# Branching Out

CANADIAN MAGAZINE FOR WOMEN MARCH/APRIL 1975 $1.00

# CONTENTS

## IN EVERY ISSUE



## FEATURES



## WOMEN IN THE ARTS





cover photo, "Portrait of Janet M. Keefe," by Diana Selsor Palting




Volume II, Number 2, March/April 1975

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Vol. II, No. 2, March/April 1975.

Industrial Printing & Litho Ltd., Edmonton

# letters

Thanks for your perceptive review of Waterloo Express in the fall issue. Yes I am a Canadian, I got my citizenship in August with a whole courtroom full of other immigrants from every corner of the earth. We were faced with a woman judge (mother), kindly and serene, and a big Mountie (father) who was silent and stern. The judge was in her official robes, the very epitome of Canadianity, Canadian Law and Federalism itself, and when she rose to speak to us she said "I vaent to velcome you to de privitch of Canadian citizenchip." Wonder after wonder. I shook and the woman next to me shook as well. I said, 'I'm sort of scared' and she said 'O no my dear I assure you I am twice as frightened as you are.' Being of Acadian French background from the southern U.S. I swore to the queen and all her heirs and successors in English and sang O Canada in French. So it goes. Am happy to be claimed for "our side".

Paulette Jiles, Toronto

Hope that you aren't only publishing work that deals DIRECTLY with women. Liberation means defining a meaningful position for ourselves within a world comprised of TWO sexes (at least I hope so, or I don't wanna be included).

Heidi Greco, Burnaby

I beg to differ....

One way, I suppose, of viewing and reviewing *Bonnie McSmithers*, Sue Ann Alderson's children's book, is the way the *Branching Out* reviewer did (Jan./Feb. '75): that is, to see and say that the mother-daughter conflict captured in this little book reinforces a nasty stereotyped image of mothers and daughters inside conflict inside rooms inside houses. Left there (as it is), the review is probably guilting at least some of the mothers among your readers for being so nasty and stereotyped. I would venture to estimate that the mothers who have similar, if not the very same, conflicts with their children inside rooms inside houses or apartments amount to 100% of all mothers among your readers as well as to 100% of all mothers among your non-readers. My point is that these conflicts do happen. It is ideologically unclear to me why, as the reviewer implies, we should all say they don't happen.

Alderson's book, at any rate, "branches out" beyond that ideological impasse. Its' point is that, sure, mothers and children have scenes at home, but what's important is what they do about them. What the characters in *Bonnie McSmithers* do is ideologically positive and characteristic of what is happening more and more between mother and child. The kid takes the initiative in beginning to resolve the conflict while the mother listens and responds.

Now all that in itself is not what makes *Bonnie McSmithers* a good *children's* book which, after all, it is. Other things about the book help a great deal. For instance, kids like it. They instantly commit its new nursery rhymes to memory because they like the sounds. Then, my five-year old daughter - who puts banana peels on her head, paint on the wrong walls, flies in my porridge, and frogs in my pockets; who has heard me deliver the stereotyped line "You're driving me crazy" more than once -- identifies, you see, with Bonnie. She and her friends shriek with delight, in fact, over Bonnie. And they like the book's happy ending which can be real.

Because an ideologically nearsighted review has tried to assign this children's book to the women's index, I have begged to differ. Also, I think that it's generally a good policy to read children's books to children before finally analyzing them for adults.

Carol Sommers, Vancouver

I came across the November-December issue of your magazine and went through it again from cover to cover.

Perhaps I am just plain stupid. Could be. But God help us if we have to read and try to understand the poetry on page 17 by Heather Pyrcz.

I enjoy the clever way you present poetry, but no amount of artistic quality can make up for pure unadulterated rot.

And I enjoyed the short stories. Also the illustrations are excellent. The piece about the film makers was interesting. Wish I could have known these gals as I have extensive knowledge about homesteading days and might have been of some use to them.

I hope you hardworking editors don't run out of steam. Perhaps you'll get a government grant from our benevolent Uncle Pierre. So hang in there!

Agnes Copithorne, Calgary

I was pleased to receive a copy of *Branching Out*. It is not only refreshing, but informative as well: more exciting evidence of what women can and are doing in Canada.

There was just one thing which I found to be a bit out of keeping with the general tone of the magazine. Perhaps I'm being too sensitive to such things but I felt I should comment anyway. On page 45, lower right hand corner (January/February), there is an ad for Northwestern Utilities Ltd. The buxom young lady, a steno, is being eyed by a beady-eyed male. In the opposite corner, an older woman stands, hair in a bun, small glasses, unshapely legs... there must be a better way for them to advertise their services.

Sylvia Hamilton, Happy Valley, Labrador

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# editorial

So it's International Women's Year. Women in groups everywhere are busy organizing conferences, cultural events and activities of all description designed to improve woman's lot and to draw attention to women's achievements.

But, far more exciting to me, more thought-provoking, challenging, is the effort of one woman, Erica Jong, author of *Fear of Flying* whose paperback release in Canada coincided with the start of IWY. What is significant is that the book has generated as much or more excitement among a certain species of woman, well-represented on our staff, among our readership, and our contributors, and in the movement in general, than IWY - the educated, liberated yet still unfulfilled woman. No, this is not a book review. Many of you have read it; every woman should. Apart from her dubious billing as the female counterpart of Philip Roth, which I think misses the point entirely, Ms. Jong has written the novel which comes closest to defining the vague malaise I have felt during my association with *Branching Out* and with the women's movement in general.

I am concerned that some of us are becoming professional feminists and separatists. By banding together in groups we've scored some much-needed changes in the way of liberating women and shifting the balance in a previously male-dominated and oriented society. But what are we doing for ourselves as individuals? Women's groups still have a legitimate role to play out, lobbying for day-care facilities, equal pay for equal work and control over our own bodies with respect to government and the medical profession. These issues still need attention.

But I know too many women for whom, as for Isadora Wing, Ms. Jong's heroine, these are no longer or never were problems. They have been educated to the level of their choice; they have jobs which are not sex-defined; they have freedom either within or without marriage and family. Yet they are discontent, restless, unfulfilled. Why? I contend that the problem stems from fear. The woman who has achieved equality of opportunity, as many of us have, must take the next step. She has to decide what to do with her freedom, set her own priorities in life, and take responsibility for the path she chooses.

It's an individual problem. We've documented ad nauseam our herstory and our oppression at the hands of male-dominated society ; we've read all the right books: Lessing, de Beauvoir, Atwood, McClung, etc.; and we've devoured with sighs of self-justification sociological articles on the double bind women have been subjected to in our metamorphosis from school girl to adult female: be clever and bright, but not too clever, not too bright. Be passive, pleasant, and aggressive when appropriate, but never, never trample on the male ego. All of which leads to the passive-aggressive games so many intelligent women play.

It's a subtle game - we please our men, act as helpmates, dabble with careers, and all the time remind them and ourselves that if it weren't for the roles imposed on us by men/society, we might even be great. Under such game rules, it's legitimate to ask who is master and who is slave. Does anyone remember the play (later the Dirk Bogarde film) "The Servant"? The subtle power the servant acquires over his master, although they are both males, has something in common with the power woman as "underdog" enjoys over men. Many of us trade off the freedom we claim we want for that power, which brings security and allows us the role of critic.

