

# sinister wisdom 51







# Sinister Wisdom 51

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*Sinister Wisdom* is a multi-cultural, multi-class, born-womon lesbian space. We seek to open, consider and advance the exploration of community issues. *Sinister Wisdom* recognizes the power of language to reflect our diverse experiences and to enhance our ability to develop critical judgment, as lesbians evaluating our communities and our world.

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 Notes for a Magazine

There's a frame of mind in which I usually write these editor's notes — serious, reflective, engaged with the theme of the issue, encouraging — that I can't seem to find this time.

Partly it's that this is an open theme issue and the work in it varies. Dykes explore identity, politics, violence, family, love, betrayal, creativity, humor. What they have in common is the willingness, the willfulness, to create their own spaces.

Dyke willfulness. We will ourselves into being and we create whatever we have.

But partly it's that lately willfulness isn't quite enough. *Sinister Wisdom* doesn't have enough money, time, space, equipment and energy — and these notes end with a plea for your support. All our lesbian communities don't have enough. Especially we don't have enough of what might give us history, continuity, a sense of community. Since we don't have enough within our individual communities (friendship and political circles), we don't have enough to build the bridges between them. No matter how good our intentions, we tend to come at our work with a sense of scarcity. And why not? Although we know there are enough material resources in the world for everyone, we know we'll never see that redistribution of wealth in our lifetimes.

Sometimes I feel we're (*Sinister Wisdom* in particular, but this metaphor extends) stuck on a river, in a small boat without oars. We're paddling with our hands while on one side of us many dykes in smaller boats have capsized and on the other a few dykes are zipping around in flashy powerboats. But we're too busy — with our hands in the water trying not to get carried away with the current — to either extend towards the dykes who can't swim or flag down the cruisers. Or else we're arguing about how many more dykes our boat can handle and whether or not it's ours to hold the dykes in bigger boats responsible, and if so, how —

I'm tired of working so hard to stay in the same place. Of listening to dykes in their 20's being startled if (not when, but if) they find out that we've been developing lesbian analyses about



class and race since the late '60s. Of finding out by chance that lesbians struggled over these same issues in the Women's Trade Union League in 1905. I'm discouraged by what currently passes as "lesbian culture": slickness, the embrace of beer ads and drag queens, k.d. play-acting sex with a straight model. All this happening while violence against women escalates every day.

Violence, struggling to survive and media circuses keep us distracted, shut down, guarded. Living constantly on guard destroys passion, spontaneity, generosity of spirit. Without passion, our commitments to radical change become obligatory scut-work. In the bleakest moments, it's possible to imagine we're caught in a Sisyphean nightmare, stuffing envelopes endlessly for a revolution that will not come.

But suppose those envelopes go out and touch womyn's lives? Suppose you got a mysterious envelope and when you opened it, hope and courage filled the room? Writing that reminded me of a letter we got a few weeks ago from Ada Joyce:

"I recently received two of your publications...It is hard for me to describe the effect they had on me. Let me explain something. I am a 41 year old Lesbian in the Mississippi prison system. Also I am a Black Lesbian. As you know different governing systems in Mississippi are as if we're in Medieval Times. And life as a 'Resistor' among other things makes life's struggles even harder.

1970, the year of the Jackson State massacre, my freshman year, was my first view of human injustice. Since then I decided to devote myself to the struggle of human rights. Scars from billie clubs, false charges etc. will never let me forget who I am. I've chosen not to let anything deter my determination to make a difference. In here and certainly not when I am released.

I must inform you that if you've touched anyone's life it's mine. Massive loneliness that has been embedded in me for years seems to have eased. And just your mere existence is a relief. The more I read, the more I felt alive."

When I started writing these notes I was discouraged and, with Ada's help, I seem to have written myself out of it. All I have



to fight with, still, are words. Words I hope will reach you. I keep working because I believe that the possibility of lesbian community is built on self-expression. We need to show ourselves to each other, to keep showing who we are. We demand recognition, respect, thoughtful interaction. Check out, for instance, the call for solidarity with the lesbians of ex-Yugoslavia, on page 114.

But if words are going to have this community-building effect — your words, the words of the dykes you're longing to read — they have to have a place to get published.

This place, *Sinister Wisdom*, is in danger of closing down. One of the things we *must* have in order to survive is a separate office. We've been advertising for inexpensive (\$150 a month) office space for over a year and haven't found anything. That means we will have to find a way to pay more. That means we need to know if you, our readers, want us to continue — and if you do, we are, literally, desperate for your help.

We need dykes to take on promotion for *Sinister Wisdom* — to talk it up, to get new subscriptions. If every dyke who reads *Sinister Wisdom* got two of her friends to subscribe, we'd almost double our annual income. If a quarter of the lesbians who go to music festivals every year subscribed, we could pay for office help. We have over 80 womyn in prison on our mailing list who receive free subscriptions worth \$1500 a year — if you can, send a couple dollars extra, or a whole subscription, to cover that cost. We need dykes who can write grants and fundraise, and we need those of you who can to make cash donations.\* Without new energy, space and money, it's unlikely we can survive longer than another year. If you can distribute subscription fliers, or want other ideas for local fundraisers or subscription drives, contact us at our post office box.

We need you to remember *Sinister Wisdom* as a resource in your life. Work with us, think with us, create with us.

Thanks.

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\* *Sinister Wisdom* is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization and your donations are tax-deductible, if you itemize.



## Upcoming Issues

**#54 Allies:** We say we're a community dedicated to changing conditions and attitudes around race, class, age, ability, size, appearance. As allies, how are we making that happen? Out in April, 1994.

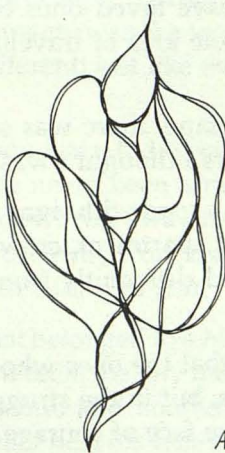
**#53 Old Lesbians/Dykes:** The over-sixty-years-old guest editors invite lesbians born before 1935 to contribute to a special issue by and about old lesbians/dykes. We use the term "old" to demystify the stereotypical images bred by our youth oriented society. We are not only society's mothers and grandmothers. We are questioning, still developing women from 60 upward, creating new images. Old ain't what it used to be! And never was. We want this issue to be a voice for old lesbians in all our variety.

What do old lesbians look like? We differ greatly because of class, race, ethnicity, dis/ability and even date of birth. How do these factors influence our current lives? How do we deal with loss? What about anger, bitterness, resentment between us? Does privilege separate us? Differences in life-long and late-life lesbian experience? Out or closeted? How do we create and live in community? Who are our allies? What are our passions, concerns, plans, ideas, joys?

We welcome personal histories going back in time and are particularly interested in submissions reflecting our present lives and future expectations. All kinds of writing and art work are called for, but no submissions from women born after 1935 will be accepted for this issue. Whether or not you have something to share, please pass this information on to every old lesbian you know. If accepted, a piece of writing may be printed without the author's name by contacting the editors. For more information, call 415-585-0666 (message). **Deadline: February 1, 1994.**

**#54 Lesbians and Religion** (or: fuck Xmas), to be edited by lesbians raised in other than christian cultures, all dykes invited to contribute. In the americas, we live in primarily christian countries. But many of us grew up in muslim, buddhist, hindu, jewish,

native, atheist or other belief systems. We want to explore what happens when belief systems conflict and what those conflicts mean to our sense(s) of community (that is, analysis of being submerged/oppressed by christian assumptions and how we carry that submersion or rebellion against oppression into daily dyke life). There are questions to ask, and be asked by, lesbians who are reclaiming their cultural roots in santería, yoruban traditions or the goddess/pagan religions of europe. And then there are issues of cultural appropriation: if, for instance, raised-christian dykes do sweat lodge rituals or raised-jewish dykes take up buddhism, do we attribute that to a sense of imperialist entitlement, self-hatred or evolutionary blending of core spiritual expressions? In a world dominated by god-politics, we don't want to pose "goddesses" as an alternative, saving belief — we want to know how dykes deal with religion: in the intimacy of our friendship networks, in the global perspective of rising fundamentalism. This is the place to bring anger, alienation, careful analysis of hierarchical archetypes, righteous indignation, creative re-visioning and dyke takes on the quest for life's meaning. **Deadline: June 1, 1994.**



Aspen



Amy Concepcion  
tatiana de la tierra

## Weave-talk

Summer evening in september: dos lesbianas, amy concepcion y tatiana de la tierra weave-talk our cuban and colombian roots, our arrival in miami, and the rest of our bi-cultural brouhaha. we wrote "weave-talk" by each of us independently and randomly writing pieces of our journey into this country. to this each of us added a previously written poem that wove with the new text. we cut both of our pieces and poems into strips that made sense on their own and then put the strips in order like a puzzle. we were amazed at how it flowed. it seems like we planned it, but it's more like magic.

placing a pink feather headband in my hands, my abuelita kissed me goodbye, crying. i cried too. i didn't know why.

yo no me voy pa' la guerra  
que la guerra es dentro de mi,  
yo ne me voy para el monte  
que montañas ya comi.

There was sadness to leave loved ones behind, but there was happiness about the whole idea of traveling, the whole idea of the journey, in a boat ...

i came in a military airplane. there was something mysterious about la llegada. for years i thought i was an illegal alien.

From the sea to the road, a road with signs in a foreign language. From the road to a small apartment, crowded, with loved ones who looked and behaved differently from how I remembered them.

I always felt that the ones who left  
were cowards; but in the struggle here,  
I have seen the face of courage.  
Some call it ingenuity and determination,

Some call it ingenuity and determination,  
I call it courage.

Some call it defiance and pretentiousness,  
I call it courage.

we played over and over with the doors that open by themselves and the stairs that move. in the morning i went to a 7-11 with my dad. he bought beans in a can and glazed donuts. the beans were sweet, to our amazement.

School ... wow! That foreign language again, day in and day out, from class to class, to lunch, then back to class, like a roller coaster, no time to think, no time to remember ... just feeling yourself changing ... becoming a sponge or Bounty, the picker-upper.

at school they gave us thick wide-lined paper for free. i knew how to say "pencil" and "ruler" in english, and i already knew how to add and subtract. i was ashamed for being spanish. how had i learned shame so well? once, i had to go to the bathroom and i didn't know how to say it, so i touched myself there and showed the teacher so she would understand. i vowed to learn english perfectly and i taught my mom.

There were also showers without doors, for it was mandatory to bathe after physical education. Taking my clothes off and walking naked into the showers was the worst part. It was like a fear that my body was different; just like every other part of me was different.

How do you learn to be courageous  
if you have never been afraid?

Cowards don't run away from danger,  
cowards run away from fear,  
cowards are afraid to fear.

we lived in a house that belonged to a hippie who peed on mango trees and slept in the weeds. me, my mom, dad, brother, and two sisters lived in one room, and another colombian family lived across the hall. the father beat his wife and yelled at us. he scared



me, but we were lucky to have a place to live. colombia came with me; i think of mountains, pueblitos, aguardiente. colombia was taken from me; i took her from myself to be an accentless americana. colombia comes back to me; i visit and she moves in.

yo comi la arepa y frijol  
con panela y mazamorra  
y cuando me dicen gringa  
yo digo fumo marimba.

I had never experienced silence the way I did back then. It was the experience of being silent to strangers and silent to your own. My conversation took place inside of me, in my head, in my heart, and in my bones. Especially in my bones, in every tissue around them; they carry a conversation about who I was and what I was made of.

i wanted to be "american" and attained "resident alien" status. i don't want to be "american" any more; the term "american" denotes geographical ignorance, cultural arrogance and imperialism. as a south american living in north america, i've been an american my entire life. and i turned out to be all-american: a fat-liberal-lesbian-feminist-bearded bruja, an unsightly independent heterosexually-trained-lipstick combat femme. my mom is proud of me, and so am i.

y cuando me dicen gringa  
yo digo soy cachaquita  
una mezcla extranjerita  
con mochila y navajita.

my mom used to clean houses and my dad worked in factories. my mom brought home the wealthy white people's trash — clothes, toys, furniture ... to be our attempt at "having." when i was thirteen she bought me a sky blue blouse with a red ball design. it cost ten dollars and i felt guilty that she spent so much money on me. i wore it constantly.

There was no escape from the situation back then, nowhere to run. I looked for escape in religion, but it didn't work. When I was old enough, I ran to Peru and I fell in love with it. I learned

to sing their songs and dance their music, and speak Spanish with a Peruvian accent. And I had Peruvian children who now, when asked, say that they are Cuban ... there was, there is and there will be no escape.

when my dad graduated from college the only job he could get was as a security guard. with the land of opportunity limited, my brother found his in dealing drugs. with his money i went to college and traveled. drug money gave me what i couldn't have otherwise. i drove bmw's, ate sushi, and became addicted to silk. facing fifteen years to life without parole for a conspiracy charge in a courtroom where being colombian is cause for conviction, my brother split and became a federal fugitive. my mom's house, put up as collateral, went to the bondsman. a relative bought it and rented it to my mom so she could still live there. then hurricane andrew came and blew my mom's home of 21 years away. while my mom looks for another place to live she stays with me. we dissect every rotted shred of our life, from the american dream to the colombian chaos that keeps us here.

en colombia busque mujeres  
 busque ambiente de montaña  
 pues a pie las encontraba  
 y a caballo me rodaba.

Now a new consciousness has developed, a consciousness that says: It's okay to think about Cuba when you make your choices, to think about Cuba when you make the decision to write, and when you make your choice at the polls. Yes, it's okay to have Cuba next to me, next to my income taxes, health care costs, and women's rights.

Why would you make concessions here  
 when you refused to dress in olive green  
 in order to be a Cuban,  
 in order not to be an exile,  
 I called that patriotism.  
 When you refused to give up your identity,  
 I called that courage.



What has been, is and will be the impact of latin women in the U.S.? The impact depends on how willing we are to participate in the writing of our own history. The present is powerful if we are powerful — powerful as americans, as women, as hispanics, and not necessarily in that order. In the past I was shocked by bathrooms with no doors; in the present I am shocked by hearts with closed, bolted doors.

i came out as a lesbian ten years ago in a north american community, far from latin culture. i came back to mayami to coger la calle and feel myself cubaned and colombianed out. living in mayami is like living in a latin country, except that the phone, electricity and water usually work.

y yo grito mis ideas  
mujeres bastante bellas  
aun son ricas y blanquitas  
y asi de radicalitas,  
misma sangre, misma lucha,  
misma america jodida.

I dare to be a different American, an American with dark eyes and a characteristic accent when I speak. Now I speak, no more silent conversation. My bones have a new sheath covering them, one that protects from indifference and one that defies assimilation.

But I, I was afraid of swollen rivers  
and wild running horses,  
and cemeteries with their dead ones.  
Here, I stopped being afraid  
and instead became a coward.  
But now I want to be like you,  
I want to create, and be afraid,  
some of those who left were not cowards  
and I want to be like them.

living as a latina lesbian in mayami is a phenomenon still in formation. i am part of this process: i sculpt our profile daily, i smear myself all over the place, i take up space, i challenge them

and us, i play with my power and patriarchal power and puta power, all in the name of being an all-american fat liberal-lesbian-feminist bearded bruja, an unsightly independent heterosexually-trained-lipstick-combat femme.

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english translations to spanish words in weave-talk:

*dos lesbianas* — two lesbians  
*abuelita* — grandmother  
*la llegada* — the arrival  
*pueblitos* — little towns  
*aguardiente* — fire water  
*coger la calle* — take the street  
*puta* — prostitute

english poem stanzas are from "courage" by Amy. spanish poem stanzas are from "regresar a la tierra de uno" (returning to one's land) by tatiana — a choppy translation: "i won't go to war — the fight is within me. i won't go to the countryside — i've already eaten mountains. i've eaten arepa and frijol, panela and mazamorra, and when they call me gringa, i say smoke marihuana, and when they call me gringa, i say i am cachaquita (someone from the interior of colombia), a foreign mixture with a knapsack and a swiss army knife. in columbia i searched for women and found them on foot, i searched for mountains and rode them on horseback. and i scream my ideas, beautiful women, rich, white and radical, same blood, same struggle, same screwed america."





*Portrait of Emily Salazar*  
charcoal on paper  
Adriana Medina

Akiko Carver

## Transcript of Speech at the March on Washington Rally, April, 1993

**D**o you want the ban on lesbians and gays in the military lifted? Is this your country, and isn't it your right to serve? Well, if you believe that, then you're racist.

Because this is the country that has enslaved Africans for hundreds of years, put my grandparents in Japanese American concentration camps, put Native Americans on reservations, and forces many Latinos to live every day in poverty and fear of deportation.

This is the military that bombed 1/2 million people in Hiroshima and Nagasaki; killed, raped, and tortured thousands in Viet Nam, as well as Korea and Grenada; invaded Somalia; and bombed and placed inhumane sanctions on Iraq that killed over 200,000 people.

So if this is your country, it's because you're white. The United States and its military actively works for the genocide of non-white peoples. When you talk about lifting the ban, you're telling me that non-white queers are expendable. Working to allow gays in the military is happening over our dead bodies.

Look at the fact that 60% of the military is composed of non-white people. Through lack of job opportunities and college funds, we are forced to join in order to receive the meager benefits the military offers. Because of racist economics, we become the cannon fodder of America, while having to kill our non-white sisters and brothers around the world.

You can't tell me that you're fighting to get these issues addressed. What you're fighting for is more career choices for white lesbians and gays. You're fighting for Margarethe Camemeyer's pension. The NGLTF and Human Rights Campaign Fund aren't fighting for *human rights*, they're fighting homopho-



bia as an obstacle to white power. And it makes me so sad to see so many non-white queers working in that fight.

The focus on lifting the ban in the military further illustrates how the politics of the queer movement have watered down to nothing. This movement started with a riot and it needs to end with one. But all we can do is praise Clinton, walk down the street and sit in a park — a million suicidal fools in one city. We won't fight for true liberation, because that would mean fighting racism, sexism, heterosexism, imperialism, ableism and transgender oppression. It would mean fighting capitalism and the U.S. government. It means revolution. But we're content to let a few rich white fags determine this movement's agenda, and to let them ask for a minor concession like lifting the ban in the military.

So let me say it again: if you want gays in the military, it's because you're racist. And if you believe that this is your country, it's because you're white.

When you talk about America's "enemy across the line," you're talking about me and my family. In supporting the military, you've already named me your enemy — and you can make damn sure I'll fight you like one.

FIGHT RACISM!  
BAN THE MILITARY!

Victoria Lena Manyarrows

## When This Land Was Ours

Woman you carry me from dream to dream  
breath like fire in the ear  
i am whispering to you sweet secrets  
humming gentle tunes so your body can remember  
*when this land was ours*  
*and we grew from it*  
*and with it*  
*and we loved this land*

this land once green and undamaged  
a land not new, but loved  
cared for so that beauty could blossom.



Teresa Ortega

## Soul Secrets and Bean Lore

Do you know those days when everything in the world is too hard? I'm not talking about every day, which is bad enough, but the extra bad days: the sad, bad, lonely days. The nights of giving up.

A truly bad day will announce itself to me with a sacred occurrence. On a bad day I can hear my soul speak, making demands on me with all the grace of a pent-up chihuahua.

It has a simple message, and it's this, "Go eat some beans."

If you have not seen your own soul before, you should know that it's no bigger than a nugget, a splinter. Usually, my soul hides deep in the middle of my chest, and for the most part, it doesn't bother me one way or the other. By all accounts, I've had good luck. Because despite its diminutive size, when a soul decides it has a quarrel with you, you're better off taking its instruction.

So on this bad night, following a long, bad day, having heard the familiar but insistent request for beans, I obediently head for my yellow kitchen. I appreciate my soul's need for a snack.

I go to the large white built-in cabinet and reach for a can of refried beans. I open the can left-handed, which means with some difficulty, and dump the beans into a little pan to warm them. Then I get the ready-made burrito-size flour tortillas out of the fridge, and place one in a cast-iron skillet slick with butter. The tortilla's delicate surface raises ever so slightly as it heats. Tiny puffs of air form pockets, browning in the sizzling butter; I see the moon's face, darkened with rings.

What is the exact color of beans? I do not carry any authority on the subject, yet I have looked innumerable times past the crooked wooden counter of a burrito stand into a steaming pot of pinto beans, and I believe there is no single color that can describe the leguminous, molten body that gathers from boiling and then mashing beans with onion, spices and fat. The red, the

orange, the brown, the white are all mixed together, so that you never know where white ends and brown begins, when the turn of a wooden spoon will bring a delicate pink from the bottom of the vat, when streaks of red will form over the whole or when the beans will suddenly mass into a brown clump resembling earth. The mixing of colors is what makes it a Mexican dish, just as the Mexican people range across many hues.

