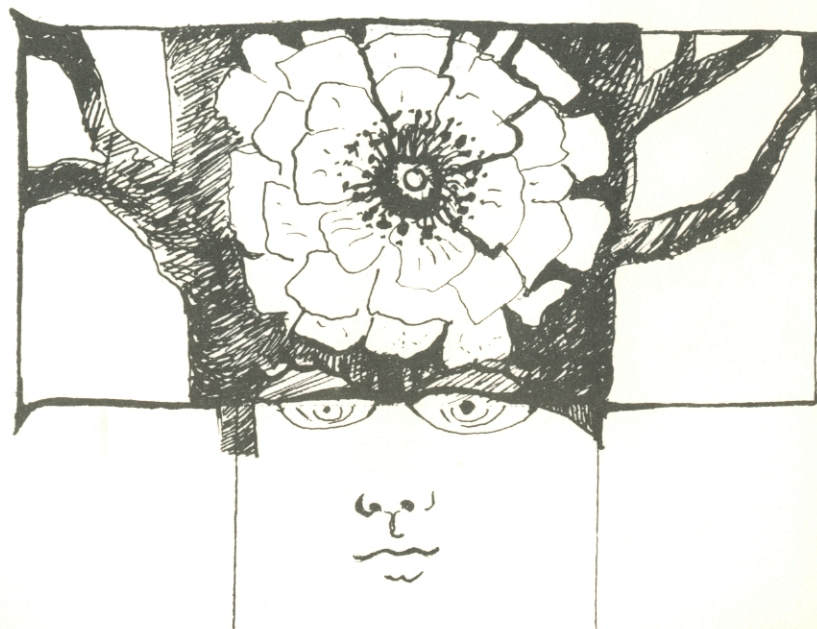
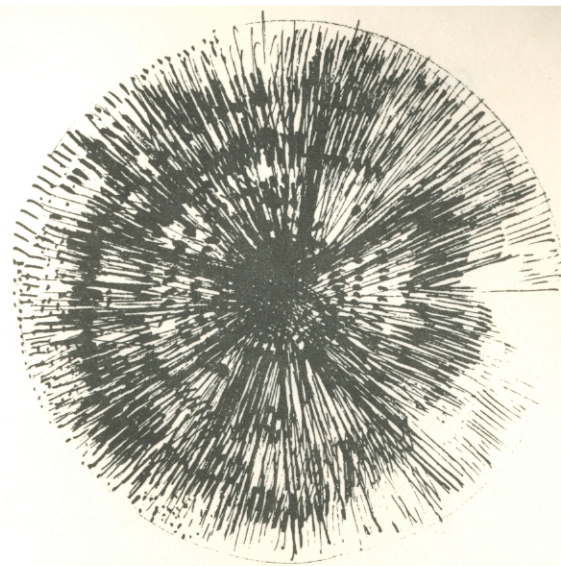
I am trapped  
by time  
It circles my wrists  
guides  
my steps

I live in the shadow of my words  
They measure the moments  
of my life

What part in all this do you have  
What part in all this do I  
To understand that question

to hold it  
open  
to hold it  
open

until finding it  
we enter  
free





## GIFT

Take these things Your hands  
That they once touched  
my flesh  
Take these things Your hands  
That they once were  
mine

Take these things Your words  
That they touched  
my flesh  
That they once were  
mine

Where are we now  
Separated by so much  
Words hands and flesh  
dismembered  
by a gift

Take this thing Your flesh  
That it once touched  
mine

Take them These things  
That always bore the name  
of gift

## TO CHOOSE THIS

This solitude To leave you Your body  
To leave you To turn toward this world  
This thing that confronts me  
like an open wound

I would hide myself in the hollows of your flesh  
In that precise place where the two bones meet  
Like two rivers Like branches of water forming  
a vast delta In that precise hollow of your  
flesh

Where was it you went I could not follow you  
into that country One arm drawn tight  
across an open plain

*My knuckles are heavy  
Before my eyes there is only space  
I can no longer speak*

In your sleep you call my name How it sounds as you  
form the words How it sounds as I know my own name  
through your lips

A mockery to write of it To speak And yet it must  
be spoken As if with words we could rip open  
the levels of our flesh

She is who is Who chooses being Who chooses  
to choose

## THE MEETING

1  
To touch your face  
To touch your arms  
To touch your waist  
To touch your thighs

To touch your sex

To hold it soft against my cheek  
To breathe it slow against my lips  
To hold you close against my breast

My love

2  
Old as the woman moaning songs  
from her chill staccato walls  
Old as that The touch between us  
The chant filtering through coarse  
night sounds The touch between us

Can I name you The words that lie against  
me Soft against the night Can I call you  
The night itself close upon my thighs