We complain about insensitivity in men. But have we been sensitive to the existential pressures men have always faced and from which most women have been shielded because our roles have been so well-defined for us? Sometimes after long talks with respected male friends, I feel closer to them than to my sister feminists. They suffer restlessness, angst. They cannot point to years of oppression by women as an excuse for unfulfillment. They fear failure, mediocrity. It's a competitive society, whether we like it or not. Are we ready to compete?

The existential problem transcends the division between the sexes. What does one do with one's life when there are options and no other excuses than one's own fear of failure? And women do have options now. It's no longer legitimate to complain that we've been used by men. The process works both ways. By allowing ourselves to be used, we've used men for security and as excuses for not making our own lives.

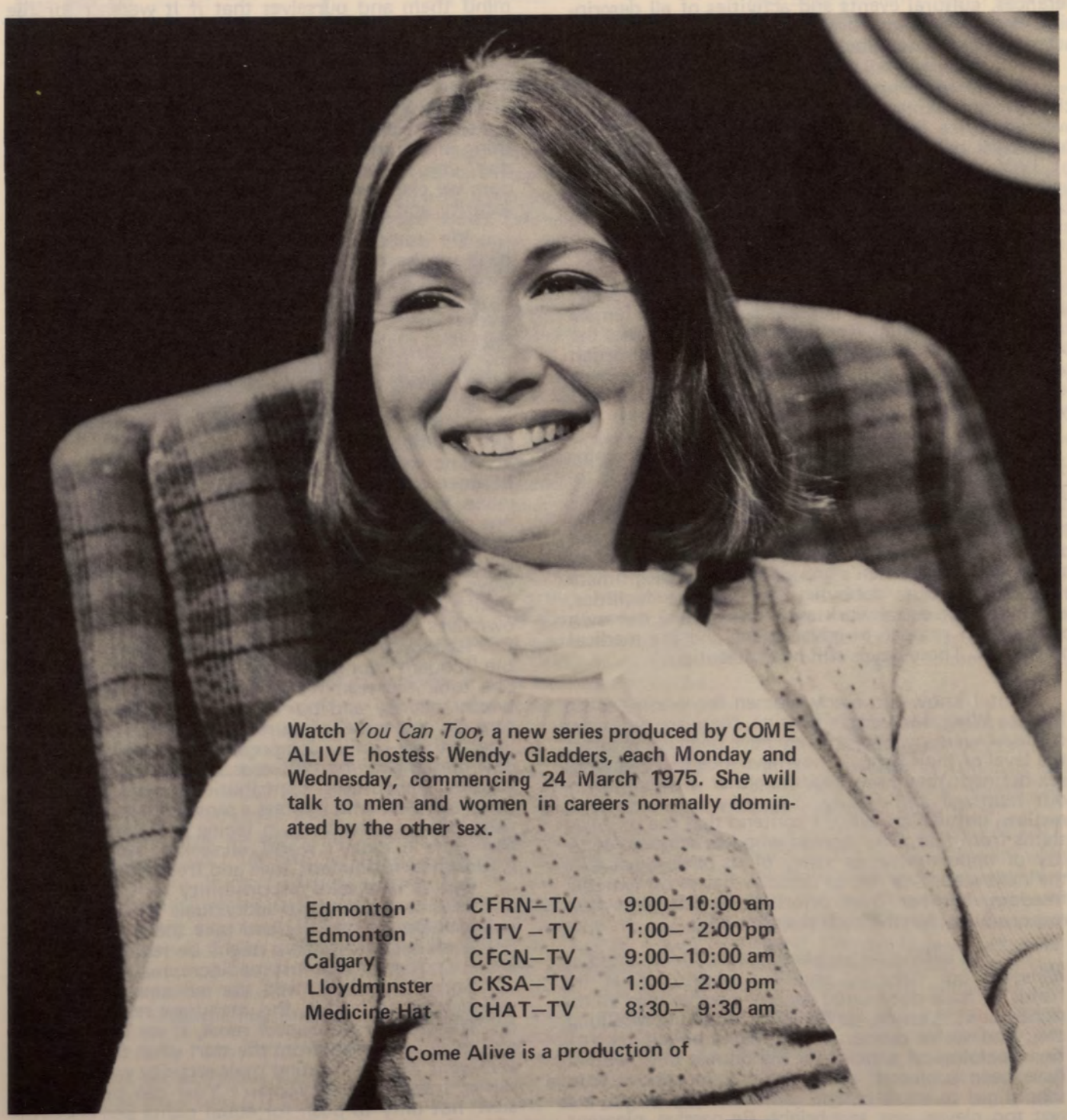
Isadora Wing has given us at least one model for the modern woman's final step toward liberation. She took the risk. We fear: we tread a fine line between security and our desire for freedom. Men are torn by the same pressures. We cannot continue to ignore these similar longings. I look forward to the day that *Branching Out* ceases to be separatist and actively encourages contributions from men. For there are men who express a sensitivity to the similarities between the sexes in facing problems as minds and souls in today's world, all seeking security, companionship, fulfillment, love and freedom.

Do we dare take responsibility for our own lives and our own futures as individuals and not just as women? Do we dare fly and take the consequences? Some of our worst fears might be realized - maybe we are not great, but just mediocre; maybe we'll fail.

Some of us still need the movement; some are still needed to lead it. But many are ready to move on. The women we respect most, if we look closely, are those who knew from the start what they wanted and went after it, finding their security within themselves. International Women's Year can be an occasion not only to push for equal rights and opportunities for women everywhere, but also to prepare ourselves for the ideal future in which full equality of the sexes has been achieved. After liberation, what?

by Marylu Antonelli

# COME ALIVE



Watch *You Can Too*, a new series produced by COME ALIVE hostess Wendy Gladders, each Monday and Wednesday, commencing 24 March 1975. She will talk to men and women in careers normally dominated by the other sex.

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| Edmonton | CFRN–TV | 9:00–10:00 am |
| Edmonton | CITV – TV | 1:00– 2:00 pm |
| Calgary | CFCN–TV | 9:00–10:00 am |
| Lloydminster | CKSA–TV | 1:00– 2:00 pm |
| Medicine Hat | CHAT–TV | 8:30– 9:30 am |

Come Alive is a production of

ACCESS ALBERTA

ALBERTA EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION

# here and there

A report on the first national conference on Women and Sport is now available. The conference was held in May 1974. Included in the report are summaries of keynote addresses by Laura Sabia, Esther Greenglass and Abigail Hoffman. There is also a series of action proposals to bring about change for women in sport. Areas covered by the recommendations include research, curriculum development, status of women in physical education, coaching, commercial sport, administration, competition, children's attitudes and media. In her address at the conclusion of the conference, Abigail Hoffman commented, "I think many of us, while pushing for changes and an expansion of the opportunities in sport available to women, felt.... that the women's movement ... was really ignoring us.... it's time we cast off whatever reluctance we may have to associate ourselves with other women pressing for other issues." To find out what you can do to support women in sport, write for your copy of the report to: Health and Welfare Canada, Fitness and Amateur Sport Branch, 11th Floor, Journal Building, 365 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa.

A conference of women's publications from across Canada was held in Saskatoon in late December. Those attending supported the establishment of a national women's news and information exchange network. The information and stories for the service will come from women's groups and individuals who feel they have news that is of interest to women across the country. The service is to be financed by women's groups that want to receive the weekly information packets. Between 50 and 100 groups will be needed to make the service financially viable. Interim national headquarters have been established in Waterloo. Contact Kati Middleton, Waterloo Women's Place, 25 Dupont Street, Waterloo. A second conference is to take place March 27-31 in Winnipeg.