Have you been in the courtyard of an old Spanish mission? In Southern California, where I was born, there were at one time twenty Spanish missions running up and down the length of the state. Years ago, standing in the lush central courtyard of one of the still-operating Catholic missions, surrounded by thick palms, red hibiscus and gigantic stalks of birds-of-paradise, there, amidst a tropical Eden, I witnessed a sinister conjunction of hues as the shadow of a cross from atop the mission tower fell across the adobe courtyard, a dark slash against the orange-pink Indian brick. The heavy faith of the Spanish conquerors must once have entered into this land as unexpectedly. Contemplation of that strange landscape might have afflicted me, had not the unanticipated mixture of color, rosy sienna cast against pale terracotta, engaged my appetite irresistibly by reminding me of beans.

A craving takes you like that, fiercely, so we may approach our own joy without hesitation. It's the least tangible regions of the body that tend to edge out of our control. Sudden laughter, the spot where hunger growls insistent, a physical sense of our lovers' pleasure, random swings of courage: places where the soul comes through like a phantom to touch the world with us.

If this were breakfast I was making and not my soul's short order, there would be rice too, Spanish rice fried in bacon grease and drizzled with fresh salsa served on a hot plate full of beans. But the task before me demands attention. The tortilla is done, and I turn to the metal kitchen table waiting behind me. I lift the tortilla carefully out of the pan that I'm carrying in my gloved hand and place it on a heavy fired-clay plate. Then quickly grabbing the beans off the stove, I half-pour, half-scoop the beans into the steaming center of the tortilla. No cheese, no salsa, no sour cream (god forbid), only beans. Next step is to fold the



whole thing up into a thick bundle. My offering now waits complete, a genuine bean burrito.

There's a secret to feeding the soul beans. As you might guess, it can't be fed through the mouth, but requires a more subtle means of intake. The eating, the ingestion, the incarnation, the bringing of another entity into oneself.

Pick up the bean burrito and hold it against your cheek.

Close your eyes.

Maybe not every soul remembers. If you're from the eastern part of the United States, where the closest tortilla factory is a full five states away, perhaps the aroma of *frijoles* will not penetrate to your soul. But if you're from the southwest — from Yuma, Blythe, Flagstaff or Tucson; from San Antonio, El Paso, Demming, Taos; from San Diego, Barstow, Needles or Los Angeles — you know about the restorative power of beans.

Clutched against your face, you feel the warm, heavy weight in your hand like all the comfort you've ever known: a soft breast, a generous belly, your girlfriend's thigh cradling your cheek. The poignant smell brings back your best memories.

I remember the Mexican jumping beans my parents bought me for ninety-five cents at a highway stop in southern Arizona. I took the beans out of the red plastic box they came in and watched them jump up and down on my hand, tirelessly, for the next two hundred and thirty-four miles. Finally they fell on the floor and rolled under the seat, lost. A happier time then: my parents silent in the front seat of the car going towards Texas, me alone in the back with my beans and a lot of time, nothing but staring and the long flat space of the desert. To be a child again, wise days, just looking.

My soul eats beans, memories, loving the savor of time well spent.

Elliott

## Lesbos Isn't On This Map

I sit on the stool and watch her through our map of the world shower curtain. First her thighs, framing the Atlantic, and then the Arabian Sea centered in her round and ample ass. And I fight the urge to switch into the metaphorical, like watching her yiddishe clit directly through Israel. Or studying, over her breast, the imposition of Poland, source of her blonde Jewish hair and blue Jewish eyes. Or, when I join her, matching my body to any of my homelands, from Scotland to Portugal. Wanting to understand us as international, tied to these places and peoples.

Wanting not to have to consider the privileges of geography.

We live in the United States; we have a rented house, plenty of food, a little more money than we need. And a hot shower and its curtain that would chart our world.

Lesbos isn't on this map.

But we lesbians are here, in borders of our own making.

And also in a map of clear dangers. Tonight, a cross could be burned in her name. Tomorrow we might be blown away by a neighbor screaming "perverts perverts perverts." Or maybe some other lesbian, somewhere else, defying easy bright colors and black outlines on plastic.

So much to be done, and us in the shower.

At first, I did really believe that loving wimmin as a class — or one or two or three at a time — would by itself topple the powers that have been and are, would be The Revolution. At first, it was. But now there is so much left to do. Even with the power of my wanting her I have this feeling of... of lack, somehow. Or maybe inadequacy.

Or maybe the feeling is desperation, maps colliding, time running out.

So much to be done, as we slowly finish our shower.



Auntie Guru's Metaphysical Wilderness Store Pre-Season Sale

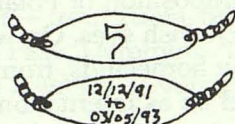
by Elliott



**NEW!**  
 Mosquito Netting  
 for Your  
 Aura  
 They'll Never Touch You!  
 Intra Price!  
 \$325



Yin-Yang  
 Sleeping Bags  
 \$250/pr



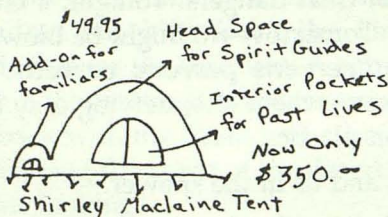
**META-ALERT ID Bracelet**  
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 for  
 Insects  
 Anonymous

\$8.95

Sensible Shoes

design consultant: K. Esposito

Janet Mason

## Why I hate Earth Day

**b**ecause Coca Cola cans leave acid rain  
in the landscape of my mind;

the "all-beef" hot dogs they sell  
took grain from mouths of hundreds  
and fed it to one now-dead cow;

plastic recyclables, coffee cups,  
vinyl earths inflated like blow-up dolls,  
sit around forever;

a "pro-life" governor gets up to speak  
and audience politely applauds;

and the straight, white, male,  
"folk" singer splits my ear drums  
screaming into microphone.



Janet Mason

## In those days

We licked salt from the rim,  
Margaritas, sweet,  
sticky in our throats.  
Two young college women,  
commuters, career bent;  
The first pitcher  
drew a bright taste,  
freshly minted futures  
on our tongues.

The second pitcher eroded  
pinstripe dreams  
until we autographed tampons,  
throwing them around the bar;  
telling blurred faces:  
hold onto them, someday  
they'll be worth something.

We stopped before the third,  
knowing she would  
fall off her stool  
and my morning would taste  
like fuzzy metal.

Instead we window shopped,  
closed stores  
on a street empty  
except for male prostitutes,  
an occasional cop.  
At the punk store  
a mannequin was bound and gagged,  
safety pins  
penetrating her plastic flesh.

We stared.  
Our gaze  
interrupted only  
by our own reflections.  
My hands were quick,  
pulling lipstick from my  
junior briefcase.  
She kept watch,  
while in sunset orange  
I wrote large:  
THIS OFFENDS WOMEN  
Turning, she took the lipstick,  
drew a giant female sign  
underneath.

We admired our work.  
Then fled,  
cement slapping  
the soles of our feet.  
Our laughter,  
my casual arm  
around her shoulder —  
innocent of a future  
where she would graduate  
to stocks and bonds  
and me  
to spray paint.



Sima Rabinowitz

## Between the Lines

The New York Times, March 11, 1992 ... dateline Georgia or North Dakota, Oregon or Tennessee.

The court refuses to dismiss the claim. The reporter refuses to read between the lines.

All are poised for victory:

A novice attorney can try her case. The New York Times can try my patience.

She has told her new colleagues in the State Department of Law, where she was promised a job (and a desk and a phone and a future),

she intends to marry.

In the summer. By a lake. Under a blossoming juniper plum. Her bride will wear white.

The novice attorney never sits behind the mahogany desk, never answers the multi-line phone. She is her own best witness. The future is an edict she must draft alone.

The court will hear her case. The public can hear the echo. (Section B, page seventeen, bottom left-hand corner, before the obits and after the ad for a fur sale at Saks.)

The state says its employees must uphold (hold up, erect) the law. The novice attorney's

attorney says a contract was fractured. The reporter for

The New York Times says this is a challenge to anti-sodomy laws. The ACLU says sodomy is a first amendment right. The

Lambda Legal Fund says the practice of sodomy does not interfere with the practice of law. The

American Heritage Dictionary says sodomy is abnormal sex,

specifically anal intercourse  
between two men. The state says its employees must uphold the law.  
The court will hear the case. The public can hear the echo.  
The novice attorney's attorney is (judiciously) jubilant.  
The reporter for The New York Times  
is (objectively) jubilant. The ACLU is (right-eously) jubilant.  
The Lambda Legal Fund is  
(gaily) jubilant.  
The court will hear the case. The public can hear the echo.  
Nobody hears the novice attorney (or her blushing bride) say  
she wants to practice sodomy, only  
that she wants to practice law.  
Nobody hears her say she loves the arc of her lover's breast  
against her own.  
Nobody hears her say she loves the billows and folds that  
gather at her lover's waist.  
Nobody hears her say she finds her tongue between her  
lover's velvet thighs abnormal.  
The court can try the case. The New York Times can try my patience.  
The court will hear the case. The public can hear the echo.  
The novice attorney can hear her lover's breath swell and flower.  
Nobody remembers to say that it is not legal in Georgia or  
North Dakota, Oregon or Tennessee  
for two women to marry. Nobody remembers to ask  
how the law can dictate what a body can know.



Suzanne

## Fire in the Woods, Flood in Town

News quote: Studies have found that one in three teenage suicide attempts is tied to sexual confusion.

*for Andrea, 1963-1982*

We could see the smoke for miles.  
From my balcony I saw it clotting the sky.  
I heard later how the flames leapt high —  
an aroused, murderous beast  
stretching to full height.  
It was all shock effect,  
staged to wake a staid New England town.

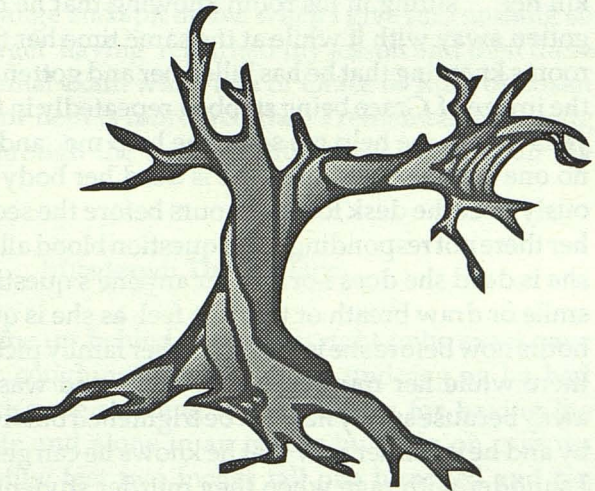
She had waited for hikers  
to see her light the match  
and touch it to her clothes; imprinting a horror  
on their dreams eternally: her face  
a ghostly white speck, framed in a halo of blazing hair,  
her mouth opening and closing, shaping sounds  
the hikers even now cannot forget.

From a blackened gas can found nearby  
we were supposed to decipher the mystery of our crime.  
The punishment had been the last clue.  
Our message came in an envelope of fire:  
We became her survivors and we would pay  
for our inattention, our privileged  
yankee neglect.

Chastened, wiser — we were sadly aware  
it was now too late to do the right thing  
whatever that would have been.  
But with no words, no direction, no other clues

we spun in angry circles of blame  
thinking, "if only..." and in the end  
secretly wishing she had lived and died somewhere else.

When we spoke her name, guilt poured from our mouths  
flooding the sidewalks in town  
until we became a sodden, brooding people,  
each of us alone paying for our special crime;  
marked by her pain.  
To this day, I cannot help but feel  
she must have planned it that way.





Jeannie Witkin

## The Endless Onslaught

### I Hate It

I hate it when they murder students on campus especially when the student they murder is female and young and brutally stabbed many times while alone in a building and no one rescues her as I think of her fear yelling alone with no one magically appearing to save her unable to save herself yelling help me help me someone help me afraid alone with her murderer but no one helps her so then she is dead and somewhere in a dorm room in Berkeley or an apartment in Oakland or San Francisco someone is telling himself it's been five days now and no one has caught me I'm home free it's ok they'll never find out she deserved it anyway and I won't do it again I don't think since I know they can't catch me I would be safe but I really don't plan to do it again and I didn't plan to kill her until I saw the scissors but I was so angry at her and she deserved it and how scared she was when she knew I would kill her sitting in his room knowing that he has killed her and gotten away with it while at the same time her family sits in their rooms knowing that he has killed her and gotten away with it with the image of Grace being stabbed repeatedly in their minds as she yells help me help me someone help me and no one helps her no one answers and then she is dead her body hunched ingloriously over the desk for four hours before the security guard finds her there not responding to his question blood all over the desk and she is dead she does not answer anyone's question or respond or smile or draw breath or think or feel as she is quite dead for four hours now before she is found and her family pictures her hunched there while her murderer goes home and washes all the blood away because surely he must be frightened but five days have gone by and he is calmer now that he knows he can get away with it and I shudder with rage when they murder students on campus and

shudder with rage when they murder students on campus and she is female and he gets away with it.

### All the Time

I only think about it all the time how men murder students on campus and off campus and non-students and old women and young women and girl children and lesbians walking down the street in the woods at the mall "safe" at home in bed at night with the door locked breaking in through the window raping Nancy in her bed killing Bibi in the park and so many nameless others if I wanted I could make a list a litany a ritual of all the names never to be forgotten but no need I only think about it all the time as I walk up the stairs turning my head to see who belongs to the footsteps I hear coming up behind me whose shadow that is to my right who is coughing moving several steps to my left so I am hopefully out of harm's way or if he follows me then I am in harm's way but at least I know where I am which is better than not knowing so I try to be aware at all times of the dangers I face the risks I run as I walk around the campus the town the world and if I were to forget for a second some man will drive by flashing his dick at me some man will call me cunt or dyke or demand spare change and spit on me when I give him nothing so I will not soon forget having relearned my lesson and then there is the occasional final exam when Bibi or Grace or Ruth or Susan or Lisa or Esther or Beth is murdered then I remember for a long time as I walk through the streets I only think about it all the time.

### Murdered: The Fantasy

The man who came up behind me on my right to be exact gave himself away by coughing which was his undoing as he had planned to surprise me stabbing me repeatedly for having the nerve to work late and alone in an empty building on campus when I am only five feet two inches tall one hundred and ten



pounds and I needed to be taught a lesson about the place of women which is not alone in a building unless we are playing the part of a murder victim so he planned to help me fulfill this role using the scissors conveniently located on my desk as his prop the murder weapon entering stage right through the partly open door coming up behind me but as I said luckily he coughed alerted me set me on guard so I was able to spin pivot turn to meet him bringing us face to face at which point his intentions became all too clear one glance at his cold eyes hard mouth clenched fists being all I needed to understand my fears were true this time so I threw my shoulders back chin up eye to eye which angered him as a challenge for I was not following the stage directions eyes demurely cast down absorbed in work unaware of danger not I as I would no longer play this role for anyone's satisfaction no longer bolster his ego at the expense of my own life no I was brazen strong ready and I rose to meet him grabbing those scissors claiming them for my own feeling their weight in my strong hands and he unwilling to take seriously the threat I was to him came right at me ridiculously insultingly laughably presenting the soft skin at his neck by lifting his head to sneer at me so it was a simple matter to slice across his throat with them then dismember slash stab him repeatedly blood all over the desk and leave him hunched there where he would never do violence again and I went home and washed the blood away and no one caught me for murdering the man who came up behind me.

### Murdered: The Reality

But I was murdered on campus the man coming up behind me on my right to be exact and though I have only thought about this all the time I cannot quite believe this is happening surely it is just one more nightmare as I shudder and run for my brick house but it dissolves before me a mirage a hoax a trap there are no brick houses for women only straw and though I yell help me help me someone help me no one helps me no one answers I am alone shuddering against the onslaught all my fantasies of revenge retribution dismemberment drowned buried in the col-

lapse of my straw house where I have run trying desperately to change the script he will enter stage right his face clearly revealed to me and I am frightened teeth chattering at each invective he hurls at me accusing me of lesbianism pride resistance and I am guilty of each so how do I shut him out defend myself refute him refusing to live out this drama where he grabs the scissors and brutally stabs me many times blood all over the desk and no one will catch him I know though I have only thought about this all the time I am not ready surely we can put this scene off till next week next year next life as it has played itself through in my mind often enough surely we don't need an actual performance and I lower my chin my eyes bring my shoulders forward hoping that perhaps he will be disgusted and search out a more worthwhile opponent one more brazen strong ready than I who will not be caught unawares by the coughing man coming up from behind which was my undoing as I was caught grabbed stabbed repeatedly blood all over the desk not to respond any more to the endless onslaught and he goes home and washes all the blood away until he does it again and I am left here murdered on campus.



Josi Mata

## Someday

So many years we spent  
trying to be your skin  
surround you and ourselves  
with barricades Against the storm and fury  
We swallowed the water regardless  
drowned in his tides regardless

28 years later I can't erase you  
From the laundromat  
women and their children  
against the dead drum of machines and soap  
laundry and cries from babies.  
From the sight of bus size shopping carts  
filled with cheap food  
kids hanging around candy shelves  
tugging at skirt hems  
reaching up to show handfuls of hope

I can't erase you mama

I would really like to

It gets tiresome swallowing walls

Trying hard to not cry openly  
pretending I'm just tired  
Or yawning

I try to not stare at echoes  
children  
brown and round  
sometimes happy, sad eventually angry

I would really to talk about my past  
without

saying to myself over and over  
"Don't cry ... don't cry"

I would really like to mama

"Maybe it's just full moon," I say

P.M.S.

not enough rest

But even as I write this

in the middle of my favorite Mexican restaurant

between nervous bites on my lips

I can't keep water swollen

behind the lids of my eyes

Mama, I wonder when

I will be able to matter-of-factly say

My mother was abused, beaten and tortured almost

every day of her life

with my father

As clinical as possible

without emotion tight

at my neck

Mama will I ever?

And think to say ... to feel such things ...

who would ever want





*Tranquility with a message*  
pen and ink  
Kath Rodgers

C.E. Atkins

## Snake

I am at work in my garden,  
pillows of lettuce to rest my head,  
snails for pets,  
the cold secret of dirt beneath me.  
People say I have a stone for a heart,  
the eyes of a snake,  
the stiff body of cut wood.  
What kind of fool do they take me for?  
Before I grew these claws  
men entered my small openings,  
cut the warmth out of my flesh  
with their weapons and their gin.  
Poured iron in my mouth and crushed my back against walls.

The dawn pushes its way in  
where night pauses, balanced on its toes.  
My doors are all closed, my eyes struggle to open.  
I am sealed like the holy contents of a letter,  
I guard my room with a knife to the throat.  
In the morning, I undo what's been done to me,  
part the dirt with brush of cupped hands,  
tend to small things with an artist's care,  
the way a cloud guards its mountain.  
I am sure of my vigil,  
my last spare hope gropes and haunts me.  
All of my plants grow violently on hot sun  
and the river my weeping has made.



Elliott

## Bir's Song

She talked to me of healing  
anger, blame,  
breathing,  
herbs  
and the probability  
of loving myself  
She told me how  
to make the cuts look accidental  
It was all the same message

It's a pretty thing  
clean and neat  
and the scars don't show  
Self-destruction is a pretty thing  
on this side of crazy

And all the goddamned feminists  
with wispy songs  
of goddesses transforming  
they will not touch  
what frightens them  
Every snake alive  
has split her skin to grow  
Every snake alive  
has split her skin  
to grow

It's a pretty thing  
you either know  
or don't know to ask  
Self-destruction is a pretty thing  
on this side of crazy

You say that I am  
out of control

I say

*out of whose control?*

Some architect designed this house while I was asleep

built it while I wasn't home

locked the doors and kept the keys

Now I will do to it

whatever I want

It's a pretty thing

to no longer seek justification

If I didn't build this

then it isn't self-destruction, it's a powerful thing

on this side of crazy



Anna Livia

*from* Bruised Fruit

The Lighthouse

Amanda was in good spirits. She had discovered a nouvelle cuisine restaurant up north of Hyde Park which was suitably expensive. Renate from Rape Crisis and her new lover, Julie, had met them for dinner. Amanda and Renate were discussing the Child Abuse Line and the unexpected fact that few children could get through due to the number of adults calling who had been abused in childhood.

Caroline turned to Julie. "So, are you from London?" she asked softly.

"Born and bred."

"Where'bouts?"

"Finsbury Park."

"Oh wow, the Rainbow!"

"Hung out there every weekend."

"Peter Tosh, Bob Marley..."

"Bob Marley!"

"Remember those hot summer afternoons on the pavement waiting for the doors to open?"

"The queue getting longer and longer..."

"...passing whole watermelons up and down the crowd..."

"...and joints..."

"...and cans of Watney's Pale Ale."

There was a lull in Amanda and Renate's conversation.

"I thought you didn't drink?" said Renate.

"Or take drugs," said Amanda.

"Oh hell," said Julie, "only marijuana. Marijuana's not a drug."