To hold you near  
To touch your lips  
To hold you close as my own breath

3  
Touched so deeply that tears come  
unnoticed And without pain That once  
were central And only pain

It is here between us Not ourselves  
But what is here In this space

Touched so deeply that love comes  
unnoticed And without pain That once  
was central And only pain

4  
Rain glides in two dimensions The window  
holding it to my face As I hold you As I  
place my knuckles to your forehead Moving from  
my touch

The vision two dimensions The surface  
rigid As we reach toward it To find it  
different But still there cool under  
our touch

5  
I would hold you gently  
Throw myself against you as  
the rain Talk to you of  
small things As you would  
touch a child Or yourself  
small and vulnerable to even  
the slightest breath

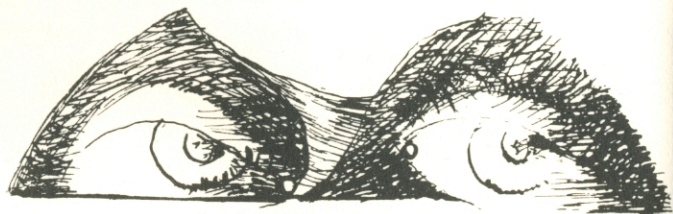
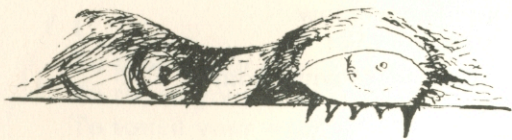
6  
No longer afraid The touch of you deeper  
than any fear Deeper than your naked form  
The single syllable of your name

As I touch your body  
As I touch the earth  
As I touch this paper  
As I touch each word

It is everywhere This night and the  
outline of our form As we are together  
Without boundary Without dimension

As I touch the depth of you  
My love





### THREE MOMENTS

1

Since you have gone  
my heart has become no larger  
than a touch My days are as  
moments I peer cautiously  
through the door  
I see only the sun

It is hard this waiting  
Since you have gone

2

Because I can no longer hold you  
Because your words cannot contain my name  
Because you are far away forever from me  
Because other voices now fall on my ears