Redlight Theatre has begun a national tour of "What Glorious Times They Had" about Nellie McClung and the suffragists. The professional women's theatre visited Maritime centres in January, and plans to travel through the West in June. Contact Redlight Theatre, 24 Ryerson Avenue, Toronto.

A women's bookstore opened in Victoria at the end of January. Present stock is limited, but will grow, as delayed orders are filled. A meeting and reading area in the back of the store has comfortable chairs and tea. Hours are 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday to Saturday, later Friday evenings. Visit Everywoman's Books at 2033 Oak Bay Avenue, about ten minutes from downtown Victoria.

The University Women's Club of Winnipeg plans a conference of grade eleven women, with 220 delegates to be drawn from schools throughout the province. The aim of the conference is to alert young women to the options open to them in careers and education. Non-traditional role models will be presented. The need for physical fitness and nutrition will be stressed and laws affecting women will be dramatized in a skit. The conference is scheduled for May 15-18. Contact Jean E. Carson, 4-390 Wellington Crescent, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The Western Canadian Women's News Service and friends have prepared a paper entitled "Cutting the Red Tape: A Self-Help Guide Through Bureaucracy." The paper outlines sources of information and guidelines for gathering, using and exchanging information and resources. Write to WCWNS, 2029, West Fourth Avenue, Vancouver, B.C.

CARAL, the Canadian Association for the Repeal of the Abortion Law was founded in November in Ottawa. The purpose of CARAL is to ensure that no woman is denied access to safe, legal abortion in Canada. The aim of the group is to repeal all sections of the Criminal Code dealing with abortion, and the establishment of comprehensive contraceptive and abortion services, including appropriate counselling across the country. CARAL has already lobbied over one hundred Members of Parliament many of whom expressed their willingness to vote for repeal provided it could be shown that this was the wish of the voters.

cont. on p. 37

*Room of One's Own* is a feminist journal of literature and criticism, to be published by The Growing Room Collective of Vancouver beginning in early April. The publication will appear quarterly, and will contain mainly short stories, poetry, drama and essays of literary criticism and theory. Manuscripts are invited. Subscriptions are $5.00 per year, single issues are $1.50 each (higher for institutions). Write to Laurie Bagley, 9-2520 Prince Albert St., Vancouver.

The Women's Office at the Student Union Building, University of British Columbia, has begun a series of presentations and workshops. Speakers in March will include Margaret Atwood and lesbian feminist writers Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon. A series of video-tapes is being prepared, based on the presentations. These will be shown on Cable 10 television and will become part of the Women's Office library. Contact the Women's Office, Box 85, Student Union Building, U.B.C., Vancouver.

# The Brazilian Woman as Writer

by Eloah F. Giacomelli

The United Nations has declared 1975 International Women's Year. However, its international character can be achieved only if more information on the status of women in other cultures is made available. So far, the media haven't done much to provide this information. News about women in other nations appears only when they create major political or intellectual storms.

Such was the case, for instance, of "The Three Marias," as these Portuguese writers became known. In 1973, the Portuguese regime, since then overthrown by General Antonio de Spinola and his followers, accused these three women of publishing a subversive, obscene book. "The Three Marias" have been acquitted, and their book is available now at bookstores all over Portugal.

Aside from news of notoriety, the information that comes to us about women outside North America is scant. Yet, Canadian women want to know more about them. I am always asked about the women of Brazil, where I lived most of my life. People here want to know what kinds of problems, discriminations and prejudices they face. By focusing on the Brazilian woman as a writer, I shall illustrate some aspects of prevalent Brazilian attitudes towards women.

Brazilian women face many problems similar to those faced by Canadian women, except that their problems are magnified a thousandfold. Because it is more deeply-rooted than the sex discrimination in Anglo-Saxon societies, discrimination against women in a traditionally macho-centered culture such as that found in Brazil is harder to eliminate.

Besides, sex discrimination is not even recognized as existing. The Brazilian government has never appointed a committee to report on the status of women in the country. It does not believe there is a problem, in the same way that it does not believe in controlling population growth. Quite the opposite. By the year 2000, Brazil hopes to have 200 million people thus doubling in 25 years its present population. The "public interest" needs women for a specific purpose.

In the English-speaking world women have long been allowed to express themselves creatively in writing. This has not been the case in Brazil. It wasn't until the 1930's that Brazilian women achieved recognition as writers of any importance. Compare this to England where women played an important role in the development of the novel. From the 18th Century beginnings of the development of this literary genre, women such as Jane Austen, the Brontes and George Eliot made major contributions that enriched the English language.

The Brazilian woman as a writer is a recent phenomenon. But, even as a latecomer, she has created much of the best poetry and fiction published in Brazil during the last twenty-five years. Her achievements are widely recognized, yet she continues to be excluded from the all-male Brazilian Academy of Letters. Lately, however, many of the Academy's major literary prizes have been awarded to women.

As a long-time reader of Brazilian and Anglo-American literature, I wanted to find out why Brazilian women writers have only recently begun to speak with their own voices.

"It is so," Lygia Fagundes Telles wrote me in reply to my query, "because the Brazilian woman inherited from the Portuguese culture a corset that still constricts and stifles her."

Lygia Fagundes Telles, one of the best contemporary Brazilian writers, has been awarded major literary prizes. In 1973, Indiana University invited her to take part in a symposium focusing on women in Brazilian literature. There she presented a paper entitled "Diffidence and Assertion of the Brazilian Woman Writer." In this paper, she noted that, as a writer, the Brazilian woman still hasn't freed herself from the customs, traditions and attitudes prevalent in her country. She is still under the influence of "a bleak heritage devoid of any flights of the imagination," as Lygia puts it. Machismo is a way of life in Brazilian society. An educated woman is seen as a threat to the male-centered system predominant in Latin America's largest country.

A woman writer in Brazil has to overcome many prejudices. For instance, expression of a woman's sexuality is still taboo. By and large, male critics still adhere to the notion that if women write at all, they should concern themselves with flowers, spring, God, spiritual love, and similar bloodless topics. This is why the works of first-rate contemporary writers such as Nélida Piñon and Hilda Hilst have largely been underrated or ignored.

Hilda Hilst is one of the most experimental and innovative Brazilian authors. Yet, a male critic had this to say about a recent book of her short fiction: "The writer's verbal chaos, this delirious sexuality of a man-starved, unsated female rummaging in a dunghill in search of some literary beauty to be plucked from the garbage...". This reaction is typical, although it is only fair to say that male writers in Brazil have also been greatly criticized for their literary innovations. The country's repressive political atmosphere encourages nothing but stagnation; everything else is viewed with distrust.

And, that is why this very experimentation on the part of the Brazilian woman writer is an encouraging thing—encouraging because in a society that represses self-expression, she dares try to find her own voice to assert herself as a writer and as a woman.

"We've always been what men said we were. Now we are the ones who are going to say what we are," says one of the characters created by Lygia Fagundes Telles.

When I asked Lygia why women writers were non-existent in Brazil before the Twentieth Century, she wrote back:

"Women learned how to embroider,

Opposite page: photo of Hilda Hilst, used by her permission

## TWO POEMS BY HILDA HILST

Translated from the Portuguese by Eloah F. Giacomelli

### LITTLE ARIAS FOR MANDOLIN

No. II

My body in the sea
And the fish stirring
A taut fin
In the air.

My body of earth
Dives into the thrill

And thinks you up

In a liquid chimera.

The body of the fish –
Astounding eye
Hiatus
Screamingless gill

Dying away.