Caroline laughed. "And Watney's Pale is hardly beer."

"I like cider," said Renate. "Cornish cider. Scrumpy. Most lethal thing I ever drank."

"Really hits, doesn't it?" said Caroline. "Cos you think it's just goin' to be apple juice."

"We went to Cornwall last summer," said Amanda. "Rented a little cottage on the cliffs. But Caroline got frightened, didn't you, Caroline?"

"What?" said Caroline.

"It was funny. Caroline suddenly wakes up in the middle of the night and I hear this little voice beside me going, 'Amanda, there's someone shining a torch at us through the window.' She wouldn't rest 'til I got up and looked outside. Big butch me. And there was this vicious evil lighthouse glaring at us from an island, strafing our faces with its wicked beam. Caroline can be terribly silly sometimes."

Caroline stared at the exquisitely bleak landscape of her plate. Six green peas and one mint leaf in a raspberry coulis. "Don't cry," she told herself. "It'll only get worse if you cry. She'll see she's hit a weak spot and keep on 'til she breaks through the skin."

As long as Caroline laughed with the others, the moment would pass and perhaps she could chat some more with Julie about the old days when she listened to reggae with joy in her heart, with bare feet on sunny pavement, the days when you could share a watermelon with anyone who was thirsty. But she felt the terrible rise of tears and before she could leave for the bathroom, she was sobbing. In front of Julie and Renate. Amanda would be merciless.

"Well, er," said Renate. "We seem to have hit a sensitive spot."

"Oh don't mind Caroline," said Amanda, "She's so squeamish she had to be carried out of *Aliens II*. Thought I'd have a basket case on my hands for the rest of my life."

"Why did you burst into tears like that?" Amanda asked on the way home.

"Because I was scared," said Caroline.

"Scared?" repeated Amanda, "In the middle of a restaurant?"

"No," said Caroline, "On the cliffs in Cornwall."

"But it was a lighthouse."

"I didn't know that. I thought it was a man with a torch."



"Well it made Renate and Julie feel very awkward. I do think you might spare a thought for other people's feelings sometimes. They'll assume it was some quarrel we were having and blame me, and that is simply not fair. Well, is it?"

"What?"

"Do you think it's fair that I'll get the blame for something that was all your own foolishness?"

"Will you?"

"You know I will. People always blame the lover."

"Oh."

"What do you mean, 'oh'?"

"I mean, I see."

"Well what do you propose to do about it?"

"I don't know," Caroline sighed.

"It's no good sighing, Caroline. You can't just go on hiding behind me. One of these days you are going to have to take responsibility for your actions and how they affect people."

Caroline shut her mind to the angry protests which were forming there. Resistance was useless. Worse than useless; it just made Amanda worse. And then she would go on for hours 'til there was no part of Caroline's person that remained whole and unbruised.

"You could apologize," said Amanda.

"Apologize?"

"Ring them up and say you're sorry you spoiled their dinner." Amanda went to have a bath.

"Renate?" said Caroline.

"This is Julie. Renate's in the kitchen."

"Oh, that's okay. It's Caroline."

"Hi. Are you alright?"

"Yes. Fine. I'm fine. I rang to say I'm sorry for bursting into tears like that."

"Well you were upset."

"I, it's okay, really. You see..." Caroline invented, "Amanda and I have already talked it over in the car coming home. So we've resolved our difficulties with each other, but you and Renate weren't there. So it's like Amanda and I can be friends

again but you must still feel that tension..."

"We did gather there was something going on between the two of you."

"Just a misunderstanding. Cross purposes, you know. So thanks for such a nice evening."

"Yeah, we must do it again sometime."

### The Vibrator

"My feet are cold," Amanda announced.

"Borrow some of my socks," said Caroline sleepily, waving a languid arm toward the top drawer of the dresser. And before she was fully awake, Amanda was searching the drawer. Caroline frowned into her pillow. Something was wrong, but she was too tired to move.

Amanda's hand came across something hard in a thick ball of wool walking sock.

"What's this?" she asked.

"My vibrator," said Caroline as the floor sank away from her and she felt herself falling, falling.

"Your what?" said Amanda.

"Vibrator," said Caroline, redundantly since Amanda had already pulled the hard plastic out of its woolly sheath. Amanda stared at her lover with horror and rage.

"How could you?" she said. "How could you do this to me? Where did you get it from? Why didn't you tell me you had one of these ... things?"

The questions poured out like the high pitched barking of some frenzied dog. Amanda's eyes were full of shock and pain as though Caroline had just told her that her father was a Nazi.

"What else do you have? Dildos, a harness, whips, handcuffs?"

"No," said Caroline. "Just a vibrator."

"Just this?" said Amanda, "And do you use it?"

"Yes," said Caroline. She wanted very much to lie. To say a friend had sent it to her as a joke and she had not known how to dispose of it. But Amanda would have gone on all night: who sent it to her? What friend? What kind of friend would make a joke like that? Why had she sent it? Did she want Caroline to use



it on her? Did Caroline use it on her? And who else? Who else did Caroline use it with? Anyway, they both knew Caroline didn't have any friends. Amanda had seen to that.

"Why?" Amanda demanded. "Why do you use it? Do you want a man? Is that it? Am I not good enough for you? You want a man's dick between your legs?"

"I use it to give myself an orgasm," said Caroline.

"Don't you have orgasms with me?" asked Amanda, her voice shrill. "Have you been faking it for six years?"

"Yes," said Caroline, "Yes, I do have orgasms with you."

It was true. She did. She had organised her fantasy life in such a way that when Amanda made love to her, neither she nor Caroline were there any more but two huge elephants she had seen once at the zoo. Caroline was always the male elephant mounting the female, brutally and implacably, fucking her with an enormous penis running the entire length of its body.

"Then why, Caroline?" Amanda's voice was enraged still but there was a new note, an edge of pleading.

"I bought it ages ago, Amanda. I read an article about sex toys in *Cosmopolitan* and I went out and bought one."

"From a sex shop?"

"Yes. A shop in Tottenham Court Road, just off Oxford Street. I was the first girl at school to get one. No one else had even seen one before."

"No," said Amanda, "I don't suppose they had."

Encouraged, Caroline went on. "I stood it on the table during school dinner, turned the battery on and everyone giggled and gasped while it shuddered away on the formica in a sea of gravy plates and green peas.

Amanda shook her head. Then her face clouded over. "But now, Caroline? You don't use it any more, do you? Now you're a lesbian, and a feminist, and everything?"

"Everything?"

"Well... just the shape for one thing." They both looked toward the beige plastic object now upright on Caroline's dresser.

"It looks like a penis," Amanda announced. "The whole idea is totally repulsive. As though women were not complete on our

own but had to simulate male paraphernalia."

"I see what you mean," said Caroline. She did see. The vibrator was eight inches long and four and a half inches in circumference. It had a cobweb pattern until just over half way along, to make it easier to hold. The tip was bald and shiny like the tip of a rocket standing at Cape Canaveral. She had long since given up wondering whether she agreed with Amanda; understanding how her lover saw the world was quite enough.

"So you'll throw it away?" Amanda insisted.

### The Kiss

"Kiss me," said Amanda urgently, the same urgency which accompanied all her actions. An urgency Caroline had found irresistible six years before. Everything mattered so much to Amanda. Whatever it was, she had to have it, they had to prevent it, women must not read it, men must stop it.

And now Amanda must be kissed.

Caroline looked at the sore on Amanda's upper lip. Pus had collected, but if you broke the the skin to let the pus out, more would surface from underneath. Caroline tried to swallow her revulsion, feel Amanda's fear of rejection, the fear that she was no longer beautiful. She had to make Amanda's fear bigger in her mind than her own feeling of disgust.

"Kiss me," Amanda ordered.

By now Amanda had both hands on Caroline's forearms, her mouth was inches from Caroline's and her breath rose in the air in warm gusts. Caroline turned her head away, but Amanda caught her cheek and forced her lover to return her gaze.

"No," said Caroline.

Amanda's eyes sparked fury.

"You can't say no to me."

And she pushed her mouth down on Caroline's so that the skin over the sore burst and her lover's mouth filled with the taste of her pus. Caroline tried not to feel it, not to taste it. She felt herself leave her body, leave the mouth which now belonged to Amanda, occupied by that alien tongue which flicked about searching for warmth and reassurance.



Caroline knew better than to say anything, but in her head the voices were going wild. "I hate myself. I want to kill myself."

Soon it was over. Amanda's tongue returned to its own mouth. Caroline did not look at the sore but went instead to the bathroom where she spat and spat until her mouth was dry. But the saliva kept coming back and she could not vomit.

### Fresh Fruit

Caroline set off for work at the usual time and walked down to the tube station. Amanda waved to her from the car as she passed. But instead of showing her ticket to the guard and climbing up to the platform, Caroline turned back toward the house. She wanted the day off. She wanted to sit in a quiet room with no voices.

As she wandered back through the early morning streets, the stall holders had already started setting up their fruit stands. There was little warmth yet in the sun's rays, but their brightness lit up the cheeks of the nectarines and peaches, the cherries and grapes, the punnets of fat red strawberries. There was an enormous watermelon split open, lying pink and blatant on an up-turned crate. It smelt of watermelon, it was ripe and juicy like watermelon, it had the hard white pips of a watermelon. It was not an eraser, a shower curtain, a beach towel, a color swatch in a mail order catalog or any of the hundred mass-produced objects which seek to emulate some aspect of watermelonhood.

"Deelishuss," said the man on the stall smacking his lips. "Juicy, fruity, sweet and wet." He raised the big thick-bladed knife which he used to cut the melons in half for his customers. "You have to try it." He brought the blade down on the hard rind and in a second had cut a slice for Caroline. "Ere y'are, darlin. You get outside of that. You'll be back for more."

Caroline laughed and bit into the fruit. Seeds spurted down her throat and fresh juice filled her mouth. Idly she looked at the knife and realised that her mind had been so full of watermelon it had not shown her Amanda's grim image of a hand moving between a woman's legs, a blade cutting into her flesh. Out here in the busy cheerfulness of the streets, the shadows were not fearsome but a pretty gray dappling of the light.

In a sudden fit of acquisitiveness, Caroline picked out as many different kinds of fruit as she could see, vegetables too, for their colour, their shiny leaves, their soft skins and strong smells. She carried home two heavy bagsful, then dropped exhausted onto the sofa.

It was warm in the apartment. For a while she lay stretched out, the sun playing a lazy hide and seek over her body. She gazed up at the calm white ceiling and wriggled out of her sweater and shoes. Her grey work blouse would crease, so she unbuttoned it and laid it carefully on the back of a chair. Soon she was wearing only underpants and a bra, the light and shadow of the window blinds striping her flesh like a zebra. In the round mirror which hung above the chimney she caught sight of herself. There was a half-naked woman lying on her sofa. She smiled.

Between her legs was the beginning of a warm tension and little curls of pubic hair were creeping out from under her panties. She reached behind her back and unhooked her bra, dropping it onto the carpet. She trailed a tentative finger under the panty elastic. She was wet, her lips felt swollen. With Amanda they got through a tube of KY a month; Caroline had assumed she was drying up due to early menopause. She began to feel the unfamiliar, long-buried sensation of wanting something. Not of having something forced upon her and having to make accommodation, or of sublimating wrath to tenderer emotion, but the simple, delicate pulsing of her own blood, a roaring of her veins. When she drew her finger up to her face, there was a strong smell all over her hand. A smell she knew, or had remembered. Perhaps it was there when she and Amanda went to bed, she put so much effort into forgetting those occasions. She lay still, feeling the marvel of her own desire, waited till the want became hard and specific.

She wanted a woman. A woman with a huge red mouth and a strong heavy tongue. And the woman would lie, miraculous, between her spread thighs. And the tongue would be warm and wet and firm; the mouth would cover the whole enormous marsh between her legs, the lips would suck her clitoris into that mouth as it swelled and grew. And Caroline, instead of tidily removing



herself from the scene, would remain entirely, joyously present, feeling that mouth on her, that gently pressing tongue. And as the sensations built inside her and pleasure sparked up from between her legs all over her body, she could feel that woman loving her.

What woman? No one she knew. Caroline jerked up and stared around the room. Her eyes were full of fear. But all was calm and still. One of the grocery bags had fallen over and three red and yellow nectarines lay on the pale blue carpet. She reached out and pulled one toward her. Its flesh was warm and firm as a woman's lips. She raised it to her face, smelled its rich ripe smell and bit into its sweet juice. She licked the orange flesh beneath. That was not so warm as the the skin of the fruit.

Filled with clear purpose, Caroline went down to the kitchen for a pan of hot water, and a lid that fitted. She placed the bitten nectarine in the water and covered it over, waiting for the cool flesh to become warm. But there was more. She wanted a mouth on her softly lapping, lapping but she was greedy, and she took new joy in her hunger. She wanted a woman's fingers slipped inside her, firm and filling, opening her up, wider than she'd ever been.

She ran back up the stairs and tore apart the second grocery bag. A mass of thick leaves and vegetation cascaded upon the floor. Radishes, spinach, zucchini, eggplant, carrots, cucumbers, bell peppers, tomatoes. They were red and orange, deep bulging purple and six shades of green. With thoughts only of fulfilling her own desire, Caroline picked out a carrot, a zucchini and a cucumber. The carrot was too hard and rough-edged and it tapered away to nothing. The cucumber was just too thick. She seized the zucchini, placed it on a chopping board, carved its stalk down to a rounded tip and put it in the saucepan of hot water alongside the nectarine. Carefully fitting the lid on top, she carried the pan up to the living room and put it down beside the sofa.

Ten minutes should do to warm them up. While she waited, Caroline ran her fingers over her own skin, feeling the silk of her inner thighs, the round swell of her belly, the smooth glide of her

little finger in her asshole. She did not tell herself what she was doing, used no words to socialise her actions, held no discussion of their greater implication.

And when everything in that small pan was warm, Caroline took each object out, dripping as they were. And the nectarine nudging and rubbing and sliding up and down on top of her, and the zucchini moving in and out of her with greater and greater force felt every bit as good as she had known they would.

Caroline came laughing. She had a secret. She would tell it to no one, but cherish it quietly, gleefully to herself. During the course of that hazy day she tried out many of the fruit and vegetables there assembled. The cucumbers were not, after all, too big, but allowed a gradation of sensation once she had been opened by the zucchini. Nectarines were perfect. Well-washed peaches were delightful too in their own way, as long as one did not bite too deeply since their pits could be sharp. Kiwi fruit and tomatoes were not good; she had had to wash them off again hastily, they were so acid on the skin. Bananas were fun, but they were messy and they disappeared, melting in their own excitement before they had seen to hers. Opening lychees was a silken treat in itself as her tongue ran along those sweet fleshy folds.

"I could write a book," she laughed gaily to herself, sobering immediately to the cold, tormenting certainty that she could never even speak of the things she used to give pleasure to her body.

But then she heard the downstairs noise of Amanda's key in the lock. Had she been there so long? Had she spent the whole day lying flat on her back, finding new ways to enjoy herself? What was this laziness? She must move, run, hide, throw away those many-scented fruit which had given her such delight. She had time only to throw on a bathrobe, gather all the vegetable matter into a towel and dump it on the kitchen counter. Her underwear lay on the living room floor where she had scattered it.

"Oh really, Caroline," said Amanda. "Don't you think you could put your clothes away after you take a shower."

Caroline followed Amanda's gaze up the stairs to the living room. "Rest your weary feet," she said, pulling out one of the old kitchen armchairs. "While I tidy up."



"What are you cooking?" asked Amanda, pointing toward the stove. "Ratatouille or something?"

"Oh I was just throwing this away," said Caroline.

"Whatever for?" asked Amanda, "Looks okay to me. Shame to waste good food."

And so Caroline made a big stir fry with all those lovely vegetables, many of which had already been scraped and cleaned during the course of the afternoon, various juices enhancing their natural flavor. For dessert, of course, there was fresh fruit salad.

### A Jar of Jalapeños

One night Amanda had a collective meeting which was set to go on into the early hours. Were they going to accept local government funding so they could provide a twenty four hour service for the people who called, and decent wages for themselves, or retain their independence and refuse to be co-opted? The collective was split. Half of them had been preparing business plans and spreadsheets for months hoping for a top-up grant, and this windfall made them ecstatic. The others, including, most vociferously Amanda, would not be seen dead signing any agreement with the powers that be. Caroline had remained impassive but sympathetic.

"I hope it all works out for the best," she said, as Amanda left that evening for the meeting.

"Then you must hope we convince the others to send the offer back where it came from," retorted Amanda, who was feeling prickly about the long night ahead.

Caroline smiled, "Drive safely," she said.

"Who can resist you," said Amanda, "When you're so sweet and so simple? Like stone ground bread." She nodded to herself, pleased with the analogy.

As soon as Amanda's car drove off, Caroline went down to the kitchen to see what was in the vegetable rack. They had eaten the last of the zucchini and the carrots were limp and covered in other life forms. The fruit box was empty. Caroline shrugged on a sweater and went out into the street. She'd have to go all the way up to the Gate to get anything at this time of night.

Caroline wandered round the White Lotus all-night supermarket, wondering what else she should buy. She couldn't just put one zucchini in her trolley, someone was bound to guess what it was for. Or make some suggestive joke. She stood over the vegetable rack, choosing a thick green firm one which would be the right length and easy to hold. At the same time, her eye was caught by a jar of "jalapeño peppers," whatever that might be. She put both the zucchini and the jalapenos in her trolley and marched toward the checkout.

She was crossing the main road, taking herself swiftly back home again with her booty, when someone called out, "Hey, Caroline. You going to The Sea Change?"

"Oh, hi Julie, no, I was just buying groceries."

"It's only 'round the next corner."

"I couldn't," Caroline shook her head.

"Amanda won't let you out on your own?" Julie teased.

"No, no, it's not that," Caroline laughed, and, emboldened by her recent vegetable-buying expedition, she added, "Okay, just for an hour. To see what it's like."

They bought drinks and watched women dance and danced a little themselves. Caroline kept looking around.

"I can't believe you've never been here before," said Julie.

"Well, Amanda doesn't like drinking," said Caroline.

"You could come on your own," said Julie.

"No," said Caroline.

"Course you could. Don't let her boss you around."

"How are you getting on with Renate?"

"Oh, I love her. Never been with a feminist before, takes a little getting used to, but she's all heart, Renate. I just wish she wasn't spread so thin. I want her all to myself."

"Oh," said Caroline.

"You look shocked. How's it going between you and Amanda?"

"We, well, you know, we've been together six years."

"What's that 'spose to mean? Don't have sex any more?"

"Oh, we do," said Caroline.



"Every Saturday after shopping, whether you're randy or not." Caroline laughed. "That's wicked," she said.

"You know you don't have to stay with her."

"What? What? What do you mean? What are you trying to say?"

"Keep your hair on. It was just something to say."

"No it wasn't. You meant something." Caroline was shaking with anger.

"Look, I'm sorry if I offended you. I've probly had a bit too much to drink. Should have kept my big mouth shut."

Julie grinned, bent over and with a popping of bones in their sockets, succeeded in putting her foot in her mouth, shoe and all. Caroline laughed despite herself.

"Where on earth have you been?" demanded Amanda as soon as Caroline had climbed the stairs. "I got home half an hour ago expecting you to be tucked up watching television. You didn't even have the decency to leave a note."

"I went out to get some things," said Caroline.

"What things? It's nearly eleven o'clock at night. Nowhere's even open."

"The all-night supermarket up at the Gate."

"You went there? Caroline, this is like pulling teeth. Can't you see I was worried about you?"

"How did your meeting go?"

"There were three people missing so we couldn't take a vote. It was very frustrating."

Caroline went past the kitchen on her way to the bathroom. Amanda spotted the supermarket carrier as she passed.

"So, what did you get that you had to rush out for so urgently?"

As Caroline bent down toward the bag, Amanda sniffed the air.

"Caroline?" she said, "Have you been drinking?"

"Yes," said Caroline.

"What the hell has been going on?"

"I went to The Sea Change. I dropped in there on my way back from the supermarket."

"Had a couple of pints and came on home? Do you expect me to believe that?"

Caroline nodded. It was the truth.

"Who else was there? You must have been with someone. Or did you meet someone there?"

"I met Julie on the way."

"So you've been having an affair with Julie. How long has this been going on? Does Renate know? Or hasn't Julie told her yet? I've a good mind to ring her up right now. I've heard a few things about that Julie Grant."

"Don't," said Caroline. "Amanda, please don't. I just had a couple of drinks with Julie, that's all. I was coming back from the grocery and I met her on the pavement."

Amanda studied her lover's face. "But you like her, don't you. You'd like to go to bed with her."

"No, no, of course I wouldn't."

"Don't lie to me. Of course you fancy her. She was flirting with you like mad at dinner the other night. Women flirt with each other all the time, you know. You don't have to be so coy about it. Why do you think we go to bed with one another if we don't fancy each other?"