Do you suppose  
you are less to me than before

3

Where has the summer gone?  
*It has faded into the clouds*

Where has the night gone?  
*It has dissolved into the trees*

Where has my lover gone?  
*Hidden Hidden behind the flower  
of the moon*



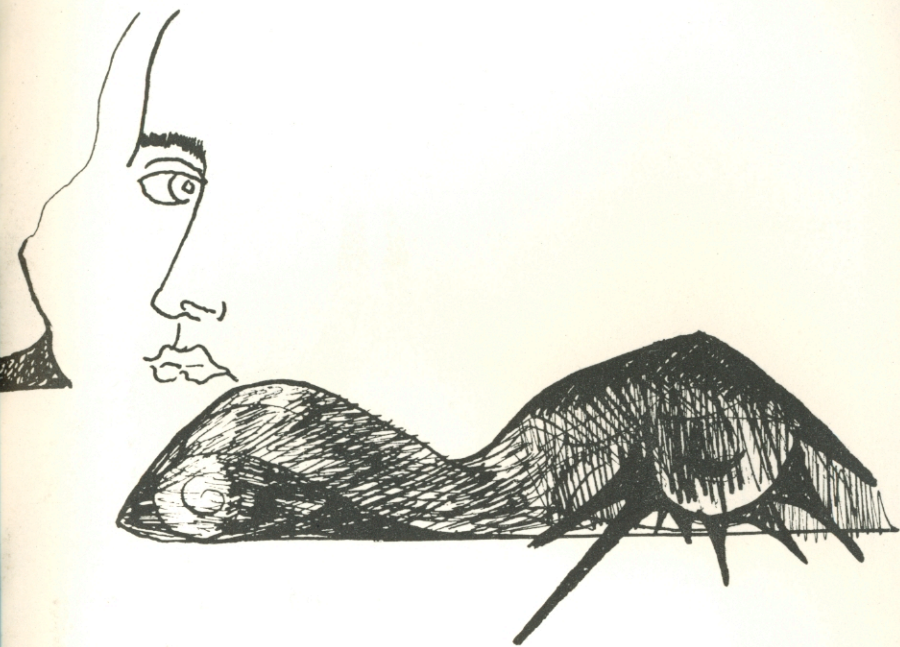
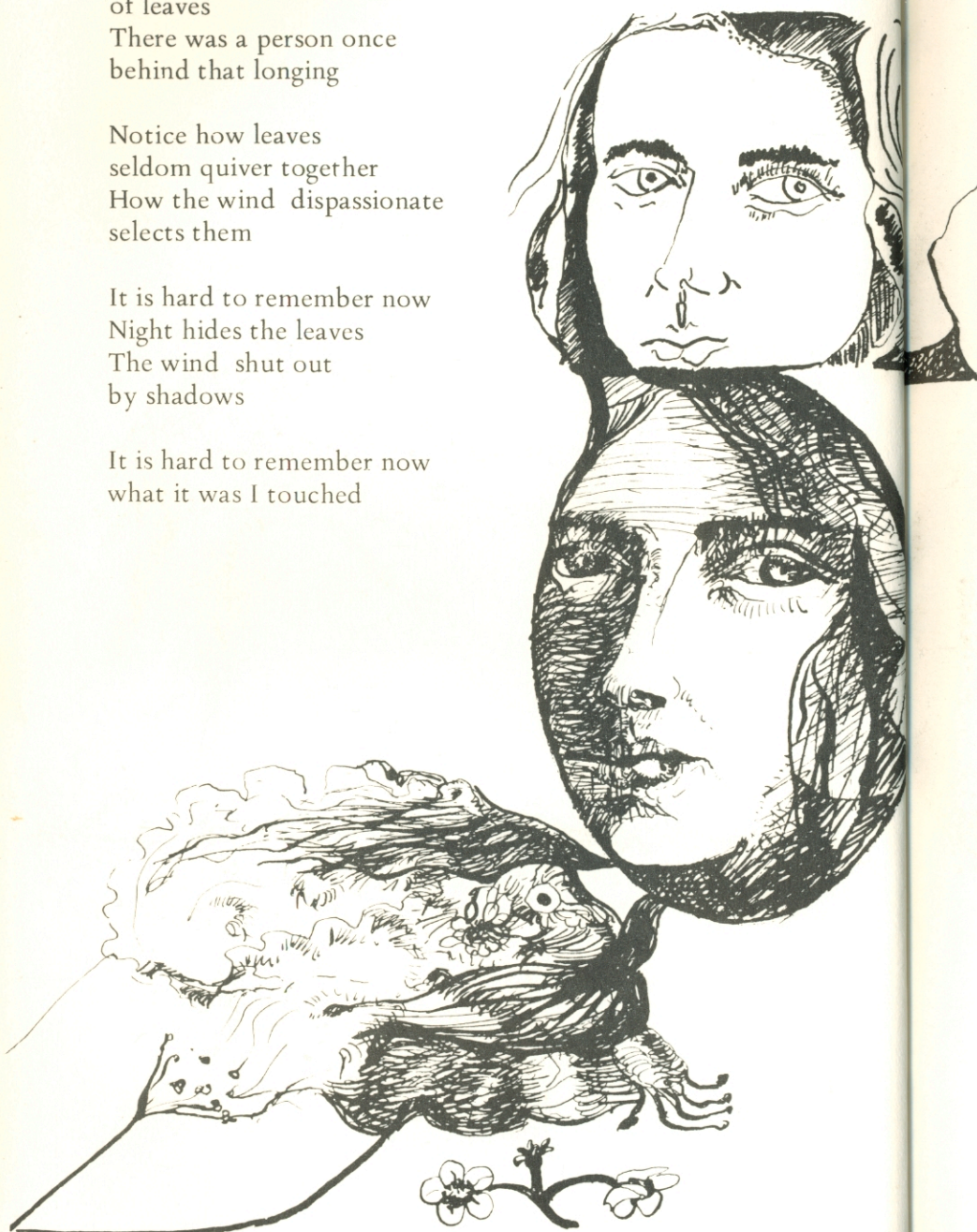
## RETURN

It is hard to remember  
what it was I touched  
Your body the faintness  
of leaves  
There was a person once  
behind that longing

Notice how leaves  
seldom quiver together  
How the wind dispassionate  
selects them

It is hard to remember now  
Night hides the leaves  
The wind shut out  
by shadows

It is hard to remember now  
what it was I touched





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SUSAN SHERMAN's work has been published in many magazines and anthologies including *Poetry*, *The Nation*, *El Corno Emplumado*, *Sinister Wisdom*, *13th Moon*, *Amazon Poetry* and *The Eastside Scene*. Besides poetry, she has written articles and reviews and nine of her plays have been produced. From 1968-69, she edited IKON, a radical magazine of the arts. Her latest collection, *With Anger/With Love: Selections, Poems & Prose (1963-1972)* was published by Mulch Press. She is presently completing a new collection of poetry under a CAPS grant for 1976-77 and is working on a non-fiction book, *Creativity and Change*.

MARIA LUISA SENORET, a Chilean artist, was born in Vina del Mar. She studied at the University of Chile in Santiago, at the School of Fine Arts in Paris and Florence, and at the Otis Art Institute of Los Angeles. Her work has been exhibited in Chile, Brazil, Puerto Rico, Los Angeles and Canada. From 1967-69, she was in charge of expositions and cultural activities of the National Museum of Fine Arts in Santiago. She also worked at the Museum of Contemporary Arts and the Museum of Solidarity. In 1973, she emigrated to Canada where she now teaches and is director of the Taller Latino-Americano in Montreal.

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