### MEMORY NO. 7

Listen, Ricardo, if I talk so much of beings of clay
It's because the rest is landscape.
I looked at my own flesh one night. And at that age-old
Pain that covered it. Your eyes roamed
Revivifying the island, and my arms, punished
For having reached out, searched for that harvest season.
But I was no shepherdess. In the earth that I am there are vast arteries
But dazzlement and winds of inception took hold of me
And the gesture of sowing was crystallized in my purest gaze.
I gazed: At the fig tree, at the damp stones around the well,
At the sun on the faces of women, faces like
Mud forgetful of rivers. And ubiquitous, I journeyed on.

Not that I didn't leave there affections, evening birds,
Dogs (travelers of one day) and presences when the night
Of auspices began to fall. Part of myself, the one of flesh
And absences, perhaps didn't emigrate. The rites – the usual ones.
But my gaze wasn't the same: It rested on things
But it wasn't on the things on which it rested.

I was seen walking across pastures. In the vineyards. Many have said
That my body stretched over the earth so that the two
Couldn't be told apart and birds came to rest from their flight
On my forehead of stone. I fell asleep at the crossing points of salt,
I sang my song in the courtyards of monasteries, I crossed bridges,
I bathed in the waters of endless wellsprings. But my mouth,
My mouth hardened in its search for one single fountainhead.

Memory No. 7 published with permission courtesy of Contemporary Literature in Translation, Mission City, British Columbia.

how to do the laundry, and in special cases, even how to play the piano and sing for the family. In the case of talented girls, those who belonged to the so-called rural bourgeoisie, they also learned how to read and write. The others (the absolute majority) were illiterate or could just barely write their own names."

Lygia can speak from her own experience. She belongs to one of the old, traditional Brazilian families, who pride themselves on being the descendants of the first Portuguese settlers that arrived in Brazil four hundred years ago.

Many of her female ancestors were stung by the writing bug. Unlike Lygia, however, they were forced to keep their writing a secret lest the wrath of their husbands should descend upon them. It was from her grandfather that Lygia learned about those women writers in her family. As a girl, she used to read her school essays and compositions to her blind grandfather. He was always warning her against her interest in writing.

Lygia speaks about one ancestor in particular. "She kept asking her husband for notebooks to write down household expenses and things like that. Until one day, somewhat puzzled, he wanted to know, But why do you need so many notebooks? It was only last month that I got you a new one. Even if this house were as large as a castle... And one day, as he was snooping around her things, he discovered the notebooks. Next to the figures, which were crowded together to save paper, were hundreds of poems. His wife had been filling entire notebooks with poems, written in a minute hand, in purple ink. Not only did the husband burn all her notebooks, but he also forbade her ever to take up such nonsense again."

Equally sad, Lygia recalls, was the case of that ancestor's daughter, who also wrote poems in secret. Stricken with tuberculosis, this young woman made a last request: she wanted to be buried with her poems. Her family filled her coffin with hundreds and hundreds of poems she had written. One wonders how many Brazilian Emily Dickinsons were lost forever in that strict, dismal, soul-destroying environment of rural, patriarchal Brazil of past centuries.

Unlike women in the English-speaking world, Brazilian women in the past were forbidden any direct contact with the outside world. In their travel books and historical accounts, foreigners who travelled in Brazil during the Nineteenth Century quite often remarked on the fact that they never saw the lady of the house in the homes where they stayed as guests. Although family heads were eager to offer their hospitality to strangers they kept their womenfolk away from the visitors. Wives and daughters were not even allowed in the dining-room when their husbands and fathers were entertaining strangers.

This situation has changed considerably in modern Brazil. However attitudes prevail that subtly pressure women to be homebound. Although today most professions are open to Brazilian women, those who do choose careers outside the home are still considered eccentric, if not bold, unfeminine, or "loose."

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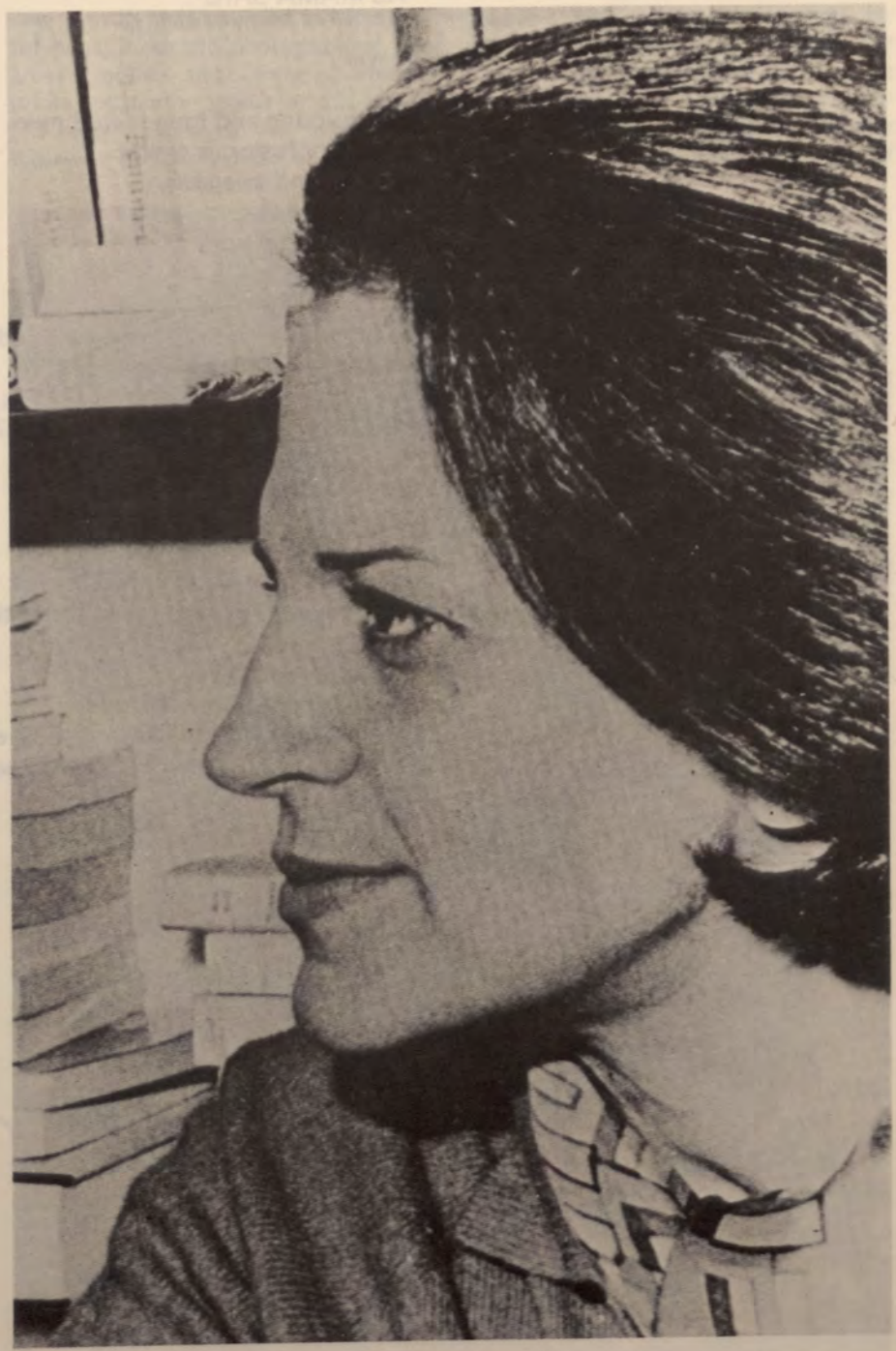