"Well, I guess, I mean, I do like her. It was nice sitting in the bar, drinking beer with her and all."

"And you thought to yourself, 'Gee, she's cute.'"

"Sort of. Yeah. I guess I did. But I mean, I'm with you and she's with Renate."

"Well I'm sure you could do something about that. Couldn't you? Did she come on to you? In the bar, while you were drinking all those beers? I bet she did."

"No, she was just nice to me."

"And she told you to leave me. Didn't she? I can see it in your eyes, Caroline. You know you never could lie to me. Well I'm going to call Renate and see what she has to say about all this."

"Don't do that, Amanda. Please. I couldn't bear it."

But Amanda was already up the stairs. Caroline watched as her fingers moved on the dial. Julie had been nice to her, she couldn't bear to have Amanda turn it into some crotch-groping



session with a stranger.

"I'm warning you, Amanda," she said.

Amanda looked down at her, raising her eyebrow at the word "warn".

"If you dial that number I'll, I'll do something terrible."

The phone was on a little table by the bannisters and in front was the flight of stairs leading to the kitchen where Caroline was standing.

"You'll do what?" sneered Amanda. The contempt in her eyes was like acid. There was nothing Caroline could do. Except not be there any more.

"I'm leaving," she said quietly, and she turned to walk back out into the night.

"No you're not," said Amanda. "You're going to stay right there and face the consequences." There was a note beyond fury in Amanda's voice. It sounded like fear. Caroline looked up at her, looked in her face, looked in her eyes.

"I'm leaving," she said again.

"Oh yeah? And where are you going to go this time of night? Who's going to take you in? You're going to Julie's, aren't you? I knew it. You are sleeping with that woman."

Amanda dropped the receiver, darted round the bannisters and seemed about to charge down the stairs. Her eyes were fixed on Caroline.

"You can't ..." she began, but her foot slipped on the top stair and suddenly the full weight of her body was falling through the air toward Caroline. At least that must be what had happened. It could not be that Amanda had thrown herself at Caroline in sheer rage. Instinctively, Caroline moved aside. She did not open her arms to break her lover's fall. Amanda's body hit the wall with a crack, crumpling up into a little broken heap. Caroline stared at her. There was a little trickle of blood coming from her left nostril and her arm was buckled.

"Hallo? Hallo?" called Julie's voice over the phone, as the receiver swung from the bannisters where Amanda had dropped it.

Caroline gazed blankly from Amanda's folded body to the receiver swinging in mid-air.

"Hallo?" she called, "Julie? Is that Julie? You have to come. It's Amanda. She fell down the stairs and I think she's broken her arm."

"She tried to kill me," said Amanda, as soon as she was conscious. She was very pale and rather shaky, struggling to maintain her air of self-possession and authority. "Caroline tried to kill me. She got this idea into her head that Julie wanted to sleep with her and when I pointed out that Julie was in love with you, she just went crazy."

Amanda's face clouded over. One moment she had been on the telephone calling Renate, the next she was falling through empty space, hitting the steps and landing on the floor below. She remembered Caroline's face, closed off to her; her own rage; then the pain in her arm, her ribs, her jaw. Her arm had been set and no longer bothered her, save the awkward weight of the plaster and the necessity of doing everything with her left hand. The hospital would not even have kept her overnight, had it not been for the dizzy incoherence which might have indicated concussion.

"That's awful," said Renate. "I can't believe she did that. You're lucky she only broke your arm. Julie told me she'd met Caroline that night and they'd had a few drinks together, so I suppose she must have been drunk. But Julie certainly didn't come on to her or anything."

Amanda waved her left hand in the air, as though dismissing the very idea. "The whole thing would be quite ridiculous, if it wasn't so painful," she said courageously, wincing into her plaster of Paris.

"Was she ever violent toward you before? Have you been trying to keep it quiet? Even lesbians can be battered, you know. Physical and psychological abuse in lesbian relationships has been such a taboo subject, I think you ought to speak out about it. I really do, Amanda."

"Well," said Amanda, "It does make me wonder whether I'll ever be able to trust a woman again."

"Of course it does," said Renate. "The emotional wounds will take much longer to heal than your broken arm. It is good



that you're able to talk about it already. A lot of people just freeze over, or deny the pain." Renate was surprised that Amanda was willing to discuss the subject at all. It often took years for a woman even to admit she had been battered. Perhaps working at Rape Crisis made it easier to recognize the pattern.

"I cared for Caroline very deeply," said Amanda, "I let her into a place that few people even get to see."

"And she betrayed you."

"Yes," said Amanda, simply, "I think she did."

"You can't let her get away with it, you know."

"But I can't take her to court. I really couldn't bear to have our relationship laid bare before the eyes of the world and the tabloid press."

"I know what you should do," said Renate. "Confront her with what she's done to you. Make her recognize the pain she's caused. Sometimes the women we work with want to confront their abusers, in a safe environment, of course."

"You're right," Amanda sighed nobly.

"I think we all know why we're here. Caroline, Amanda says you deliberately punched her in the face, causing her to fall down the stairs and break her arm. Is that true?" The questioner was Helga Jansson, a woman who'd never met Caroline before and so, the theory went, most likely to be able to remain uninvolved. But the confrontation was being held in the Rape Crisis building, and everyone but Caroline and Julie was on the collective with Amanda.

"No," said Caroline. "It's not true. Amanda fell."

The women from Rape Crisis looked at each other. They had been warned that Caroline was still in denial.

"Would you like to explain to us how Amanda came to fall down the stairs of her own house while she was in the middle of making a phone call?" Helga pursued.

"She was angry," said Caroline. "Her foot slipped on the step."

"Why was she angry?"

"She thought I was having an affair with Julie."

"But you weren't having an affair with Julie, were you? You hardly knew her."

Caroline said nothing. If she had opened her arms to Amanda as she fell, they would neither of them be here now. Amanda's arm would not be broken, Renate would not have come round that night, everything would be going on as usual. On and on. As usual. Did it matter what really happened as long as it was over now?

"You can hardly expect us to believe that Amanda turned round in the middle of a phone call and slipped down the stairs."

"I told her I was leaving her."

"You said just now she was angry because you were having an affair. Now you are telling us she was angry because you were leaving. Where were you going to go?"

Caroline fell silent. Significant glances went round the room.

"Well, we've heard what you have to say. Now you must listen to how your action affected Amanda."

Amanda went on for over an hour. Caroline was no longer listening. She was tired. She wanted it to be over. She had a cold sore on her upper lip which was painful. Occasionally she pushed at it with her tongue. Shouldn't they be calling the police now?

"So, if you can truly say that you are sorry for what you did, and promise in front of all of us sitting here today that you will never lay hands on Amanda, or any other woman, again in a rough or violent fashion, then Amanda is prepared not to press criminal charges against you. In reparation she asks that you devote a hundred and fifty hours of your time to redecorating the Rape Crisis building, or such tasks as you can usefully do. Do you agree to that?"

If she helped out at Rape Crisis, Caroline would have to see Amanda every day, since she worked there and was a key collective member.

"I will never lay hands on Amanda again," Caroline promised.

"Or any other woman?" Helga prompted.

"With violence," someone added.

"I will never touch any woman violently," said Caroline.

"And do you regret what you did? Are you sorry for the pain and suffering you have caused to the woman who was your lover?"



"I did not hit her," said Caroline. "I have nothing to be sorry for."

"Caroline, don't you realize that unless you can admit what you did and apologize you'll never be able to move on from here?" Renate asked in the specially re-convened meeting they held an hour later. "No one will be able to trust you."

"I trust myself," said Caroline, "That's all anyone really has."

Renate sighed and shook her head. "Well, Amanda just doesn't feel safe with you around any more. You must understand that. She wants never to see you or hear from you or have any kind of contact with you again. She'll be staying with me till tomorrow afternoon, by that time you must have packed your bags and left her flat, and you must not attempt to see her again. Do you agree to do that?"

"Yes," said Caroline.

Once she had decided to leave behind all the things Amanda had given her over the years, there was very little for Caroline to pack. A sleeping bag, some reggae cassettes, a couple of pairs of jeans and a bunch of t-shirts. She looked like a young American, packing for her first trek 'round Europe.

The doorbell sounded. Caroline jumped. Could it be Renate with Amanda, brought home early? Since it had been decreed that she was never to see Amanda again, Caroline was already breathing more easily. Though the sense of shock had never left her since that night when she saw Amanda's body hurtling toward her. The doorbell rang again. More imperious this time.

"Hallo, Julie," said Caroline, standing awkwardly on the landing. "Was there something they sent you to tell me?"

Julie just pushed past her and went up the stairs to the living room. Caroline followed. They stood for a moment by the sofa, looking at each other. Julie's face was frowning, Caroline's wary and closed.

"What really happened, Caroline?" Julie asked, rather more brusquely than she had intended.

Caroline shrugged. "I can't," she said, simply, sitting down. "I just can't talk about it. I have to leave now. I have to be able

to walk out of here."

"But..."

"I don't really mind," said Caroline. "I never have to see her again, I never have to hear another thing she says to me, I never have to make love to her, I don't even have to look at her. It's over. It's finally over."

"Was it so terrible?"

Caroline darted her eyes to Julie's face and Julie stepped back, shocked at the sudden pit of terror and hatred which opened up before her.

"They'll be here in a couple of hours," said Caroline, "I'm packed. I better go."

"Where are you going?"

"To the airport," said Caroline.

"I'll drive you," said Julie.

"You have to go to work."

"I'll call in sick," said Julie, "And anyway, I'm the boss."

"What will you say?"

"That a woman I like is leaving town," said Julie, "And I don't feel good about it."

"You'll make me cry," said Caroline. "I can't afford to cry."

There was a plastic supermarket carrier next to the bannisters. On the way out, Caroline bent over and checked the contents. The zucchini was beginning to soften at the edges and grow white fur down its back, but the jalapeño peppers sat greenly in their jar. There was a notice on the lid saying, in red letters, "Very Hot," with a thermometer drawn on the side of the jar in which the mercury was nearly bursting out of the top. She threw the zucchini in the dustbin, but the jalapeños she wrapped carefully and stowed away in the inside compartment of her bag.

"What time is your flight?" asked Julie, once they were safely on the motorway to Heathrow.

"Four-thirty," said Caroline.

"We've got loads of time."

"There was so little to pack."

Julie glanced at her from the driver's seat and held her hand for a moment.



"Where are you going? Or don't you want anyone to know?"

"I don't want Amanda to know where I am, what I'm doing, who I'm with or what my name is."

"You're planning to change your name?"

"And my birth sign," said Caroline.

"You can't change your birth sign," Julie protested. "You can't change when you were born."

Caroline laughed, "It's funny how sacred horoscopes are. How much we believe in the stars."

"What would you change it to?"

"Libra," said Caroline. "I'm going to be a Libra."

"And what were you?"

"I won't tell you that."

Julie laughed. "Then you must have been a Scorpio. Only a Scorpio would think of changing her sign." Caroline smiled.

"Where was it you said you were going?"

"San Francisco," said Caroline.

"Really? I mean, you bought an aeroplane ticket all the way to San Francisco? San Francisco, California? You're not just flying up to Edinburgh to spend a few days with your Aunt Mavis?"

"I'm going to San Francisco, Julie. And I'm never coming back. Not while Amanda's alive."

"Well, do you have friends there? People to stay with? You have been there before, for a holiday or something?"

"No," said Caroline, slowly, "No, and no."

"You don't know anyone there, you have no one to stay with and you've never been there?"

"That's right."

"Caroline," said Julie, "Have you planned this? Have you thought about what it's going to be like? You can't change country as easily as you can change your name."

"For the last six years I have been quite unable to plan anything."

"But without a work permit, they'll only let you stay six months."

"Then that's six months more than I can deal with at the moment. I just have to get away, far away where Amanda can't

get me, in a few months time when she's stopped being angry with me and wants me back."

"You're just running on fear," said Julie.

Caroline said nothing.

"Look," said Julie, "I'm going to give you the phone number of a friend of mine who has a house in San Francisco. She's always looking for people to rent rooms."

"What's her name?"

"Ella," said Julie. "Ella Jordan."

"Ella Jordan," repeated Caroline, savouring the sound of it on her tongue. "I feel better already."

She looked at Julie a moment. "You've been so good to me. I think you're a decent person." She laughed at the awkward formality of the phrase, but it was what she meant, and she did not say it lightly.

Then she picked up her black bag, full of jeans and T shirts and jalapeno peppers, and walked toward the boarding gate. Julie watched her go. A thin woman with a big bottom. She looked so terrifyingly alone. The kind of loneliness that smells, a disturbing odor of desolation and barren landscapes. Julie found a kind of comfort in the unfashionable spread of Caroline's hips. She was solidier than she looked.



Carellin Brooks

river

When you called me this evening you had just come from making love. I could tell by how your voice turned a notch when you said her name.

It betrays us always, the false intimacy of bodies, their interior spaces. My new lover is bigger than you, a strength that doesn't hold but frees me to rise against her. Last night she lowered her head and I gave in lips against wet skin.

(Everyone says I want to get back together with you, she said: three or four times.) I asked the obvious question. I could tell by how you said nothing what you wanted.

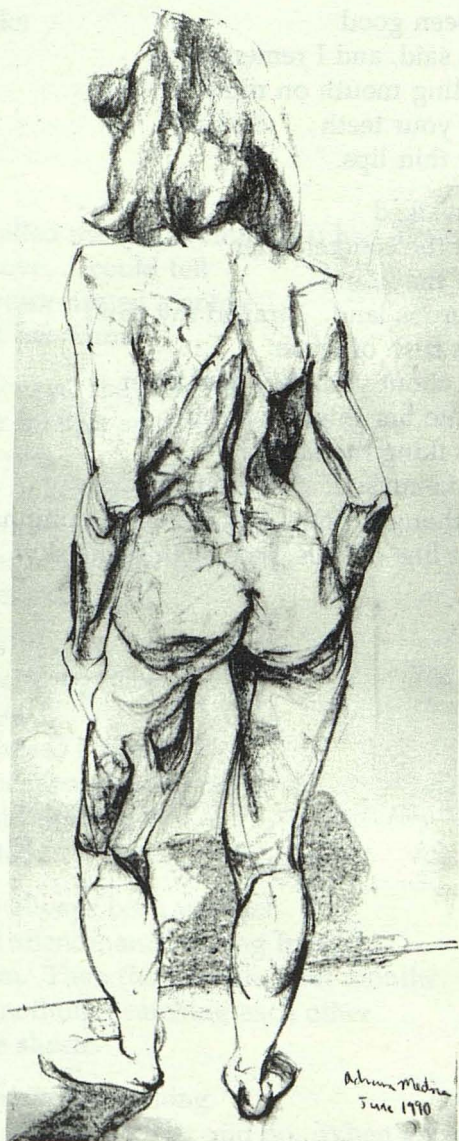
That's how it's always been with us: movement and silence, and waking from it as from a dream. Then the parcelled-out months when we said nothing, watching each other from across the sheets.

I could have forgiven anything but the turn of your body that said no. When you came it was with a cry as if you had been forced. I learned to take my pleasure quickly, moving without noise against your watching eyes.

It's always been good  
with us, you said, and I remembered  
your unyielding mouth on mine,  
the bones of your teeth  
behind your thin lips.

Yesterday I walked  
to the end of the concrete pier  
at the end of the island  
where the herons land. I trailed my hand  
in the brown rush of water  
and thought about you. My new lover  
draws me onto her thighs, working  
like a river, taking me farther  
than I can take myself. You are farther away  
than I ever thought possible, beyond the uninhabited islands  
and the faint line of hills, pale against the sky.





*Standing female nude backview*  
litho crayon on paper  
Adriana Medina

Reggie W. Brewster

## Not About the Ocean

Everyone is writing about the ocean these days  
telling me of seaweed and kelp and sand  
with all the details and sunshine.  
I have been to the ocean, too, and yes, I got a sunburn,  
but it was long ago.

Since I have lived in the midwest so long,  
spent my whole life in the "Land of 10,000 Lakes,"  
to write an ocean poem would be cheating.  
Indeed, the water body I knew best  
was hidden by a "Private Property — No Trespassing" sign.  
It was dark, late-night, no stars reflected on the lake,  
rather chilly, too, as I recall.  
We made love (though she has since gone to the ocean).  
I'm sorry that I can't remember more  
of the details; the sun wasn't out...  
I can't tell you how the water lapped on the shore, or how  
the cattails swayed, or how the lightning bugs blinked  
or how the fish flopped on that water;  
I can't tell you any of these things, and I can't tell you  
about the ocean.



Pamela Gray

## This Pantoum Was Not On My Schedule

I'm tired of breakup poems.  
I wasn't supposed to write more poems like this  
I wasn't supposed to need new metaphors for grief  
You were never supposed to leave me

I wasn't supposed to write more poems like this  
I'd outgrown loss, you see  
You were never supposed to leave me  
You were supposed to stay with me forever

I'd outgrown loss, you see  
The keening at bedtime, the ache in the gut  
You were supposed to stay with me forever  
I'd never have to feel like this again

The keening at bedtime, the ache in the gut  
That's over in our twenties, isn't it?  
I'd never have to feel like this again  
Never have to face that early morning dread

That's over in our twenties, isn't it?  
I thought I'd paid my dues  
Never have to face that early morning dread  
That moment of absolute aloneness

I thought I'd paid my dues  
Been left enough for one lifetime  
That moment of absolute aloneness  
No floor beneath my feet

Been left enough for one lifetime  
The old losses still live in my body  
No floor beneath my feet  
You were supposed to protect me, remember?

The old losses still live in my body  
I wasn't supposed to need new metaphors for grief  
You were supposed to protect me, remember?  
I'm tired of breakup poems.



TENI HALL



Lois DeWitt

## Hungry Hearts

The dollar of moon,  
sliding from the grasp of branches,  
is nightly invested with the stars.

We could bask in this richness  
of pale, black velvet night,  
our legs entwined,  
breathing each other's breath.

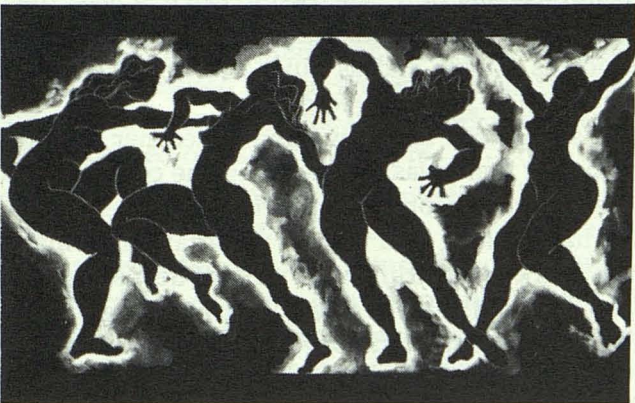
But instead we lie alone,  
me in my bed  
you in yours.

And when, at last we sleep,  
our hungry hearts go out and  
forage rodent-like  
amidst the cornstalks and gutterweeds  
for sweet kernels of love.

Kathryn Eberly

## Although You've Gone Dancing

Your breasts have stayed behind  
to have a little chat with me.  
They pull up a chair.  
They say: we are serious and  
we refuse to be dreamy.  
They say: we've been neglected  
and we're hurt.,  
but we love you.  
We miss the attention, what gives?  
The breasts are asking me questions.  
I'm trapped.  
I'm in a corner and I've no other choice  
but to send in the earlobes  
to negotiate.



*Figure Illustration, No. 4*  
Reven Swanson



Rustun Wood

## Passion/Play

See.

This is the page. And behind it is a writer and lying on it is the life of a woman in a story. And outside of it is that world that was not made to fit around the woman writer in a cold flat, nor around a woman whose life will appear on a page. Now see them hunched together: woman and writer and imagine the blank space that is to be the rest of the woman's story lying like a graveyard between the writer's fingers and the woman there spread on the page. Now imagine the woman writer trying to create a life of daffodils in a minefield of war. For that was what the woman writer, Serina, felt she was creating as she tried to dig a trench between her life and the woman's on the page. She tried to fill the blank page with a word in the alphabet, typed "T," but the rest of the words refused to be finished.

Outside, the morning was opening over the entrails of the night. But inside the cold flat, the unformed words collected around the typewriter, breathed in, and then disappeared before Serina could use any of it. She tried to catch at least the tail-end of one of the words on her tongue, but they were now here; then gone; quick as a fuck; and as quiet and forgotten as your last drawn breath. The page stayed empty.

Serina swallowed her saliva and rolled her tongue around her mouth: but there was no one thing she could pull out from the creases of her memory to complete a sentence. The end to the woman's life lay long as a stormy waterfall in Serina's mouth: dark, rich, murky — swirling with wells of deeps and orange and green and red and purple. She rolled her tongue around her mouth again, but could find no word left over on the cusps of her teeth.

The cold flat creased in on itself, and put a blanket on the life of the woman who smelled of the deeps of waterfalls and tasted

of purple. The page stayed empty, and Serina could not get past the one sentence that lay between her fingers: how does such a woman wake up and then find a place for herself in a world that is not open to women who taste of purple? Perhaps if she had smelled of just orange then she could have got up and had a long bath and then felt like a woman. And if she had smelled of day, she could have worn pastels and daintily minced down the streets. But a woman who smelled of just purple? How could Serina make her speak of the fat rolling around on the inside of mouths, the taste of red wine around her folding thighs, the smell of murder and revenge between her hair?

The daylight now leaned forward around the writer's shoulders and licked the last of the night from between the breasts of the woman there on the page. The rising sun licked invisible the wounds of the night. Flowers raised their heads a little higher: the sun looked up a bit, and while Serina was thinking of a word to write, the ghosts that lived inside her fingers lay back and tried to find a space in the uncomfortable morning dawning.



Do not sleep easy now; do not sleep softly: there is a woman on a page waiting for her life to be finished. The woman on the page lay with her eyes open and stared up at the ceiling. Her brows shifted a little. From beyond the page came the heavy weighted sighs of the loneliness which kept turning around in Serina's bed and refused to find an easy grave. And as the daylight came up, the woman on the unfinished page could feel the moon being robbed of its witch powers.

The cold flat turned, dodged in-between the words that could have described the woman, and Serina could only stretch her neck back and wait for her own silence to lick the night off her neck. She closed her eyes, swallowed and felt the lies cut like a secret through her heart. Women, the angel in her head was telling her, were treacherous things to write about. And this woman on the page was like so many before her who had been written about: like many before they stuck the knife in the back;



before they cut off the golden tresses of hair; before they threw back their heads and felt the power of their cunts go beyond orgasm and bring out the god and the satan in them. But where do women of purple go in this world? Each other? The other? Themselves? That was it, Serina's fingers felt as she started typing across the keyboard. They only have their own purples to go to. Therefore, women of purple don't wake up in the morning, and just lie back on cold pages. They smell their own hair; taste their own fingers; draw their own blood.

"Sometimes,/ when I am not lying on empty pages, I lick the death/ around my enemies' hearts" the woman on the page said to herself.

Serina opened her eyes, and continued typing: "When / she woke up that morning,/ she could only lie back and / taste / the sin that lived in her own bed./"

The woman on the page closed her eyes for a few seconds; dreamed and breathed.

"Her hands were covered with it;/ she smelled the purple she was bathed in,/ keeping her safe from the nightmares written in tongues on her walls./"

Serina leaned closer into the typewriter, and brought her thighs closer together.

"/She touched her hair;/ and plotted murder./"

The woman on the page pushed her head back a little, licked around her mouth and turned over.

"She counted the number of people she had haunted / both / in their dreams / and throughout the day,/ the ku klux klan / the preacher / the scared man / the woman with a black maid and children to think of / the man with his finger on the button./"

Serina let her nipples just skirt on the edges of the wooden table. Her fingers felt satisfied walking so easily over the keys. She drew her thighs closer to the table.

"The woman licked / her fingers / and tasted the salt of other people's nightmares./"

The woman on the page pressed her stomach and her tits

further into the mattress. She felt the heads of her enemies being smothered and drowned in the wined creases of her thighs.

"Lying/ back,/ staring at the ceiling,/ she laughed and rubbed her stomach./ What would the president have for breakfast this morning/ while/ he thought/ of/ people/ like her./"

Serina pushed her thighs closer around the table leg and locked her legs at the ankles. Her fingers and the keyboard were in conversation.

"No matter what/ the president/ would have/ thinking of her/ and them/ she knew she had his fear/ for always./"

The woman on the page moved out of the sheets and wrapped herself around the typewriter cartridges. Serina's fingers typed and she rubbed her nose in the purple that was coming through from her fingers.

"She/ lay/ back/ and laughed//."

Ankles locked, Serina started rubbing herself against the rounded bulge of the table. The smell of somebody's cunt was coming through and coming through strong. The woman on the page pulled at her own nipples and felt the satisfying taste of her enemies' blood on her teeth.

"She laughed/ and/ laughed/ and saw the president eating her blood for breakfast./"

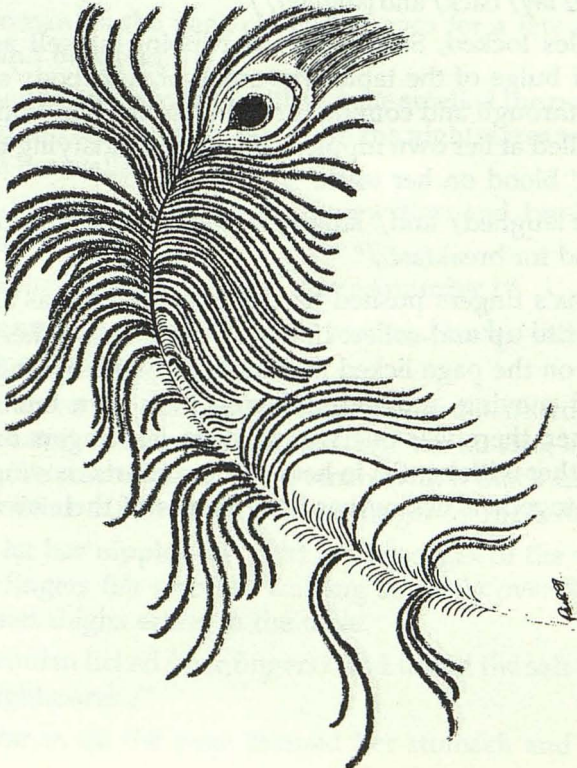
Serina's fingers pushed harder into the keys as she felt the ground rise up and collect in her stomach and in her cunt. The woman on the page licked and licked while laughing her head off. And moving, moving, enjoying their own terrors against each other, there was one woman with her fingers on the keys and another with her fist in her enemies' hearts moving, moving, coming together: licking hard the flames of their own desires.



Sandra Havener

## Frackle

Native leaves like mesquite, like mimosa:  
Yellow dangling tassels  
like yellow food, like pink,  
food like clover for bees,  
for the wax cages, for the honey boxes.



Peni Hall

Jen Benka

## Symbol of Sound

*I'd rather read "Have I told you that I put my tongue in Bernadette's mouth," than "Have I told you I'm a lesbian?"*

—Stacy Szymaszek

A word is a word is a word  
 for something  
 frustrated in its own meaning.  
 Capturing and distancing itself —  
 two women masturbating  
 in separate rooms  
 imagining the other.

Without naming my wanting  
 I watch her  
 sitting near me  
 stare at her softness...  
 If I strung letters together  
 to make a line sound like her  
 it might speak  
 sunrise or sunflower or dusk.  
 It might be quiet  
 breath.

Without naming my touching  
 my hand presses her breast  
 circles it deep into her chest.  
     move with me  
     move with me  
     slow and around  
 My tongue touches her lip  
 follows a line  
 down to her hip I sturdy and sink  
 face first  
 inbetween then into her      slow  
 and around  
 and around  
 again.



Susan Stinson

## Cream

One day an angel was walking down the Main Street of Moody. She saw a store, and entered. A fat red-headed woman stood behind the counter. She nodded at the angel, and the angel recognized her. She leaned on the counter. "Are you Martha Moody?"

Martha rang up a purchase and nodded again. "What's your pleasure?"

The angel blinked her large yellow eyes, and said, "I am Azreal, and I need a favor."

Martha said, "I can't take any time off from the store."

Azreal stuck her muzzle in a barrel and picked up an apple. "Come on," she said out of the side of her mouth. "It'll just take a few moments of your time."

Martha frowned. "Don't bite that apple unless you're going to buy it. Can it wait until after five?"

Azreal licked the apple with her long tongue, then put it back in the barrel.

"Hey," said Martha.

Azreal held up her hoof. "That will make it extra sweet for some lucky customer."

Martha looked skeptical, but as soon as the angel had wandered off, she found the very apple and took a bite. It tasted like honey would if it had a peel.

Azreal was back at five sharp. Martha lowered the awning and locked up, then looked her visitor in the eye. "What would you have me do?"

Azreal's voice was suddenly grander. "Your task is to come to a dry town and use your powers to make it wet and green."

Martha stared at the angel as the store fell away around them.

A wind came up and blew the gray cloak off Azreal to reveal her in full glory as a winged cow. She was the color of fine butter, with deep yellow skin, broad yellow udders with veins in the pattern of lightning, yellow at the end of her tail, and the inside of her ears and around the eyelids yellow.

Martha saw that she was no longer standing, but floating on blue air thick as cream. Her black dress melted away from her, and she found herself in a short garment of a shimmering white fabric she did not recognize, with thin straps and a pattern of eyelet flowers over her breasts. Her body was loose underneath — her corset frothed off her into ticklish bubbles — and she was moving all over herself, like the sky cream she was riding.

"Look down," lowed Azreal. Martha saw a hilly, green country, very different from Moody, with trees in abundance and black roads and strange houses at regular intervals.

"You must make it wet and green."

"But it's already green," said Martha, turning onto her side so that she could see the cow flying beside her. "So many trees."

"It's dry at the heart," Azreal insisted.

So Martha stretched out on her belly and floated looking down through the clear blue cream to the clusters of houses and odd vehicles. Azreal watched over her shoulder and breathed grassy smells on her back.

When they were close enough, Martha saw people — women, mostly, and small boys and girls — carrying brown bags, talking, gliding the streets in closed wagons. They looked like the people of Moody, just dressed funny and most of the women were thinner — but a smell rose from them and their houses. Martha didn't recognize it, but it bit into her nose and made her eyes water.

"Dry rot." Azreal flicked her tail, and the cream sky darkened. "Go on, Martha. They're desperate."

Martha wondered how to go about bringing them liquid. She could cry them a river, but she wasn't that moved. In fact, she felt indifferent to lives whose dryness made her itch even from this distance. "Why won't you do it?" she asked Azreal.

The cow stretched her wings. "That's not my role. I just make



the cream."

Martha knew a thing or two about cream. She dipped a flesh-rippled arm in the thick sky she was floating in. "So that's it. Okay. I'll churn the air."

"You can stand on my back if you want." Azreal beat her wings and flew close to Martha. "To have a solid surface."

So Martha climbed onto the back of the yellow angel cow. Azreal's back was broad, and Martha's feet were bare, so when she squatted for a moment, then stood up straight, she had a firm footing. She wanted to beat as much of the cream as she could, so she started swinging her arms and rolling her hips, the big swings of her belly moving the cream in a firm circle. Her hips stirred from the front and the back, and her arms caught the motion over her head and brought it back down to her hips again. She moved like sex, like magic, like the ocean she carried with her in her rippling back. The soft parts of her body that she couldn't agitate floated back and forth in rhythm as she worked. It was hypnotic and exhausting. Martha hadn't learned so much motion in childhood, but grew into it with her breasts and the rolls of her sides. She walked forward on Azreal's back with her hips and arms rolling, then turned on her toes and walked to the tail. Azreal sang low repetitions in the ancient voice of cow, to help.

They hung in froth that lasted for what seemed hours, a screen of small blue bubbles that clung to Azreal's hide and Martha's skin, but slid off her shiny slip. They could no longer see the town, but Martha had closed her eyes, anyway, to concentrate. She forgot about the people, forgot about dryness, but lost herself in texture, in nuances of foam as it slipped down her sides, as it clung to her eyelids and coated her hair. She felt herself swelling, arms and belly spreading until she and Azreal could move the whole sky.

Then it happened. It thickened. Martha's breaths came slow and filtered through blue whipped cream. Azreal kept singing. Martha waved and rolled and danced. Quickly the cream clotted and buttermilk spilled upon the people who had been pursuing their business as if the sky were a far and placid place.

Martha sat on Azreal, who flapped her wings slowly to help her gather the butter into a ball.

"That's the moon," Azreal told her. "They'll see it shine tonight."

Martha dug some craters with her fingers. "Do you go through this every month?"

Azreal shook her head. "Not that often. But these people are so hollow that they suck the moon down to nothing. So I look for a woman with strength and succulence who can churn my cream to butter when it gets too bad. There's nothing like buttermilk rain for dry rot."

Martha glanced down. It all looked about the same, only glossy.

Azreal landed. "Thank you so much."

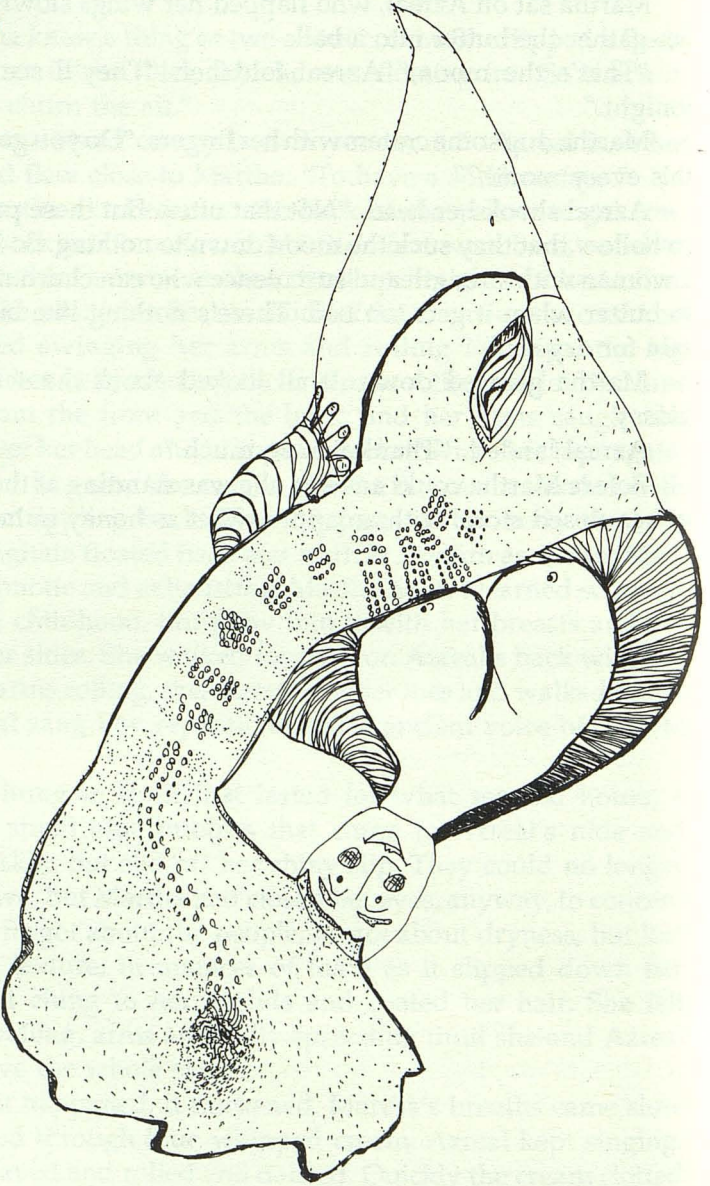
Before Martha could answer, she was standing at the counter of her closed store, with an apple sweet as honey in her hand.



*Change is not necessarily perpendicular*

pen and ink

Kath Rodgers



3/2/11

Laura Bean

## Letter Written From One Hen to Another as Dictated to a Sympathetic Farm Girl

My Dearest Amelia cluck-cluck,

If I, a chicken, were to stand before you, another chicken, and unruffle my feathers, which have been ruffled for some time now, given the life of the coop — no, no, scratch that. I, a hen, stand before you, another hen, featherless, in the skin, as it were. Yes, Amelia, there have been others.

But now, after reading *Healing the Chick Within*, I know that it was fear which led me to strange roosts. I hoped that surrounding myself with other hens could make our loving risk-free. Oh, I have transgressed, my darling! cluck-cluck

You are the only chicken with whom I wish to nest. I delight in scratching our names in the soil while we peck at the cracked corn, though we hurry to cover them up before the others see.

Oh, they don't see, do they? And I fear that what they don't understand, they must destroy. What ills will my true affection bring? Will my love for you be deemed foul? Will I be considered a danger to the chicks? Or sent to see the veterinarian? cluck-cluck cluck-cluck

Such thoughts leave me flightless. But with you, I soar (sort of). Permit me to enter the folds of your loveliness once again. Though we peck nervously and worry about getting our necks wrung, we will love.

Without you, I am less than a fryer.

X  
Greta  
cluck-cluck



C. E. Atkins

## Confessions

I won't get out of bed without coffee.  
Some people like me, some don't.  
I walk the streets planting my bitterness  
between the cracks of sidewalks.  
I'm afraid of the moon and her jade power.  
The things it will do to me!  
I have a weakness for mountains and small streams.  
I have an aunt who was once young and very beautiful.  
She played out her sadness on the white teeth of a piano.  
I am a liar. A cheat.  
I'll steal anything that fits inside my pants or pockets.  
When I'm hungry, I read.  
I had a father who was drunk, and fell down  
on the rug in the living room.  
My mother kicked him, I think.  
There are ways to survive and I've learned some.  
I worship my soul, despise myself.  
I am a loser, a thief, a footprint, a leaf.  
Lately, I've had deep and endless dreams.  
Sometimes my body is all fist.  
I am stronger and weaker than you could ever believe.

Gail M. Koplou

## November

Like sniffles, sin is annual.  
Every November, bittersweet as anise  
I find noisy discontents, malfeasances  
within my own undercountry.  
My basement's low-ceilinged, has  
musty rock and mortar walls.  
My body feels pressurized, as if in a rickety DC-3.  
I have an idea from years past that I could  
fly out the bulkhead into space  
spinning with mischief.

When sin's up, I nosebleed, I heartache.  
I see so much possibility, like a  
crash landing on Antarctica  
causing great harm  
doing banal, big-winged things.  
I eat lightly so as not to  
feed the goatish part.  
I take long endorphin walks on the beach.  
On the night of November twenty-first, 1992,  
a woman in a top hat shouted carny speeches  
in my dreams. Step right up and  
carpe diem, she shouted  
wiping her wet nose with a striped sleeve.

Even though I glimpsed my pleasant  
fifty-three year old body at the discount store  
the rules say: you're not sexy.  
Even though my skin is dry and freckled  
from sunny antics. Even though my multipara  
belly swells like an expensive sofa cushion.



I am beautiful. You see me?

My parents said nothing of lust and I never got to ask my grandparents, though they owned several candy dishes. When I slept on the couch in their kitchen, Pop would slip me a slice of Genoa salami at midnight. She doesn't want lunch meat, Jerry, Nonny would whisper in their bed fifteen feet away but he never believed her. Nonny was a woman as restless as I am, fed me pink canada mints, dressed in shivery, purplish silk made love to Poppa. I could hear their smacking sounds. But she knew what she was missing. We cried at matinees every Wednesday. Their basement scared me full of orphaned cats she fed erratically. A huge humanoid furnace, white, arms outstretched toward the floor registers heating itself, turning on in November whenever anyone touched the thermostat.

Bettianne Shoney Sien

## The Cold War

I don't believe Russia exists.

When I think of Russia I see my mother is shouting that if someone were at the neighbors with a gun pointed to their heads, wouldn't we defend ourselves?

"But mom, why would Russians point a gun at Allie Ziegler's head? They didn't point a gun at anyone else's head."

"You're seven years old," my mother says, "what do you know about Russians?"

It's just that it has been snowing all week. It has to do with God and Saint Norbert's Catholic cemetery and how the ground is so stubbornly frozen that our dead uncle can't be buried.

"Russia's even colder," my mother says, "so be grateful you don't live there."

If Russia exists.

I breathe holes into the frost on the pane to watch the sky. I confuse flurries with stars and planets while my mother whacks sprouts off last summer's potatoes before throwing chunks of them into the soup pot.

It is eight o'clock. It has been snowing all week, and has been night for hours. The house smells cold and the scraped ice I suck from my fingernails taste sweet.

"Stop it," my mother says, "you know you can't see stars when it's snowing. Why don't you listen to me? Half the time those aren't even stars. It's the Russians, watching us. They can hear everything, too. Put your coat on if you're going to sit by the window."

Out the window I watch a million tiny Russian ballerinas plummet to the ground, while my mother mixes chicken fat into the soup pot.

I pull my mother's plaid woolen coat around me and play with the sharp beads I find loose in her pocket. I once thought



they were glass, before I held one up to the sun and saw the plastic seam.

"What does it matter?" My mother said, "They're still pretty."

I had been sitting on her lap in the car, the frost like moss across the dashboard in front of me. The tip of my tongue stuck to the metal in the same moment that she warned, "Don't you dare lick that dash." She had given me the beads for comfort but the string broke as I wondered how long taste buds took to grow back.

It is eight o'clock and has been snowing for months. My mother is a gray frayed dress with red hands.

I wish they would come, marching in their furry hats across Highway 12. They could blow like drifts from someplace that does not exist, past toy farms and humps of wrecked tractors in white fields. The children would stop with their rusted wooden sleds to watch as the woolen soldiers knocked over the priest. The dogs would be too scared to bark, they would stand like they had been dipped in dry ice. The sisters of St. Francis would excitedly chant the rosary, their faces triumphant with martyrdom.