Lygia Fagundes Telles
photo used by her permission

## "AS MAMA SAID"

be wary

not of young and long-haired men
whose confusion is overt
in swing and swagger;
unseasoned
they could be your prey

but watch for guile
inside soft-voiced pros who're middle-aged;
who would question decency
in grey suits, white shirts, plain ties,
shaved faces, short hair, clean nails?

these have scented, tasted power
stalking like old elephants
in the paper jungles;
then tiger-wise
they spring with all the force that they have hidden

and for those naive
who venture close, too close,
serpents curl around irises of their eyes
and victims can't return to the same safe habitats
once in the vortex coil

# Pat Austin

# Who is the New Eve?

## The Feminist Art of Freda Guttman Bain

by Susan K. Poteet
photos by Bitsy Bateman

Freda Guttman Bain's first one-woman show (at Gallery 1640 in Montreal, October 1974) was the product of two years' work. In preparation, she learned two new techniques – photography and silk-screening – to add to her printmaker's repertory, and she worked on the images– thinking, collecting old material to be transformed, consolidating those midnight inspirations. The result is a series of prints whose complexity, beauty, and political impact leave the viewer breathless.

The subject of much of Freda's new work is the Garden of Eden and its central figure, Eve. This subject is not a new one for the artist, whose works in painting at an earlier period had been a series of Edens. I first encountered her images of Eden in the drawings which illustrate Leonard Cohen's *Let Us Compare Mythologies*, a collection of poems filled with stale existential despair and imagery of mutilation.

Freda's drawings, by contrast, have naked innocence (with delightfully Canadian spruce trees), which caused me to speculate upon exactly who tempted whom back at that moment when all our troubles began.

Of her recent works, Freda says, "The Garden, as in the Bible, is a place of incomparable beauty, overflowing with the endless variety of nature. It is also a time-place, or an ideal: a time of innocence (childhood) to be revisited in dreams. It has never ceased to exist."

One series of prints is composed of a number of images - a recurring Eve (a figure from Hans Baldung Grien's painting *Eve, the Serpent, and Death*, a 16th Century German painting owned by the National Gallery of Canada). One never knows where she will turn up in the print - standing to one side, gazing from behind a window, floating above a garden. She's as elusive as ever – eyes down-cast, Mona Lisa smile - but naked and unashamed. As the artist says, "Eve herself emerging from eons of myth to a new identity, has returned to her rightful home." An old photograph of the artist's mother and others of Freda's prints frequently appear in this series. She uses images of her mother to represent herself. We are all linked to our mothers; we are our mothers. Indeed, it is this link that makes Eve our mother, and perhaps, also, the new Eve our as yet unborn, although already conceived, child. Freda feels too that using her mother's image is a form of

detail - Eve in the Garden, 1974

detail — the artist watching a movie of her life.

reconciliation with the role figure we all rebelled against, the passive martyr who sacrificed all for us and our fathers. Being able to love her mother again is also a transcendence of perhaps our worst enemy, self-hatred.

In her works, the artist herself is seen visiting the Garden, as a tourist with her camera, possibly a metaphor for the creative process itself — the Garden symbolizing the multiple layers of experience; the camera as mind and memory, the recorder and synthesizer of experience. The design achieves unity and strength from a window and mirror, set in an old wooden wall.

About these prints, the artist says she sees "a great deal of ambiguity about being a woman, and that's a political statement." One has only to look at the rest of Baldung's painting with its slimy serpent and half-rotted corpse, which holds the apple above Eve's head, while grasping her arm in what must certainly be a death grip, to remember the old Eve—the mother of us all, the bringer of sin and death into this world. Who is the new Eve?

For the most part, the photographs which are the beginnings of these prints are the artist's (although she does include old photographs — one of her brother and herself as children, another of her mother and herself, both set in flower-crowded Edens) and she feels that photography is as important a form of artistic expression for her as etching and silk-screening.

In two of the works, Freda is seen watching movies of her life. Photography, the taking of pictures, becomes the very subject matter of her work, while at the same time it is a part of the medium used to create it. Rather than minimize the use of this technology, Ms. Bain wishes to emphasize it, believing that the new technological advances of our age, if mastered, can only expand and intensify our creative powers in any field.

Colour experiments absorb Freda. Taking her cue from the broken colour techniques of the Impressionists and using the tiny dots of colour of the photo half-tone, she works from her own colour slides, attempting to capture the vibrating colour intensities of nature. The slides are separated into the three primary hues (yellow, red, blue); three etched plates or silk screens are photographically produced and then printed one over the other in transparent inks to achieve a total image.

The result of this complicated, and to the layman, incomprehensible technique is surprising. I particularly like "Sunrise in the Lacquer Garden," which creates the impression of the light of sunrise on leaves so subtly that I am reminded of the classic comparison of a Monet with a photograph of the same subject. Beside the evocative colour of this print, Kodacolour suddenly looks primitive.

After graduating in painting from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1956, Freda did no art work of her own for ten years. She hastens to point out that those years were not spent in idleness. As well as teaching high school art classes, she did what many of us do during those precious years of youth? she started a family.

In 1966, Freda took up printmaking, a difficult and exacting medium, and spent the next several years mastering the necessary techniques. A famous printmaker once told her that "if one can ink it, one can print it," a remark which became a touchstone for her imagination. Even her earliest work shows a fascination with mixed media. In 1970, she glued, inked, and printed a man's shirt front which had come fresh from the cleaners. It was the first of her many lovely but ironic statements about the paraphernalia which clutter woman's mind. Another early work, *Armoire I*, is a representation of a lovely Quebec antique pine cupboard, the kind of object which Quebecoise have lived with for centuries, for so long perhaps that they no longer notice it at all. Our attention is drawn to this artifact by Ms. Bain's work which is a print of a worked and perforated piece of copper foil.

Freda is both a feminist and an artist. What does this mean and how did it come about? It is hard to say which came first, she says, feeling that they start simultaneously. Freda joined one of the first consciousness-raising groups in Montreal and has always been active in feminist activities, most recently as a member of Powerhouse Gallery, a co-operative women's gallery in Montreal.

However, to talk about feminism as an aspect of Freda's art is more difficult, the danger being oversimplification. Art comes not from the conscious intellect, the world of ideas; it comes

cont. on p. 37

Crouching Beast

# passive, obedient and pleasant

## The Modern Nurse: Professional or Good Scout?

by Carole L. TenBrink
drawings by Linda Donnelly

Nursing today is affected by its total history as a female, obedient, dependent profession. When trying to understand some of the ways nurses are presently affected, we must consider: the public image of the nurse, the socializing process in nursing education, and sexist aspects of nursing practice today. Statements made in this article are based not on formal research, but on observations and experiences of the author, other nurses, patients, and occasionally on the research of others. Every nurse must do her own inner research in this area. She must examine her own attitudes and professional experiences to become conscious of how her personal history and the history of nursing have taught her to minimize her contribution.

**Nurses are stereotyped as suffering saints, sex objects, or doctors' assistants.**

Nursing does not endeavor to be an independent, influential and respected profession. One way to explore the extent to which we may have succeeded in this endeavor is to consider the public's image of the nurse. The results of such an exploration are both depressing and infuriating. The public image reflects the nurse almost entirely as a dependent, serving, non-thinking girl with a nice sex-object sugar coating.