My mother looks at the clock and strains to hear a car engine above the silence of the snow. She drops dry chicken bones into the soup. It is eight o'clock and I watch seamless snowflakes build hills across our farm and walls to hide us from our neighbors. Fog rises from the soup, and I think of the headless chicken that ran scarlet circles in snow yesterday.

When the Russians point their guns at my hat, I would fold my hands as I had been instructed by the nuns, bow my head and tell the truth, "Nope, I do not believe in God."

Then would the soldiers take me back to Russia with them?

"You'll see when they come," my mother insists. "Look at the snowflakes," she says, "God made each one different."

But I have no proof, they always melt into my mitten before I can compare.

My mother says, "It's eight o'clock, how can it still only be eight o'clock?" She opens the door, tries to make out the road through the gray shield of the storm, then slams it against the invading flakes. She sits down at the oilcloth covered table and

picks walnuts loose from their cracked shells.

What if the Russians don't ask me if I believe in God? They might just line me up with all the others against the barn door and blast us.

What will happen then? With no God or heaven, and I'm not so sure about limbo either, though I like that limbo song on the radio. But I think they only allow babies.

So there I'll be in the snow bleeding with my family in stale hay and manure and the cows will be mooing, while the Russians climb the walls to Allie Ziegler's farm to point guns at their heads.

Soft bombs of snow will fall and our bodies will have to wait for the frost to end before we can be buried along with our dead uncle.

I uncurl a strand of paint from the windowsill and say, "Mom, the clock is unplugged."

"You and your snotty mouth," my mother says.





*Figure Illustration, No.1*  
Reven Swanson

Darmaye Marley

## Experience

South Texas, one hundred miles from the Mexican border. Everything flat, hot, dry and thorny, even you. I'd been there five years when we met. I wasn't a native. You liked to remind me of that. I was a damn Yankee. I left you there. Burned all your cards, letters — even tried to burn the jewelry. Traveled back north. Back to cool green mountains. Back to where I knew the water flowed and wouldn't sting my eyes, like your Gulf. Yes, I remember swimming there with you. Drunk.

You wouldn't know me now. But I think of you sometimes. I'm embarrassed to admit I've forgotten your last name. Your maiden name was Russell, is that right? We used it sometimes in various small-town hotels. We were a real hoot, weren't we? Two married women sneaking away from the watchful eyes of husbands. State parks, secluded beaches. Had to be so careful.

Your husband was a real Texas man. Even in his slick business attire, he was real Texan. Nothing more than a red-neck packing a pistol. He hated damn Yankees, especially me. Came for me once, with his gun. Thanks for calling and warning me. Last time I ever talked with you.

Ah, well, we weren't in love by that time. What was it? All of nine months? By that time we had managed to create so much scandal. God, you should have known better — a successful business woman like you. So calculating, no wonder the company thrived under your direction.

I'd like to sugarcoat it, like so many stories I've since heard. "Sweet." "Mystical." "Empowering." I didn't know any stories back then. I just knew what I was experiencing. You. When I feel I must classify you, and often lately I feel I must, I place you in the experience category.

"She was my first 'experience.'"

Thanks for calling and warning me about the gun.

South Texas. Flat. Hot. Dry. And thorny.



Lenore Baeli Wang

## Fullness of Harmony

When you were fifteen it was like being on a merry-go-round. With each revolution you caught a glimpse of the brass ring, but it was always one hand's length out of reach. That's what being fifteen was like, Terry thought, hiding her eyes behind her copy of *My Darling, My Hamburger*. From the moment they left their shiny apartment in New York, until now, her parents' communication had deteriorated. They should stop every hour, even if they didn't have to go to the bathroom, her mother said. Sitting long in a filthy car required frequent refreshment. His car was clean, her father had snapped, and if he listened to her they would be in Florida Christmastime.

Although being in the car with them was as comfortable as being in a tank with piranhas, Terry speculated it might be interesting to find out how well she could manage.

Now they were arguing whether or not they should visit Terry's cousin. By her mother's voice she knew it was more than a matter of inconvenience.

"She should not be exposed to such an influence."

"Karen is our relative, my sister's daughter. We're in the area. There's no reason we shouldn't drop in. We can have coffee. You can wash your face," he enticed. "Then we'll be on our way."

Her mother complained that it wasn't necessary and became a "stubborn mule" in the eyes of her father who, to her mother, had become very painful to her ass.

Terry took her father's side. Putting her book tent-like on the seat — she could always return to it should things get hotter — she prepared to speak. It would be like poking a finger into the water when the piranhas were feeding. She felt her sentence reach over into the front seat like a finger: "I'd like to see my cousin, especially if she lives in a trailer. It would be like going to a circus camp."

"Yeah, a couple of clowns." Her mother snorted.

Terry could feel peace spread slowly through her stomach as the muscles of her hands and arms relaxed. Like two outstretched, unsevered fingers her sentences reached over into the front seat, perhaps one resting on the head of her father, the other on her mother's shoulder. They had not screamed at her.

The "lawn" was mostly dirt. Sparse grass grew straggly and blond, like the sparse but fluffy brass-colored triangle on that girl in her father's magazine. Sometimes when her parents were out, she rescued the glossed-in women from under father's pajamas at the bottom of his night table drawer. She couldn't resist staring at the brassy, fluffy one, labelled Janice, who loved to ski and kayak. She confessed her fantasy was to lose her path on a lonely ski trail, to be rescued by a healthy St. Bernard with brandy, a broad-shouldered owner close behind. She wanted that burly owner, she reassured the interviewer, who told readers that at this point she laughed, shaking her blond hair.

Terry most liked Janice's smooth blond hair that slid curvy down her shoulders. If she could stroke it once, if she could have it in place of her own dull brown hair —.

Her mother was wanting a promise they would not stay at Karen's an hour. Damn it, he wanted help finding those invisible trailer numbers.

The dirt may have been dusty, bland, but amidst tussocks of grass, it held narrow homes, some corrugated, as if holding an energy like the one in Terry's gut now. She wished she could open all the doors.

Karen's strong, clear "hello" made her forget everything but visiting Karen. It was celebratory, like a bird wanting to sing just because it could. Terry said "hello" in hopes that Karen would sing a second time, but Karen was already dragging in her parents, telling them they would love the place. Her father asked, responding to the female teasing he liked, "What is it, a hollowed out two-by-four?" Karen laughed as if she appreciated something in his comment that he was unaware of and patted his back. She invited them into the kitchen to meet Laura, to have a bottle of beer.



"Why do you live in a trailer?" Terry asked.

Her mother took little sips of beer from a huge glass with green and purple flowers. Terry could imagine climbing into a glass that size, but didn't have much time to — Karen was explaining, "Singing in nightclubs is not lucrative."

"Care" — that was the way Laura pronounced her cousin's name — "does some electrical work on the side. She repairs things for people here." Her hair was like Janice's.

"Lucrative," Karen answered her question, "means money-making, which music is not."

"But you play in nightclubs. Isn't that being famous?"

Karen poured half the beer from the bottle into her throat. "It's being hard-up; don't ask what that means, you dictionary thumper."

"Dictionary thumper?"

Karen slapped the table in amusement so strong that the beer in her mother's glass hissed softly and made new foam. The two girls and her father laughed — he watched Laura like she wanted to — but since Terry could not see what was funny, she put the mouth of her beer bottle into her mouth, tilted her head back. She felt fish-like, her lips forming an "O"; maybe that's why they were laughing, no, they had laughed before that. She couldn't remember anymore when it was her beer disappeared. It had been delicious, tasting almost like pretzels, bubbly, golden, bitter. Despite her mother's grumblings, "Sure she could have another," her father said. "The kid's had a rough trip. Besides, you know how observant she is."

Terry pretended to be very observant of Karen's fingers as they pinched the cap off her fresh bottle. Her thumb rolled smoothly round its ridges; her index finger, with its neatly squared nail, pointed backwards in the opposite direction. It was such a persuasive finger Terry almost believed the direction it stung the air was significant, but it only indicated Karen's own breast. From beneath her burgundy shirt, which must have been soft, a nipple was outlined. Laura saw her. Terry was surprised to receive a smile from this curly-haired friend of her cousin.

Strong, smooth, the color of coffee with just a drop too much

of cream, Karen's hands would stay for a long time curved around her brain. She felt them massage an odd joy around her mood.

"She's wasted," Terry heard Laura say from the far end of the table.

Was she really drunk? She had never been so it was fuzzy to figure out. If she really were, she would not wonder if she were. That was easy. Her brain felt like the Cheshire cat, wide, white, grinning....

Everyone was discussing sleeping for some reason, her mother insisting it would be an inconvenience, they could easily find a hotel; Karen, that hotels were expensive; probably not clean, her father speculated. Laura said, "We have more space than you think, and look at poor Terry."

Terry did not feel poor, just thirsty, eager to sleep. If she could only get sleep now, it would be like hay to a cow, milk to a baby, sex to the sex maniac — she thought this would make a good poem.

"Could I have a pen, Karen?"

Karen pulled a thin maroon pen from her breast pocket. It was heavy, and she felt, just from holding it, it would ink beautiful lines, penmanship, words; it could probably even write a great poem.

"Are you going to write on my table, or would you like some paper, too?"

Terry could not figure out what Karen meant. The pen was perfect; she did not want to scribble on the table with it. Was she hinting that like a schoolgirl Terry would be inclined to write on desks? She could see herself filling the entire surface, then the sides, legs, scribbling the best parts underneath. Anyone sitting there would miss what was scrawled beneath the surface of the desk. But she really did want to sleep.

Karen put a cot in the bedroom, where Terry would sleep with her parents. It was fruitless to protest, Karen and Laura would take the fold-out couch. Terry was glad to stretch out on the tight canvas bed. It did not sink, but vibrated slightly when she struck it. Both her parents were soon snoring in the dark.

When she awoke — had she slept? — to the lion of their



snores, she remembered that she had fallen asleep to the ocean. The ocean roared, but then it murmured, hummed and sang while the earth danced beneath it. Pounding the sand, it hummed; singing, it clawed back into itself particles of shell, sand it would fling out again. The hum and scrape of the ocean was the sound she heard now. It wasn't her parents snoring. Something scratched the sand, or was scratched by it; something murmured.

Karen was playing guitar with her fingers, making more music with her mouth. Terry brought knees to chin by the door and listened. Listening in the dark was funny. Fingers of music brushed against her cotton pajamas, made her goosebumpy. Should she go into the living room to hear better? It might be too good, then Karen and Laura would see her cry. If it was strong from here, she should let it surround her and be satisfied ... but if there was a chance of getting it fuller, she had to take it. She opened the door as narrowly as possible and closed it quickly so no light passed over the gaping faces of her parents.

Karen sat on the floor cross-legged, her guitar, like a curvy woman, across her lap. Laura lay in front of her, a curvy woman in a knee-length white T-shirt. With her chin resting on the cushion of her palm, her fingers folded down, exposing her very red lips exposing small teeth. Laura watched Karen play as if she were reading the most beautiful line of a poem over and over. Just above a knuckle on her right hand, slid as far down her middle finger as possible, a braided silver band encircled. Karen's eyes followed a line, perhaps an invisible guitar string that ran over Laura's shoulder out the low window and into the dim porch lights. Terry dared not move for fear of stirring air particles that would jar the invisible string, creating disharmony where so fine a tension throbbed in perfect harmony.

*Who will you be?* She sung her words over the string into an upward trajectory, so that once out the window, they merged with the stars — that's why they trembled; they weren't really twinkling.

*And what will you say when they tell you you're done?* Karen shook her head sadly as she sang, causing the string to shift the particles, filling the air with a bewildering melodiousness. When

she had finished, words and music diminishing gradually until what lingered was as round, sharp, fine as the final period in a Portuguese sonnet, it was Laura who plucked the silent "string" by inviting Terry, curled in the corner of the hallway, to finish creeping into the living room.

"Can you play?" Karen asked. Terry shook her head. "Here." She received the glossy instrument into her lap. If the strings were lines in a poem, she wanted to say, maybe I could play them so you'd at least get a little pleasure. But this, this long-necked body, I have no idea what to do with it.

"I'll teach you a chord," Karen said. She came round and sat on the floor behind her so Terry could feel the soft little hills of her breasts nestle against the curves of her back. With her left hand Karen grasped Terry's limp, curious fingers and molded them into the C-chord. "Use your thumb. I haven't a pick. Good, now we'll try an F." She also learned G<sup>7</sup>. Karen held up grid-like drawings, scattered with solid black dots, indicating where she should put her fingers. She alternated between the three chords until the tips of her fingers ached; they came away barred with tiny grooves.

"Let me teach you to bring them together." Her cousin came back around to hold her hand and cushion her shoulder blades once more.

But the next sound they heard was not strings vibrating together; instead it was the toilet flushing. Her mother sprang from the bathroom, shouted from the hallway that she was to dress immediately; they were leaving. "Sam, get up. I told you we shouldn't have come." She looked at the women. "Guitar-playing excuses for touching my daughter," she said.

Karen looked directly into Laura's eyes. "We won't lower ourselves by defending what needs no defense."

"Right." Laura nodded firmly, opening an encouraging smile to Terry.

"You'd better get out of those pj's and into your traveling duds," Karen said. She rumpled Terry's hair.

"Right."

"And take these with you." Karen gave her the five chord cards.



At the door her mother said she had nothing to say.

"That's fine with me." Karen shook her father's hand, told them to have a safe trip. Laura took a step back, although she did extend her hand to him.

Terry couldn't look at Karen, but Laura grabbed her hand and shook it in a way that said, *You're alright*. She couldn't believe it. Karen gave her left hand a hard squeeze.

"The shamelessness, the nerve to actually be proud of sexual deviance," her mother said as they got in the car.

Let her. Terry would keep the throbbing of that song. It flowed through her veins now, she felt it, radiating outward, leaf by leaf vibrating the passing trees, through the veiled morning sun, glimmering in her ears, filling her. In her hands the chord cards she clutched were a kind of connect-the-dots. She would examine them as soon as they arrived at a lighted place.



Aspen

Donna Allegra

## The Women Always Wave the Flags

At construction sites  
they stand bored  
signalling traffic  
out the way of big machines

Women in hard hats  
fly fluorescent orange warning:  
caution, slow down  
their banners telegraph:  
men at work

But today I saw  
a worker with round in her hips  
straddle a machine gun drill  
shuddering through stone

She braced her body  
to conduct its force  
to trumpet a hole in the rock  
anchor a bolt to the wall  
fasten the pole  
she hoisted like a baton  
unfurled her colors  
and let the flag wave  
by itself.



Neta C. Crawford

## Sound of My Voice

my voice  
a chair  
a pillow  
the soft wide bed of childhood  
should comfort

the rhythm  
wrap you up

sound  
cover you  
with feathers

resonate  
warm  
in a different language  
tones understood  
only

sound of the story  
continued  
after sleep begun

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 Review

*The Issue is Power — Essays on Women, Jews, Violence and Resistance*  
 by Melanie Kaye-Kantrowitz, San Francisco: Aunt Lute, 1992.

This is an essential nonfiction resource book, a collection of essays (1979-1992), which grapples with the complexity of issues vital to women, lesbians, feminists, Jews and all progressives concerned with social justice. The collection displays a type of insight and sophisticated perspective only an experienced activist like Melanie Kaye-Kantrowitz can offer. Taking into account the wide scope of issues that comprise the ongoing struggle that Kaye-Kantrowitz has actively dedicated many years to, this book needs to be viewed not as "polished" writing, but as a synthesis, a commentary, a record of history and a list of questions and suggestions necessary in order to continue the struggle.

One piece, a written transcript from her talk at the March, 1991, Out/Write Conference in San Francisco explains the type of writing she seems to engage in:

"... 1. the personal journal, raw, in which personal/political boundaries blur. Unfinished. Art is the last thing on my mind and audience next to last.

2. press releases, speeches, statements, project descriptions, leaflets, chants. Finished writing, for me, has focused outward, to what's immediately useful" (230).

Knowing this explains the unique organization of some of the essays; however, the brilliance of Kaye-Kantrowitz's writing (a combination of data, explanation, personal experience and illustration) lies in the "immediately useful" nature of the analysis and the suggestions she makes for individual and mutual understanding. Hers is an important, hopeful voice reviewing a decade fraught with fractionalization, a war, a rise in hate crimes, violence against women and the trivialization of the needs of underrepresented peoples. Her analysis of Jewish lesbian identity, the placement of Jews historically and the dilemmas of



progressive Jews now is important and clarifying.

The section "To be a Radical Jew in the Late 20th Century," confronts the primary injustice Kaye-Kantrowitz sees in operation: American capitalism. She argues that progressive Jews need to deepen our understanding of the relationship of anti-Semitism and racism to class. She does not believe that we can fight anti-Semitism or racism without attacking the systematic economic injustice of American capitalism. This means confronting "the reality of how we live versus how much of the world lives" (135). She sees anti-Semitism as a smokescreen that prevents people from examining the true structure of property and power: "Anti-Semitism protects christian wealth. As economic straits tighten for many, history teaches us to expect a rise in anti-Semitism as well as racism" (121). While Kaye-Kantrowitz sees racism and anti-Semitism as two very different experiences, she convincingly states that they come from the same source — a white supremacist ideology that underpins this country.

She addresses media-exacerbated tensions between African American and Jewish communities with calls for mutual understanding and action: "Jews need to articulate strongly a pro-Jewish, anti-racist position addressing not just our common ground of discrimination and race hate but our not-so-common ground of economic inequities. Many Jews working against racism and on various progressive issues are invisible as Jews, and we need to identify ourselves clearly" (128). Kaye-Kantrowitz counters inflammatory media hype by giving us names of bridge-building political activists. The work of several Jewish South African anti-apartheid activists (Ruth First, Nadine Gordimer, Abie Nathan, Albie Sachs, Helen Suzman, Janet Levine) is seldom heard of or acknowledged, as well as the work of African American organizer Albert Raby, who first brought Dr. Martin Luther King to Chicago and worked to unite the Black and Jewish communities there.

Other calls to unity come from Kaye-Kantrowitz's interpretation of the way African American and Jewish women have been maligned by sexism as well as anti-Semitism and racism. She explains that in both communities "male privilege and homo-



phobia have interfered with women acting in their own interest" (125). Jewish women experience sexism from Jewish men as well as the dominant culture, which focuses on the "loud, pushy Jewish woman" and the "Jewish American Princess" (JAP). Kaye-Kantrowitz sees these myths to be similar in construct to the stereotypes plaguing African American women, again from outside and inside the community, as the strong "black matriarch" and the "welfare mother." She argues that Jewish and African-American women can heal the split between communities by seeing themselves outside of male and white definitions which ignore issues of class and grossly distort economic reality. Kaye-Kantrowitz also notes that some of the most hopeful and healing individuals in this crisis between communities have been lesbians. She cites the political work and lives of lesbians who "... have always formed a disproportionately high number of cross-class, cross-race, cross-culture relationships. Often these relationships retain familial status even after breaking up. ... For many lesbians, dealing positively with Black-Jewish tension is not abstractly desirable but concretely necessary" (126-127).

Another excellent analysis is Kaye-Kantrowitz's reconstruction of the way we view Arab-Israeli relations. In citing the work of Algerian psychiatrist Frantz Fanon who asked, "Why do oppressed people strike out at their own?" Kaye-Kantrowitz's examines the Arab-Israeli conflict as a classic example of internalized oppression because Arabs and Jews are both Semitic in origin. The history of British colonialism in Palestine, Transjordan and Egypt, as well as the French colonialism in Lebanon and Syria, created a perfect climate for "allowable" resentment and aggression to manifest against members of the same station (Semites), or those weaker, rather than the more accurate source of rage (the colonialist anti-Semites). Kaye-Kantrowitz explains that the rage of the Jewish survivors of the European Holocaust ("never again") was misplaced against the Arabs of the Middle East, while the rage of the displaced Palestinian Ghurbas became pitted against the early Zionists, who were viewed as "one more set of colonials." Kaye-Kantrowitz maintains that Jewish and Arab hatred is really directed against Europe, but acted out



against each other: "Europe colonized the Middle East. But in Fanon's terms the West is too frightening to hate directly. ... Whereas Israel — now that's a hatred you can act on. Zionists were Europeans weak enough to attack safely" (217). This somewhat tragic explanation reveals an international dynamic of "mutual scapegoating in which Europe and the U.S emerge innocent" (217). Again Kaye-Kantrowitz's important observations of the uncomfortable positioning of Jews in history, the effect on the community and the individual, are consistently discussed.

Finally, I found Kaye-Kantrowitz's "Notes on Jewish Women and Therapy" fascinating and wonderful. She urges therapists to never underestimate the impact of being Jewish on a client and warns them that reclaiming Jewish identity in North America is not a simple matter: "... consider the possibility that some blockages relate to alienation from one's Jewish self and think about how to raise this issue" (191-192). She dispels possible misunderstandings therapists may have about being Jewish: "Don't assume that Jewishness equals Judaism. Religion is only a part of Jewishness. Jewishness is a peoplehood, a culture, a shared history, an ethnic identity. Conversely, women who struggle to reclaim Judaism are reclaiming not just their religion but their history, their wholeness" (192).

An increased awareness of Jewish cultural traits may require therapists to reexamine their assumptions. Kaye-Kantrowitz cites conventional counselling definitions of healthy boundaries to be a trouble spot for counselors without this sensitivity: "There's the issue of how to define the self. Traditional therapy focuses on an individual's exploration and healing; its very bias runs counter to the bias of Jewish culture, which is towards the collectivity" (194). She notes the collision course that therapists must avoid to gain and keep the trust of a Jewish client who has experienced the benefits of "fuzzy boundaries" as a survival tool. Kaye-Kantrowitz equates the self-defined "nosiness characteristics" of Jewish culture as extremely useful: "... if you constantly monitor information, you may be able to ward off disaster ... But the therapist who attempts to point out the danger without grasping the positive, life affirming aspect of Jewish culture forfeits my trust" (194).

I found this explanation to be one of the first in print of the subtle ways Jewish people in the United States are misunderstood because of cultural differences. Because Jews are not often recognized as having minority status, we are told that *we* are the problem; when in fact, what we must contend with is one more attempt to acculturate and assimilate us to a Euro-American model.

I have touched on only a few of the essays which I found to be unique contributions to progressive political, social and cultural thought. The collection is densely written. Kaye-Kantrowitz's use of questions and humor can put an unexpected twist into the most serious of subjects — it's a strikingly "Jewish" style. Her meandering organization may cause the reader to yearn for more definition — some of the generalizations about the complexity of gender-race-class dynamics can be less theoretical with even more illustration and concrete language than the essays offer.

However, *The Issue is Power* deserves praise for its groundbreaking analyses and original cultural connections. Melanie Kaye-Kantrowitz has recorded essential history. This is an invaluable resource book for anyone working for social and economic justice. She discusses, questions and explains issues important to lesbians, feminists, radicals, Jews and progressives from the inside — issues so often convoluted and misunderstood by outsiders that her work is cool mountain air.

— Abby Bogomolny



## Books Received

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About the Books Received List: We list (almost) all the books we get in the mail. Unfortunately, we never have room to review everything we think should be reviewed. I tend to list books here by books/authors/presses I think are important (although all books from one press are listed together), with an emphasis on lesbian-owned presses. If I've read all or part of a book I may add subjective qualifiers like "read this." While the presence of adjectives can be interpreted as editorial endorsement, the absence of them only means I'm going by the publisher's press release — Elana.

*More In Than Out* — engaging poetry and prose by women in the Writing Workshop at Bedford Hills prison in New York, edited by Hettie Jones. 1992, \$5.98, Writing Workshops, 27 Cooper Square, NY, NY 10003.

*Sister/Strangers: Lesbians Loving Across the Lines* — 34 dykes take up the politics of difference within intimacy, edited by Jan Hardy. 1993, \$11.95, Sidewalk Revolution Press, POB 9062, Pittsburgh, PA 15224.

*Lesbian Culture — An Anthology: The Lives, Work, Ideas, Art and Visions of Lesbians Past and Present* — an important, amazing, ambitious (mostly successful), 562 page, large-format collection that will make veterans sigh and new dykes wonder, edited by Julia Penelope and Susan Wolfe. 1993, \$21.95, Crossing Press, Freedom, CA 95019.

*The World in Your Kitchen* — vegetarian recipes from Africa, Asia and Latin America, by and for a Western take on internationalism, by Troth Wells. 1993, Crossing.

*The Perennial Political Palate — The Third Feminist Vegetarian Cookbook*, probably the only one with a bibliography, features vegan food and a palatable radicalism garnished with quotes and photos, by the 16-year-old Bloodroot Collective. 1993, \$16.95, Sanguinaria Publishing, 85 Ferris St., Bridgeport, CT 06605 (where their restaurant and bookstore are).

*Conditions of War* — guerrilla action and lesbian politics, set in Northampton, by Lierre Keith. 1993, \$10.95, Fighting Words Press, Northampton, MA 01060.

*The Bat Had Blue Eyes* — Canadian poet Betsy Warland explores family secrets and the role of language in keeping them. 1993, Women's Press, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

*The Unforgetting Heart: An anthology of short stories by African American women (1859-1993)* — Stories "selected on the basis of their social, historical and cultural relevance..." demonstrating how "African-American culture forms a basis in collective destiny, bound by historical experience," edited by Asha Kanwar. 1993, \$9.95, Aunt Lute, POB 410687, SF, CA 94141.



*Only Lawyers Dancing* — the dyke daughters of a crime boss and a policeman share a friendship, obsession and mystery, with an Australian twist on the American genre, by Jan McKemmish. 1993, \$9.95, Cleis Press, POB 8933, Pittsburgh, PA 15221.

*Restoring the Color of Roses* — creative nonfiction memories of sex, alcoholism, cultural identity, by Barrie Jean Borich. 1993, \$9.95, Firebrand Books, 141 The Commons, Ithaca, NY 14850.

*Mohawk Trail* — Beth Brant explores, in autobiography, poetry, short story and American Indian myth, her several families, connected by blood, gayness, and urban working-class lives. 1985, \$7.95, Firebrand.

*Lesbian (Out)law: Survival Under the Rule of Law* — Ruthann Robson explores how lesbians can use the law without being used by it. 1992, \$9.95, Firebrand.

*Lesbians in the Military Speak Out* — over 37 lesbians in all service branches, spanning WWII to the Gulf War, tell their own stories to Winni S. Webber. 1993, \$9.95, Madwoman Press, POB 690, Northboro, MA 01523.

*Sinister Paradise* — mystery and intrigue at a Greek isle archaeological dig by Becky Bohan. 1993, \$9.95, Madwoman Press.

*Other World* — Sarah Dreher's fifth Stoner McTavish mystery creates an amusing dyke ride in (& beyond) Disney World. 1993, \$10.95, New Victoria Publishers, POB 27, Norwich, VT 05055.

*Hers Was The Sky* — a mystery set among women aviators in 1929, by ReBecca Béguin. 1993, \$8.95, New Victoria.

*Dirty Money* — the second CC Scott mystery, exploring radical feminism, incest, substance abuse as well as money laundering, by Pele Plante. 1993, \$10.95, Clothespin Fever Press, 655 4th Ave., Ste. 34, San Diego, CA 92101.

*Love Me Like You Mean It* — a new edition of Lesléa Newman's 1987 poems. 1993, \$8.95, Clothespin Fever.

*Gooseflesh* — solid lesbian poetry by Emma Morgan. 1993, \$7.95, Clothespin Fever.

*Unleashing Feminism: Critiquing Lesbian Sadoomasochism in the Gay Nineties* — seven radical dyke feminists offer new perspectives and detailed analyses, edited by Irene Reti. 1993, \$8.95, HerBooks, POB 7467, Santa Cruz, CA 95061.

*As You Desire* — set in Paris during the student uprisings of the late '60s, dealing with incest, therapist abuse, by Madeline Moore. 1993, \$9.95, Spinsters Ink, POB 300170, Minneapolis, MN 55403.

*Final Rest* — Mary Morell's second lesbian mystery. 1993, \$9.95, Spinsters.

*A Killing Cure* — the latest Jane Lawless mystery set in a powerful women's club, by Ellen Hart. 1993, \$19.95 (cloth), Seal Press, 3131 Western Ave., #410, Seattle, WA 98121-1028.



*The Things that Divide Us* — 16 interesting, well-written stories by very different women, edited by Faith Conlon, Rachel da Silva, Barbara Wilson. 1985, \$10.95, Seal Press.

*She's A Rebel: The History of Women in Rock & Roll* — is the definitive sourcebook, with photos, by Gillian G. Gaar with preface by Yoko Ono. 1992, \$16.95, Seal Press.

*First Refrains and Sister, I — Parts One and Two of A Seven-Course Feast*, selected poems of 1984 and 1985-1992 by Kay Stoner. 1992, 1993, Stoner Productions, PO Box 8116, Santa Rosa, CA 95407.

*Claire of the Moon* — maybe the first lesbian novel written from a movie; about gals cavorting at a writer's colony, by Nicole Conn. 1993, \$10.95, Naiad, POB 10543, Tallahassee, FL 32302.

*Silent Heart* — an icy academician meets a hot dyke reporter, by Claire McNab. 1993, \$9.95, Naiad.

*A Proper Burial* — Another in the series centered on Berkeley private eye Helen Black, by Pat Welch. 1993, \$9.95, Naiad.

*Happy Endings: Lesbian Writers Talk About Their Lives and Work* — Dorothy Allison, Willyce Kim, Jewelle Gomez and 19 other dyke writers, interviewed by Kate Brandt. 1993, \$10.95, Naiad.

*The Spy in Question* — American lesbian caught up in South American political intrigue, a Madison McGuire Espionage Thriller, by Amanda Kyle Williams. 1993, \$9.95, Naiad.

*Fragments Recalled at Eighty: The Art Memoirs of Ellen H. Johnson* combine art, memory and a woman's accomplishments. 1993, \$12.95, Gallerie Monographs.

*Imperfect Moments* — lesbians' relationships with each other and the world explored in short stories by Candis Graham. 1993, \$14.95, Polestar Press, 2758 Charles St., Vancouver, BC, Canada V5K 3A7.

*Pride Against Prejudice: Transforming Attitudes to Disability* — a British feminist analysis of the social construction of disability, public policy and alternatives for women by Jenny Morris. 1991, \$12.95, New Society Publishers, Springfield, PA 19143.

*This River of Courage: Generations of Women's Resistance and Action* — documents the struggles of ordinary women from every continent by Pam McAllister. 1991, \$14.95, New Society.

*Making Violence Sexy: Feminist Views on Pornography* — a thick, intense collection of essays and testimony, including many straight feminists and men, edited by Diana E.H. Russell. 1993, Athene Series, Teachers College Press, 1234 Amsterdam Ave., NY, NY 10027.

*The Writing or the Sex? or why you don't have to read women's writing to know it's no good* — questions the differences in female and male literature and posits that the difference is not in the work but in the perception, by Dale Spender. 1989, \$14.95, Athene Series.

*Vampires and Violets: Lesbians in Film* — an analysis from Queen Christina to *Born in Flames*, with great photos by Andrea Weiss. 1993, \$12.50, Penguin, 375 Hudson St., NY, NY 10014.

*The Change — Women, Aging and the Menopause* — a pretty straight view from Germaine Greer. 1993, \$12.50, Ballantine.

*Meeting at the Crossroads: Women's Psychology and Girl's Development* — chronicles the difficult passage to adulthood of 100 girls from a private school in Ohio, by Lyn Mikel Brown and Carol Gilligan. 1993, \$12.50, Ballantine.

*Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* — reprinting of Susan Brownmiller's 1975 feminist classic, a political history and analysis of rape. 1993, 12.50, Ballantine.

*In the Wake of the Goddesses: Women, Culture and the Biblical Transformation* — Tivka Frymer-Kensky posits monotheism over gender-based worldview of goddess religions. 1992, \$10.00, Ballantine.

*The Girls in the Balcony: Women, Men and the New York Times* — engaging narrative, including brief biographies, of women at the Times, culminating in landmark 1973 sexual discrimination lawsuit, by Nan Robertson. 1992, \$10.00, Ballantine.

*Alias Olympia* — a search for the woman known as "Monet's mistress" as historical biography/memoir/fiction by Eunice Lipton. 1993, \$20, Scribner's.

*The Invisible Epidemic: The Story of Women and AIDS* — a readable, analytical feminist chronology of the spread of AIDS among women, by Gena Corea. 1993, \$23 (cloth), HarperCollins.

*The Moon Cycle* — fairly straight, fairly well-written lunar poetry by Effie Mihopoulos. 1991, \$8, Ommation Press, Chicago, IL.

*Sisters, Sexperts, Queers: beyond the lesbian nation* — 16 dykes write about the nature and definitions of "lesbian," edited by Arlene Stein. 1993, \$11.00, Plume.

*Revaluing French Feminism: Critical Essays on Difference, Agency, and Culture* — Nancy Fraser and Sandra Lee Bartky, eds. Explores what has been lost and what gained in this ten-year intercultural encounter. Indiana University Press.

*The Thinking Muse: Feminism and Modern French Philosophy* — Jeffner Allen and Iris Marion Young, eds. Essays by U.S. feminists exploring feminist and French philosophy. Indiana University Press.



*Apache Mothers and Daughters*—Ruth McDonald Boyer and Narcissus Duffy Gayton. An illustrated family history of 4 generations of Chiricahua Apache women from 1848 to the present. Oral history and anthropology. \$24.95, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma.

*Escape to the Wind* — The first book of Jennifer DiMarco's trilogy about the part-woman, part-beast Windriders in the post-Armageddon world of the Patriarchy. \$11.95, Castillo International, NY.

*Afterglow: more stories of lesbian desire* — Anthology of lesbian erotica, edited by Karen Barber. \$8.95, Lace Publications, Alyson.

*Confronting AIDS through Literature: The Responsibilities of Representation* — 23 writers, mostly men, attempt to change prejudices, edited by Judith Laurence Pastore. 1993, \$12.95, Univ. of Illinois, 54 E. Gregory Dr., Champaign, IL 61820.

*Living in the Lap of the Goddess: The Feminist Spirituality Movement in America* — an historical and journalistic view by Cynthia Eller. 1993, \$24.95 (cloth), Crossroads, 370 Lexington Ave., NY, NY 10017.

*Aging and Gender in Literature: Studies in Creativity* — mostly straight, white, academically oriented essays on the intersections of gerontology and literature, edited by Anne M. Wyatt-Brown and Janice Rossen. 1993, \$16.95, Univ. of Virginia Press, Box 3608 Univ. Sta., Charlottesville, VA 22903.

*Cancer As A Women's Issue: Scratching the Surface* — Midge Stocker, ed. Essays and personal stories explore how cancer affects us as women, individually and collectively. \$10.95, Third Side Press, Chicago, IL.

*Confronting Cancer, Constructing Change: New Perspectives on Women and Cancer* — Midge Stocker, ed. Essays confronting myths about cancer, exploring nonWestern possibilities for treatment, coming out as one-breasted women. \$11.95, Third Side Press.

*She's Always Liked the Girls Best* — *Lesbian Plays: Roomers, Raincheck, Hannah Free, Movie Queens*, by Claudia Allen. \$11.95, Third Side Press.

*On Lill Street* — Novel about '70s-era feminism in Chicago, by Lynn Kanter. \$10.95, Third Side Press.

*Women's Studies: Essential Readings* — eclectic and multi-cultural, but academic and fairly straight, edited by Stevi Jackson et al. 1993, \$19.95, NYU Press, 70 Washington Sq. S, NY, NY 10012.

*Changing Our Minds: Lesbian Feminism and Psychology* — an important pro-activist, community- and ethically-oriented analysis of what therapy culture means for lesbian politics, by Celia Kitzinger and Rachel Perkins. 1993, \$14.95, NYU Press.

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 Contributors' Notes

**Abby Bogomolny** is a Jewish Lesbian writer living in Santa Cruz, CA. Her two collections of poetry, *Nauseous in Paradise* and *Black of Moonlit Sea* are distributed by WIM Publications.

**Akiko Carver** is a 17-year-old, middle-class, Nisei Asian dyke who currently lives in Seattle. She works mostly on reproductive rights, anti-porn and anti-military stuff. She regrets having been in Act Up and is sex-negative with a vengeance.

**Amy Concepcion:** I am a Cuban-American living in exile trying to capture with my writings the forgotten memories of a happy childhood and the everlasting pain of a mixed identity.

**Anna Livia's** latest novel, *Minimax*, is a magic realist romp. She is currently translating *The Angel and The Perverts*, a 1920's French novel about a hermaphrodite, for New York University Press, and writing her PhD thesis on gender and cohesion. "Bruised Fruit" is the second section of a novel in progress about a lesbian, a hermaphrodite and a bisexual serial killer psychology major at UC Berkeley.

**Adriana Medina** lives in San Francisco.

**Aspen** is a disabled lesbian writer living in England.

**Bettianne Shoney Sien** has just completed writing a radical, lesbian feminist mystery: *A Dirty Shame* — look for it! Her collection of stories, *Lizards/Los Padres*, is available from HerBooks — read it, you'll love it.

**Carellin Brooks:** I'm an Anglo-Canadian student, activist and writer living in Montréal, which I love for the coffee and hate for the winters. I've been previously published in *Fireweed*, a Canadian feminist quarterly.

**C.E. Atkins** is a 24-year-old lesbian poet who is living in Wisconsin with her partner, working at a food co-op, learning to play the drums and deciding what to do next!



**Darmaye Marley:** I am white — working poor — ex. full-time mother of four — now student of feminist philosophy and literature trying to get into grad. school — lesbian.

**Donna Allegra** writes poetry, essay, fiction and cultural journalism. She is a 1992 co-winner of the Pat Parker Memorial Poetry Prize. Her latest works can be found in *Sister/Stranger: Lesbians Loving Across the Lines* edited by Jan Hardy; *Tradeswomen — A Quarterly for Women in Blue-Collar Work*, Vol 12, #3 and *Woman in the Window — Tales of Desire, Passion and Love* edited by Pamela Pratt, my friend, now dead and much missed.

**Elliott:** As a Dyke Sep, and a Midwesterner by birth and choice who nonetheless lives temporarily on the east coast, I think a lot about geography, especially the physical boundaries of privilege, oppression and colonialism. My first geography was linoleum, wall-to-wall carpeting, paneling, the dust of stock car races, a town whose roads were all straight lines at right angles and miles of corn in straight rows. What was yours?

**Gail M. Koplow:** I am a 53-year-old writer whose menopause has sparked a prodigious flow of poems, stories and paintings. I'm a former fiction editor of *Sojourner* and am working on a collection of poems entitled *Fear on the Weekends*.

**Janet Mason** is a poet and fiction writer. Her work has been published most recently in the *Exquisite Corpse*, *The Chiron Review*, *Common Lives/Lesbian Lives*, *Pearl* and *Sister/Stranger*. An earlier version of "In those days" is published in her chapbook *A fucking brief history of fucking* from Insight to Riot Press.

**Jeannie Witkin:** I am a Jewish lesbian living in Berkeley, California. I work with other people's words as a sign language interpreter. Writing lets me speak for myself. I am happiest when climbing tall trees so I can see what is happening in the world around me.

**Jen Benka:** I am a 25-year-old, middle-class Polish lesbian-feminist poet and performance artist living in Milwaukee. I have performed in Milwaukee, Madison, Chicago and New York City. I try, with my work, to combat denial, repression and silence. Mine and yours.

**Josi Mata:** I am: A Tejana. Born and raised in the Rio Grande Valle, Pharr, TX. The eighth child in a migrant farmworker family. Currently live in Dallas, and am looking for a new place to call home. I sponsor the One World Women/Lesbians of Color Poetry & Short Story Sessions in Dallas.

**Kath Rodgers, 47,** lives in Oakland with her partner of 13 years, Simi. She belongs to Lesbian Visual Artists and is active in the disability arts community, showing her multi-media works in San Francisco and Oakland.

**Kathryn Eberly:** I'm a poet and have been published in lots of little mags and small presses, have work forthcoming in *RANT* and *Poetry Motel*. I'm also a health care worker at San Francisco General Hospital.

**Laura Bean** is a graduate student in creative writing at the University of Arizona. She enjoys the desert very much.

**Lenore Baeli Wang's** chapbook, *Born in the Year of the Pink Sink*, is just out from Malafemmina Press. She has spent the summer responding to Emily Dickinson's poetry and completed a manuscript, *Conversations with Emily*. Her work has been most recently accepted for publication in *California Quarterly*, *New Voices* and *Kalliope*.

**Lois DeWitt** was born in Minneapolis in 1942, has lived in New York, Miami, Boston and presently, Falls Village, the second smallest town in Connecticut. A writer and artist with an MFA from Pratt Institute, she works as a librarian at the Ford Memorial Library of the Hotchkiss School in Lakeville, Conn.

**Neta C. Crawford** is African American, in her '30s, and is a university professor. She is from the lower middle class and has been a vegetarian for 18 years.

**Pamela Gray** is a 37-year-old Jewish lesbian poet, playwright, screenwriter and comedian living in Santa Monica. Pamela wrote the "Violations" episode of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.

**Peni Hall** is a visual artist, video producer and technical coordinator for theater and video who resides in Berkeley, CA. Since 1985 she has worked as Technical Coordinator and has been a



performer with WRY CRIPS Disabled Women's Theater. In 1991, she created *Migraine 2000*, her first art video with Melanie Media. Peni is the originator of Hallway Productions, a series of disability-related art and cartoons. Her art has been featured in such journals as *Sinister Wisdom*, *Belle Lettres*, *Hikane*, *This Brain Has A Mouth* and the upcoming disability anthology *Range of Motion*.