My first serious acquaintance with the public image of the nurse came in my college days, when I switched from liberal arts into a nursing curriculum. I was amazed at the sudden change which happened to my identity in the eyes of others. A female liberal arts student has an amorphous identity. Others have to make an effort to get to know her. But a nursing student... now, she was something different. Three somewhat contradictory images were reflected back to me from other students, friends and relatives (i.e. the public?). One type of response went like this:

"Oh, it must be wonderful to be a nurse, to help suffering people like that... but I could never do it... I can't stand the sight of blood."

Embodied in this statement is the image of "female" as one who braves horrible sights in order to sacrifice herself, nurture and be martyred. This is the "female" as angel and saint. It was usually a woman who voiced this impression of the nurse.

Contradictory to this image is that of the nurse as female sex object. Men usually express this image as follows:

"Oh yea, I know all about nurses, really wild bunch; I mean, you really know how to lay a 'bod'." These comments are delivered with an appropriately seductive, yet leering undertone.

"You aren't really going to be a nurse, are you? You're too smart... Why don't you go to medical school?" This third type of comment shows people's hierarchical conception of nursing and medicine. Nurses (i.e. women) are less smart, less capable, more the followers; doctors (i.e. men) are more intelligent and the leaders in the health field.

One can also look at the various media in their treatment of nurses. Books, television, movies, get-well cards, and jokes are influential in forming and reflecting public opinion.

Among books the Sue Barton series, the Harlequin Romance series, Red Heart Romance, Dellbooks and the Signet Nurse series are popular and widely read paperbacks which portray a non-professional and unrealistic image of the nurse. This "paperback nurse" never discusses her patients in terms of defining and developing her care of them. She usually is in a love quandary with a handsome doctor, or a rich, influential male patient. When she is described as a 'fine' nurse, the praise comes from a doctor, and he means that she is loyal, obedient, pleasant, beautiful, or that she helps to keep his work organized for him. When this nurse's work is portrayed at all, it is romanticised as a bystander's vicarious adventure in someone else's (doctor's or patient's) human tragedy, quest for health, or missionary zeal. One can argue both that these books are not widely read and that they are not accepted in their characterization of the nurse. The fact is they are very widely read. Recently, a week-end magazine article reported a Canadian publisher as saying that these books serve his company's largest market. Without them the company could not survive. It's hard to say whether or not their portrayals are accepted as a realistic image of the nurse. Probably many people know intellectually that they are reading fanciful escapist literature. At the same time, they may be affected in subtle, unconscious ways, especially in the absence of any strong, opposing image. We must consider, too, how young girls (like ourselves, years ago) are influenced in their views of themselves as women and as future nurses.

Other books push more explicitly the role of the nurse as sex object. *Tender Loving Care*, by Moura and Sutherland (two nurses), is advertised as a more succulent sequel to *Coffee, Tea, or Me*. The nurses in this book are aware of being used as dumb, cute playthings by the military, but they choose to describe their situation as humorous, good fun.

Get-well cards push the image of the nurse as sex object or as the authoritarian bitch. When she helps patients to recover, it is because her tantalizing, yet childish, presence entertains and vitalizes (male) patients. But, often she impedes patients' recovery through a rigid and inhuman authoritarianism. The worst thing about these caricatures is that, as nurses, we must recognize a painful truth they represent.

Television also portrays a sex-stereotyped, non-professional image of the nurse. Almost everyone is familiar with programs such as "Marcus Welby,"

"General Hospital," and "Medical Center." Here are a few examples from their fare:

A doctor orders a nurse to get a chart for him. She delivers it and waits patiently and silently, while he decides what he must do for the patient. Then she returns the chart to its rack.

A female doctor berates herself for not doing a good job with a certain patient.

A nurse discusses with another nurse how easy it would be for her to fall in love with a certain doctor.

Two nurses gossip about the problems two doctors are having in their marriages.

A nurse is caring for a bed-ridden patient. Two doctors arrive at the bedside and discuss with each other what to do for the patient. The nurse leaves without contributing any information or opinion she may have about her patient. The patient also remains a silent non-entity.

A doctor takes a female patient in a wheel chair back to her room after diagnostic tests. Along the way, he expresses concern about her emotional, social, and family life and how it may be affected by her present illness.

A doctor asks a nurse for a chart. She says, "Yes sir," and is cheerful and pleasing. Meanwhile, the phone rings and she answers it. While she takes the call, the doctor waits. After, she walks five to eight feet and gets the chart he requested and is again very cheerful and deferential as she hands it to him.

One can try to minimize all this bad publicity in the media by recalling that other professionals (doctors, lawyers, detectives, etc.) are also portrayed in extremely unrealistic ways. But there is a significant distinction to be made here. The "male" professions are fantasized to be much larger than real life - i.e. more curing, caring, intelligent, and brave. The "female" profession, nursing is fantasized to be much smaller than life—i.e. dependent, petty, self-seeking, childish, and cruel.

What about actual patients? Surely, they have seen that nurses are important to their recovery. Unfortunately, many times they have not. Recently, a heart transplant patient was interviewed on television. He stressed the life-giving measures used by the doctors. All he said about nurses was that they were "sweet and nice." Often I have asked patients what they think nurses do. Their responses usually stress the following: carrying out doctors' orders, reporting patients' daily progress to the doctor, and assisting doctors with routine daily care. Patients give answers like this, even in settings where nurses are *actually* assisting them in health matters in quite crucial areas. They still view the nurses' contribution as less significant than the doctors'.

Whenever and however you try to measure the public image of the nurse, one thing is clear. The public's perception of us is far different and they see us as far less central to their health than we perceive ourselves. This raises the question whether a profession can actually practice when such a great schism exists between the profession's and the public's perception of what service is offered.

Nurses are strangely content with the public's poor view of us. Very rarely do nurses mention it, much less do anything about it. Back in August 1954, one nurse, Wolff, wrote an article in *Nursing Outlook* on the nurse's public image and commented that "much of the writing of the last 10-20 years for the public, about nursing, reflects conditions and settings which are strangely obsolete and outdated." That was 20 years ago and the situation still has not changed a bit.

**Nursing students are taught passivity, obedience, deference to authority and pleasantness.**

Every profession engages in a socialization process of new members which includes both intentional and unintentional aspects of attitude formation. It includes all the subtle nuances one picks up in school and in early supervised student practice about how one should think, feel, act, and be when one is a nurse. In nursing today, despite intentional attempts to instill such professional attitudes as responsibility for one's own thinking and practice, many strongly embedded female-typed attitudes are still fostered and perpetuated. These female-typed attitudes are anti-professional and include such virtues as

passivity (don't argue or cause a conflict; it's not nice), obedience (carry out the doctor's orders carefully), deference to authority (other professionals have more knowledge and stature), and pleasantness (always consider, first of all, the feelings of others). In these anti-professional attitudes we still are living within the same paradox as our medieval sisters lived. Teachers of nursing cannot help but pass on these attitudes to the extent that their own personal and professional female-typed socialization goes unexamined. Even when teachers are, to some extent, free of such paradoxical attitudes themselves and do present to the student professional attitudes, sexist socialization still will occur. The student still will be faced with her own internalized female-typed socialization from childhood and will experience great conflict in acting like a professional. The conflict is only intensified by the clinical setting which still in many ways resembles the "husband-doctor-decide" and "wife-nurse-do" model. There is only one way to begin to overcome this sexist socialization. Teacher and student must sit down and face the conflict. It must become an integral part of student supervision to discuss experiences of this conflict.