**Reggie W. Brewster:** I am a dyke in my mid-twenties and I have a hidden disability (mostly hidden by society, but I hide it sometimes, too). My ancestors lived in regions known (now and/or then) as Germany, Poland and Bohemia. My work has previously appeared in *Common Lives/Lesbian Lives*.

**Reven Swanson:** Biologically I'm female. Biocologically I strive to understand rocks and dirt. I strongly encourage biologism, especially when it relates to biovular situations. Within my biosphere, I have begun the search for bioluminescence in hopes to achieve biometric phenomena.

**Rustun Wood** is a queer black South African dyke who has just started living in London. She's a broadcaster, journalist and writer who just refuses to be silenced.

**Sandra Havener** has worked as a journalist, as a liaison officer in the Texas government and as a health care worker. She has written poetry since the mid-'60s.

**Sima Rabinowitz** lives in Minneapolis and works in St. Paul. Her poetry, fiction and essays have appeared in a variety of publications including *Eating Our Hearts Out* (Crossing Press), *The Persistent Desire: A Femme Butch Reader* (Alyson) and *Format. The Advertising Magazine for Minnesota*.

**Susan Stinson's** first novel, with a working title of *Fat Girl Dances with Rocks*, will be published in Fall '94 (Spinsters). *Belly Songs: In Celebration of Fat Women*, a chapbook, will also appear in 1994 (Orogeny). She is a 33-year-old, raised middle-class, European-American who lives in Easthampton, MA.

**Suzanne:** I am a former fugitive scofflaw recently returned to Detroit where I sometimes forget that I am small and tasty in a big, gorging world.

**tatiana de la tierra:** i am a 32-year-old colombian-miamian lesbiana seeking total transformation from self-hatred. i am dedicated to silk scarves, world-wide expansion, fresh-fruit love, and pleasure with my words.

**Teresa Ortega** is a Chicana lesbian, originally from Los Angeles, now living in Durham, North Carolina. She participates in the Durham Lesbian Writers Group and plays second base for the Safe Sox. She hopes to see a lesbian mariachi band at her next music festival.

**Terri Jewell:** I'm a 38-year-old Black dyke living in Lansing, MI whose first book, *The Black Woman's GUMBO YA-YA: Rich Words and Sayings* will be released from Crossing Press in Fall 1993.

**Victoria Lena Manyarrows** is a Native/mestiza (Eastern Cherokee), lesbian and 37-years-old. Since 1981, she has worked extensively with community arts and alcohol/substance abuse programs in the San Francisco Bay Area, and has a Master's degree in Social Work (MSW). Her work has been published in various Native and multicultural anthologies and journals, including *Without Discovery: A Native Response to Columbus; Piece Of My Heart: A Lesbian of Colour Anthology; The Poetry of Sex; Calyx* and *Sinister Wisdom (Issue #47)*.



## A call for solidarity with the lesbians of ex-Yugoslavia

*The following is adapted from a mailing Sinister Wisdom received recently from Action politique lesbienne:*

We are a group of lesbians in Montreal called Action politique lesbienne (A.P.L.) We have been in existence since 1992. Our goal is to make public interventions on that which concerns lesbians.

By way of a contact in Paris, France, a lesbian member of the Collectif de lesbiennes, de Feministes, en Lutte Avec les Feministes et les Lesbiennes de l'ex-Yougoslavie, we have received some information about the situation of lesbians in ex-Yugoslavia, who have launched an international call for solidarity which was taken up by, among others, lesbian groups in France and Belgium who are networking the information across Europe. To establish contact with lesbians in Belgrade, French lesbians have taken on the task of enlarging the network across ex-Yugoslavia. They are in regular contact with individuals and Lesbian and feminist groups in Zagreb and Belgrade, who have especially asked for, above all, books or essays in english on rape, lesbianism and feminism, and lesbian novels. Due to closed borders, communications between lesbians in the various regions in ex-Yugoslavia have been rendered impossible. They rely on our outside contact to relay information within ex-Yugoslavia.

### What You Can Do:

- Send funds: Write on the back of the international money order or bank draft: "solidarite avec les feministes et les lesbiennes de l'ex-Yougoslavie." Make it out to "UTOPIA C.C.P.2389, 72 H Paris, Centre de Cheques Postaux — 75 Paris." Send it to: Collectif de Lesbiennes, de Feministes, en Lutte Avec le Feministes et les Lesbiennes de l'ex-Yougoslavie, Maison des Femmes, 8 cite Prost, 75011 Paris, France

- Deposit books in french, english or german treating the subject of lesbians, at the Archives Lesbiennes, BP 362, 75526 Paris, Cedex 11, France. Also video cassettes with lesbian themes. In

addition, the lesbians there have asked for images of lesbians, photos, drawings, etc.

- The lesbians and feminists can not buy anything and have asked for office materials (paper, notebooks, pens, photocopiers, telephones, fax machines...). (Best to send money to us for the convoys at the Collectif address).

- Organize public meetings in order to exchange ideas on the theme of rape in war time and in peace time.

- Relay information to other regions of the world and send us a list of groups contacted, as well as all information, documentation, and political analyses regarding this question. Our mutual collaboration is crucial.

We can send you a copy of "Lesbians in Croatia" as well as "Traces and Questions," an article that appeared in *Lesbia* magazine (Paris, no. 114, March 1993, in French), if you send us \$2.00. We, and others, invite you to copy, publish, distribute them as far and as wide as possible.

We believe that it is crucial that lesbians around the world respond to this call for solidarity in great numbers. The existence of lesbians in ex-Yugoslavia is under great threat, and it is time to activate an international network of lesbian solidarity.

We are all a part of this concern, act now!

### *from:* Lesbians in Croatia

#### **Lesbians under Socialism**

...The tumultuous events of the '80s initially began in Ljubijana, Slovenia. In 1984, it was in this city that the first homosexual organization, MAGNUS, was created. The first meeting of feminist groups took place in 1987, the year that the first lesbian group was established. The latter brought together, among others, lesbians from the feminist group LILIT. The winds of change swept onward to Croatia where the first group of lesbians, LILA INITIATIVE, was founded just before the first democratic elections, in a climate of liberalization and an explosion of associative initiatives.

The idea of setting up a lesbian group grew out of an opinion



poll conducted, on an anonymous basis, during the second feminist conference held in Zagreb in December 1988. The results of this inquiry revealed that a large number of women proposed that the problem of lesbianism be treated in a much more open manner. Following an advertising campaign in the media, about 70 lesbians revolved around the group for a period of one year. Soon after the May 1990 elections, the group disappeared for various reasons: the loss of a place to meet, the lack of money, but also the burn-out of the two or three lesbians who carried the group on their shoulders. The most important achievement of LILA INITIATIVE was to successfully bring into contact a large number of lesbians who had been, up until then, isolated from one another.

### The New Independent State of Croatia

While women and lesbians could finally — for the first time, after 45 years of socialism — participate in creating democracy and demand their rights, the absence of organized groups of women and lesbians and the lack of self-confidence (engendered by socialism) resulted in the near absence of women in the parliament (4% of women) and a lack of influence on the course of political events. Furthermore, the new government is only democratic on paper.

According to the discourse of the very influential church and that of the political power, lesbian relations are dangerous because they damage the relations between women and men, call into question the roles of women and men in society, and thus, the practice of a sexuality that doesn't produce children — particularly in these times of war — destroys the hopes of creating a strong national state. From the government's point of view, a woman should only be a tool in the service of perpetuating the nation. Lesbians are accused of not loving Croatia and, therefore, should be re-educated.

Like 94% of the population, we voted for independence, but it was certainly not — at least on our part — with the intention of arriving at a nationalist ecstasy. It is extremely harmful that political and human power is only based on the notion of national roots.

Meanwhile, Serbia refused to recognize the independence of

Croatia, and the short war in Slovenia, in Summer '91, only served to delay the Serbian aggression against Croatia. It was at this moment that the Yugoslav crisis developed into an international affair. The tragic consequences of the war against Croatia (the devastation of cities and village, the loss of civilian lives, the expansion and escalation of the conflict) forced international public opinion to no longer conceive of prolonging the existence of the Yugoslav federation. The arrival of refugees and the rape of thousands of women have brought about an increased awareness in the international community and the organization of humanitarian aid.

### The Life of Lesbians Today

It is in such a context that lesbians live. They are isolated not only from society but also from one another. There is no place (except the small space loaned to LIGMA by the radical party), no magazines, no publishing houses, and too few books get to us from the outside. Our sole intellectual nourishment is the propaganda of the media that portrays us as prostitutes or as insane, and if not as non-existent, then as the destroyers of the state and of its moral values.

Confined to silence, lesbians unfortunately seldom dare to react. Many of them give in to the system or try to keep themselves out of sight. Furthermore, because of the unequal status of women, they often tag behind gay men in order to develop a sense of identity and community.

It is in this context of repression and passivity that some of us founded LIGMA, in June 1992, with the help of the radical party who loans us a space and gives us access to a fax machine, a photocopier, etc. We've decided to unite with gay men because it would be otherwise impossible to have these advantages. And we are forced to ask for outside help in the form of money and books.

In short, this is the reality in which we live. We realize that the early stages are always difficult and that our organization is young, but we are well-organized and we will fight for our rights up to the very end.



## Announcements and Classified Ads \_\_\_\_\_

### PUBLICATIONS

*ESTO NO TIENE NOMBRE*, revista de lesbianas latinas en miami, is a new quarterly creative forum for latina lesbians with a Miami twist. Open to all forms (Spanish, Spanglish, English), \$10 per year (checks to: Tatiana de la Tierra). Guidelines, subs to: 4700 NW 7th St. #463, Miami, FL 33126.

LIKE READING LESBIAN FICTION? 12 issues only \$15. *Lavendar Life*, 215 Cleveland Ave., Dept. SI, Endicott, NY 13760.

*MAIZE*, A Lesbian Country Magazine. \$10 per year (4 issues). Single issue \$3.50. New address: MAIZE, POB 130, Serafina, NM 87569.

*WE ARE HERE* — national resource guide for lesbian and gay youth, pub. by the Gay Youth Comm. Coalition of the Bay Area, \$5 (pay to We Are Here) from: 2215 Market St., #479, SF, CA 94114.

*SEP* — publication for lesbian separatists only since 1986. Ask a lesbian separatist how to reach us. Be a part of the contagious spread of dyke separatist courage!

*TEEN VOICES* — by, for & about teenage and young adult women, sample \$2: Women Express, POB 6009 JFK, Boston, MA 02114.

### CALLS FOR SUBMISSIONS

WHAT ABOUT US? Children Tell of their Lesbian/Gay Parent's Breakup: seeking first-person stories or thoughts from children of all ages for valuable anthology. Questions or submissions — Jenn Christiansen, POB 1841, Champlain, NY 12919 by June 30, 1994.

LESBIAN ADVENTURE STORIES anthology: wild women, eccentric characters, sexual exploits, fiction/nonfiction. Mikaya/Tough Dove Books, 11101 Eastside Rd., Ukiah, CA 95482. Deadline: January 1994.

MULTICULTURAL LESBIAN RELATIONSHIPS anthology. First-person, cassettes, interviews O.K. Topics: racism in and outside relationships, having/raising children; socializing/friendships; language differences, etc. For guidelines, info: SASE to Rene Dawson & Terri Jewell, PO Box 23154, Lansing, MI 48909.

**BLACK LESBIAN CULTURE: PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE** — Putting all “correctness” aside, let’s be honest and claim ALL we are, have been and will be for centuries! All and every form (photos, bios, herstory, songs, jokes, rumors, anecdotes, fashion, art, names, organizations, bars, poetry, essays, stories, radical and separatist material) welcome. For guidelines, info: SASE to Terri Jewell, POB 23154, Lansing, MI 48909, running deadline.

**BROTHER-SISTER INCEST** writings and visual art by women for anthology, pseudonyms accepted. Send work with SASE to Risa Shaw, POB 5723, Takoma Park, MD 20913-0723 by Dec. 1, 1993.

**RADICAL HEALING** issue of *Lesbian Ethics* — share what you know, from a paragraph to full-length article. Send work, queries to LE, POB 4723, Albuquerque, NM, 87196 by April 1, 1994.

**DOCTORAL CANDIDATE** in Women’s Studies seeks unpublished journals/diaries by contemporary U.S. women artists, writers, activists, 1970-1990. Send reply to: Margo Espenlaub, Box 36, MSCD POB 173362, Denver, CO 80217-3362.

**POOR WHITE TRASH WOMEN** calling Poor White Trash Women — all forms, on growing up pwt in North America wanted for anthology. Send work, queries to: Pauline Will Triumph, 3536 Univ. Blvd. N, #198, Jacksonville, FL 32211 by March 31, 1994.

**RISING TIDE PRESS**, a new lesbian publisher, seeks full-length lesbian novels. For guidelines, send SASE to: Rising Tide Press, 5 Kivy St., Huntington Station, NY 11746.

**THE SAGE WITHIN** —The Spiritual Lives of Everyday Women seeks prose on how women incorporate spirituality into daily life. All faiths, paths, backgrounds. Query with SASE to: Hummingbird Press (was Stoner Press), POB 8116, Santa Rosa, CA 95407.

**SPINSTERS INK** is seeking feminist writing by women of color — full-length novels and non-fiction works. For more info: POB 300170, Dept. C, Minneapolis, MN 55403 (612) 377-0287.

**WOMAN IN THE MOON POETRY PRIZE** is open for submissions Jan. 1 - March 31 **THE PAT PARKER MEMORIAL POETRY AWARD** is open for submissions from May 1 -July 31. Full-length manuscripts are considered between Jan 1 - April 30. For fees and guidelines, send SASE to Woman in the Moon Publications, POB 2087 — NR, Cupertino, CA 95014-1466 (new address!).



## EVENTS/ORGANIZING/CONFERENCES/RETREATS

OLOC — Old Lesbians Organizing for Change helps form new groups of lesbians over 60, provides ageism education, stimulates existing groups to confront ageism. Contact: OLOC, POB 980422, Houston, TX 77098.

INTERNATIONAL MARCH on the UN to Affirm the Human Rights of Lesbian and Gay People, June 26, 1994, called by the International Lesbian and Gay Assoc. (ILGA) & U.S. organizers Stonewall 25. US org. meeting Jan. 15-17 in Dallas. Much more info: Stonewall 25, 208 W. 13th St., NY, NY 10011-7799.

GRAILVILLE, an education center conducting programs for women in SW Ohio offers residential semester, New Women, New Earth, January 25 - May 18, 1994. Contact: 932 O'Bannonville Rd., Loveland, OH 45140, 513/683-2340

CONFERENCE ON SISTERHOOD — building sisterhood across cultures, class and sexual lines — workshop series from Sept., '93-Feb. '94. To present or coordinate, send SASE to Conf. Coordinator, Diana C. Long, Urban Art Retreat, 3712 N. Broadway, Chicago, IL 60613 or call 312-275-1319 (inexpensive nightly rooms also available through UAR).

COTTAGES AT HEDGEBROOK — A Retreat for Women Writers provides free cottages and meals for accepted writers for a stay of up to three months. Application deadlines: April 1 and Oct. 1. For applications: 2197 E. Millman Rd., Langley, WA 98260.

## (AD)VENTURES

LESBIAN ART RETREAT on beautiful Oregon Coast. Toxic-free, safe, creative environment in a rural setting. \$175/week includes meals with other working artists, separate living and studio spaces. Private instruction available. RIVERLAND, PO Box 156, Beaver OR 97108 503/398-5223.

SALLIE & EILEEN'S PLACE, vacation cabins for women, in the woods. Mendocino, CA (707)937-2028.

YELLOW BIRCH FARM. Small cottage on working farm in Downeast Maine. Beautiful, remote, unspoiled Cobscook Bay. B&B or weekly rental. Brochure, 207/726-5807.



**LESBIAN PARADISE!** With 20 charming rooms, 100 mountain acres, pool, hot tub, hiking/skiing trails, yummy breakfasts, peace and privacy. We're your perfect vacation choice year round! **HIGHLANDS INN**, Box 1185R, Bethlehem, NH 03574 (603) 869-3978.

## **BUSINESSES**

**RED RIVER**, 100% Cotton Menstrual Pads, comfortable, ecological, economical. Made by Land Dykes. Write for brochure: Red River, Box 130, Serafina, NM 87569.

**RENT LESBIAN VIDEOS THROUGH THE MAIL!!** The Charis Video Rental Service makes almost every major lesbian title available. Drama, Comedy, Erotica, Documentaries and a lot more! Why buy when you can rent? To join immediately, send \$20.00 for your membership kit (USA only). Or write for more info. Charis Video, POB 797, Dept. SW03, Brooklyn, NY 11231. Lesbian owned.

## **SUPPORT**

**SPINSTERHAVEN, INC.**, a retirement haven for older women and women with disabilities, promoting physical, cultural and spiritual well-being of women. Membership info and donations, PO Box 718, Fayetteville, AR 72701.

**SHE** — Sister Homelands on Earth has purchased its first two acres — Saguaro Sisterland — to primarily provide accessible space for lesbians with mobility/or allergy/chemical sensitivity disabilities and low-income wimmin. Money and support services are critical to SHE's survival — write to SHE at POB 5285, Tucson, AZ 85703, inc. SASE for reply.

**WHIPTAIL WOMYN'S COLLECTIVE** provides a womyn-only dyke-identified, drug-smoke-alcohol free space in S.F. & needs all the help it can get. Send \$, questions, energy to: 3543 18th St. Box #29, S.F., CA 94110.

**LAVENDER L.E.A.F.** is the Lesbian Emergency Action Fund of money given anonymously, available to any S.F. or Alameda County (CA) woman-born lesbian of poverty or working class background who needs it. Lavender L.E.A.F.'s long-term goal is to diminish economic disparities among lesbians. Send checks, queries to: L. Leaf, POB 20921, Oakland, CA 94620.



WOMYN'S BRAILLE PRESS — desperately needs money to continue, as well as volunteers to read and type. WBP provides over 750 titles to blind, partially sighted and print disabled women, and publishes a great newsletter. Tax-deductible donations, queries to: WBP, POB 8475, Minneapolis, MN 55408, (612) 872-4352.

SAPPHO'S, a program providing safe, affordable, transitional housing for women of all ages and incomes in San Francisco, CA. Information, volunteers, donations, contact 859 Fulton St., SF, CA 94117, 415/775-3243.

THE LABYRIS PROJECT: Helping Lesbians Heal from Incest — wants a safe home for all lesbians having trouble surviving due to incest memories, as well as a meeting place for local survivors. Community-based, holistic, realistic, feminist healing. Send checks or SASE for info: New Mexico REEF/Labyris Project, POB 40097, Albuquerque, NM 87196.

LESBIANS IN CRITICAL NEED have been sending us increasing numbers of requests to run announcements for their personal funds. Instead of printing these individual appeals, we urge you to contribute frequently and generously to local organizations. Imagine it as if we just told you your childhood best friend, your favorite gym teacher, an admired dyke activist or your first lover had metastatic cancer and couldn't pay the doctor bills; or had developed E.I., could no longer leave her house and had no way to get or pay for groceries. Then make a contribution to Lavender L.E.A.F., The Dykefund, the Charlotte Maxwell Clinic, The Women's Cancer Resource Center (these are Bay Area resources, find the ones in your community). We need full support networks as well as money — dykes willing to shop, drive, talk, listen, organize.

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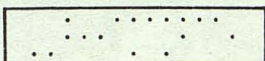
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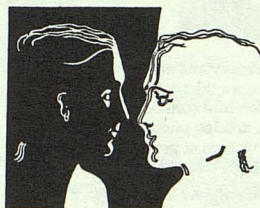
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We publish only lesbians' work. We are particularly interested in work that reflects the diversity of our experiences: as lesbians of color, ethnic lesbians, Jewish, old, young, working class, poor, disabled, fat. We welcome experimental work. We will not print anything that is oppressive or demeaning to lesbians or women, or which perpetuates negative stereotypes. We do intend to keep an open and critical dialogue on all the issues that affect our work, joy and survival. See pages 6-7 for details on upcoming issues. We are open to suggestions for new themes.



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i wanted to be "american" and attained  
"resident alien" status. i don't want to  
be "american" any more; the term  
"american" denotes geographical  
ignorance, cultural arrogance and  
imperialism. as a south american living  
in north america, i've been an  
american my entire life. and i turned  
out to be all-american: a fat-liberal-  
lesbian-feminist-bearded bruja, an  
unsightly independent heterosexually-  
trained-lipstick combat femme.  
my mom is proud of me, and so am i.

— tatiana de la tierra  
and Amy Concepcion  
from *Weave-talk*