How do students experience this conflict? Often it takes the form of a great anxiety over whether to assert oneself or not. Either way, great guilt is experienced. If she backs down, the student is wrong professionally; if she asserts herself, she's wrong in her sex role. I have gathered numerous examples of this from students. Here's one another teacher related to me:

A student has cared for Mr. X. for a week, and this morning the medical team is making rounds while she is on duty. She is afraid to attend the bedside rounds even though she has some pertinent information about Mr. X. The teacher encourages her, but she still hangs outside the door, saying that she doesn't understand everything they are discussing and feels her contribution would be irrelevant to them. The teacher finally says, "You're going in there to speak and I'm coming with you."

Had the teacher not acted, she would have reinforced an anti-professional attitude in the student, probably reflecting her own still deeply ingrained female passivity.

Students can also go to the opposite extreme; that is, they can become so intoxicated with a new ability to think and act independently that they act in situations where they haven't yet developed sufficiently complex or subtle judgement. At this point, also, the teacher's effort to reinforce professional independence can backfire. When faced with the student's "faux pas" she will be tempted to say, "Don't do that again!" This, in effect, rips from the student her still fragile ability to think and act on her own. Here is an example:

A student cared for a severely deformed newborn for two weeks before it died. She realized that she had been the only person to have regular human contact with this creature. She assumed that the mother, who had gone home to a nearby town, would be grieving her loss. She further assumed that her grief would be assisted if she wrote her a letter describing what she felt the baby had been like. When the mother wrote back, the student proudly took the letter to her teacher. The teacher was, with some reason, shocked at such unusual practice and told the student not to do things like that, because it could greatly upset some mothers. The student reported feeling crushed and intimidated.

It would have been much more conducive to professional development if the teacher had analyzed the situation with the student. Hadn't she assumed too much? What did she really know about how this woman could best deal with her loss? Did she have any basis for thinking this woman could deal with detailed knowledge or that she needed to deny and forget? At the same time, the student needed to know she had taken up an important area that nurses should explore. Instead, all the student learned was that she shouldn't be inventive, shouldn't act on her experience and ideas (passivity), and she shouldn't upset people (pleasantness).

From my experience in college programs, students often are more rewarded (with good evaluations and grades, etc.) for behaviors like carrying out doctors' orders and doing routine procedures correctly and efficiently than for taking initiative with patients in stress. Students also learn, all too often, that the real rewards come from doctors. When a young nurse can intellectualize

cont. on p. 46

## THE SIMILKAMEEN CHANGES

In spring the snows melted
White became clear

That morning near our hearth
our hub
— the stones we ringed
and blackened together —
we knelt to the River

made eels of the sun rise
on our wriggling
wet hair
soaped it
beat it
on the rocks to dry

brought the River
to shivering armpits
dropped it
down our backs
and onto hot brown thighs

walked in it
washed in it
cupped it and drank

# Judy Lassen


The 5 minute
breast cancer check.
Do you have the time?
Canadian Cancer Association

have you ever noticed
how people who are in a hurry to leave
rush on their coats
and then stand reluctant to disturb the weave

to depart from the design
of gathered friends
afraid to fend
for themselves
without the secure protection
of speech and group

and who continue to stand
holding on to the thread
of exchange
not breaking it
but stretching its length
mutliplying its thickness
until finally it is not snapped
but dropped
by cruel necessity of time

Simmering slowly
the bean soup murmurs
on the stove
the dishes lounge
in the warm water
the music swells
into my heart
from the radio
a classical Spanish
strain haunting
uncovering memories
dear to my being
my pen snuggles in my hand
the kitchen only a land
working for me
its sovereign
not its slave

# Constance Soulikias

# Winning in the Sierras

"I kept laughing to myself because I couldn't believe I was working at a casino because everyone at home thought it was so wild" (Susan).

by Robie Darche
collage by Barbara Hartmann

In the high Sierras, in Nevada, just east of the California border, the players are beckoned by the unholy allure of the games. On the street, sounds of excitement prevail. The whole place buzzes. Lights and billboards flicker, paling only slightly in the sun's bright ray. Honking cars and people scurrying flutter here and there. The scene is compelling, ringed in by the three big casinos. Beyond are the mountains.

Inside, the walls are papered with red brocade. Where the papering ends, a highly varnished wood takes over. Red carpeting with a design in deeper red runs through the casino. Everything is textured. Row upon row, shiny flickering, throughout, the slot machines prevail. Where there are crap tables, there are slot machines; roulette wheels, slot machines; flickering keno boards, slot machines; bars, restaurants... slot machines. The casino is a collage of reds with speckles of green and yellow. Slot machines spark signals into the air. In summertime the crowds are always thick. In nature's infinite array, they fill the casino, a crush of fun seekers to rival a rush-hour press in the New York City subway. Reflected in mirrors that extend from the ceiling, the throbbing image glares from down to up and up to down.

"The thing that struck me the most was the appearance of the people, both the customers and the people I was working with" (Christine).

I had thought this was the age of Aquarius. But in the high Sierras, it was the 1950's again – bouffant hairdos, spiked heels, mascara, lipstick and painted fingernails. I half expected everyone to line up for the stroll humming a Fats Domino tune. Men with their hair cropped and parted at the side were wearing red blazers. Shades of high school varsity. Little Anthony and the Imperials were at the Sahara ("Tears on My Pillow"), bringing back memories of Sadie Hawkins dances and the Platters, getting drunk and going steady and flexing in the back seat.

"I felt out of it. Well, whether it was my imagination or not, I felt that they were like a clique I remembered from high school and I was a new kid, and, as I had felt in high school, you know, it was almost impossible to break into it" (Lois).

And the players – in their world the machine is the thing. First the nickel, then the pull, then the waiting and watching, then the stop of the wheel. Jubilation, despair, highs, lows, and resignation – a discordant spectrum of emotions pulsates through the players. Just put, pull, and feel. Just wait till the wheel stops and let it out. The machine will not hold you accountable. It lets you feel. It's outside the real world. It's telling you to feel. It is in a world apart. Your world. You are the world.

"They create their own secure world. They have their machines and their nickels and drinks in their hands, and they feel safe. I think that's why they get so impatient when they run out of nickels" (Christine).

When a player experiences an interruption in the rhythmic lull of the machine, perhaps having run out of nickels, quarters, or dimes, he or she is jolted from this absorption. The first person the player must contact is the changegirl.

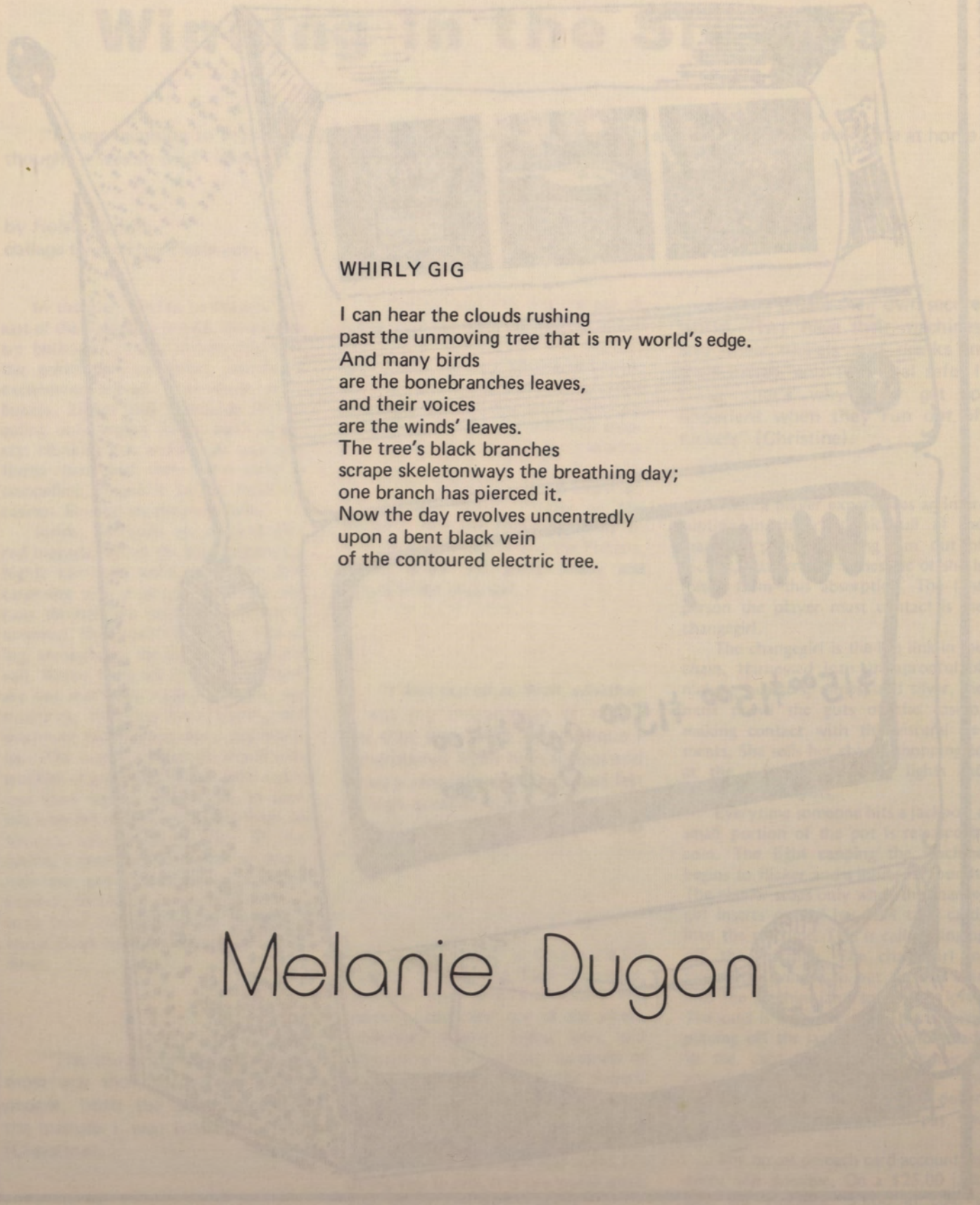
The changegirl is the last link in the chain. Harnessed into an apronful of nickels, quarters, dimes, and silver, she must prowl the guts of the casino, making contact with the visceral elements. She sells her change, hopping to at the sight of flickering lights and dinging off jackpots.

Everytime someone hits a jackpot, a small portion of the pot is released in coin. The light capping the machine begins to flicker and a loud ring sounds. The clamor stops only when the changegirl inserts one of her IBM tally cards into the machine. This is called dinging off the machine. The changegirl instructs the winner to put another coin into the machine and to pull the lever. The card is then released. This is called playing off the jackpot. A punch made in the card indicates the remaining amount of the winner's jackpot. "The machine has dropped you a dollar, madam, play it off and I'll pay you $6.50 more."

The boxes on each card account for every win possible. On a $25.00 jackpot, for example, $5.00 in coin is

cont. on p. 44

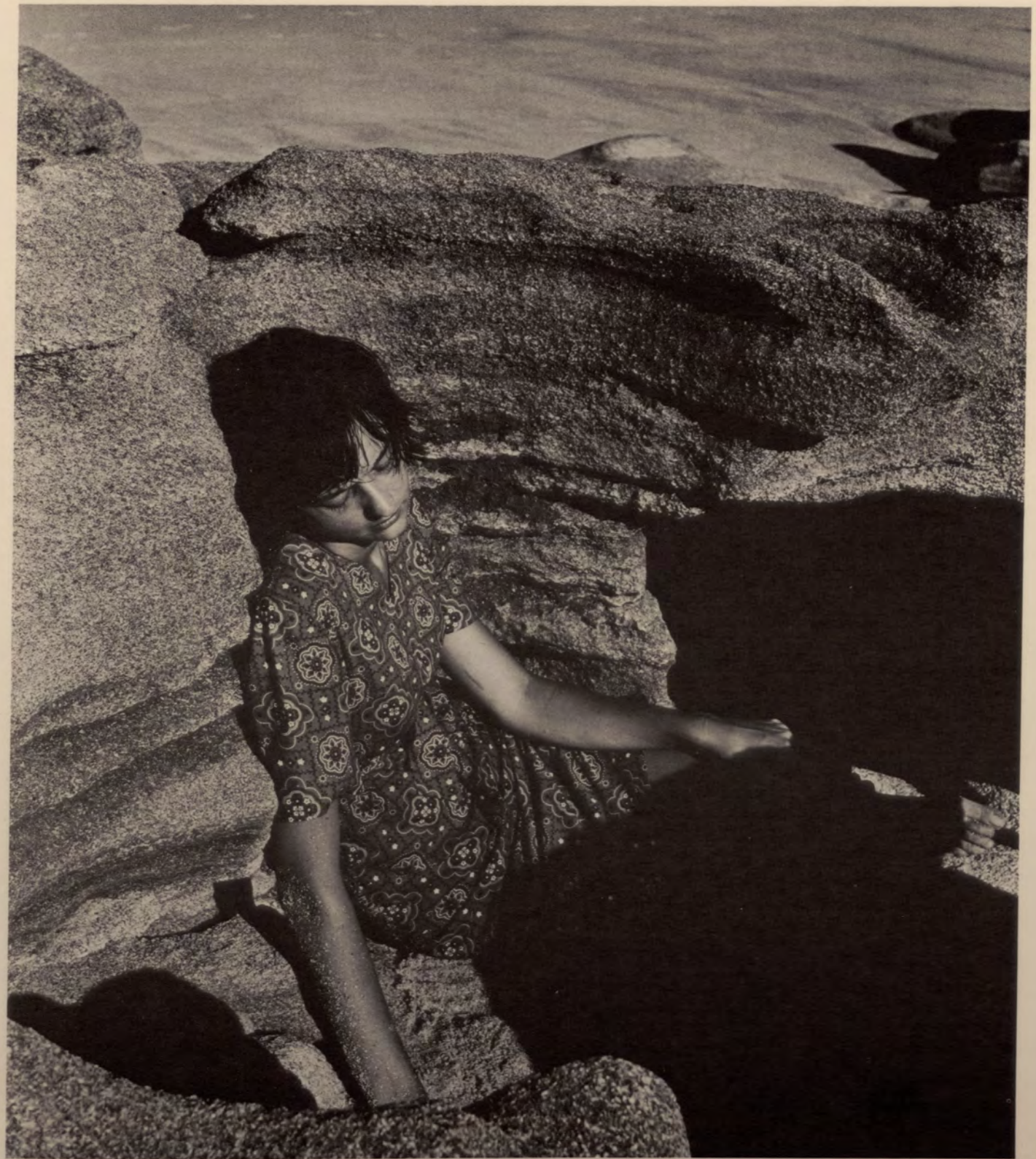
photos courtesy of the Sahara Tahoe



## WHIRLY GIG

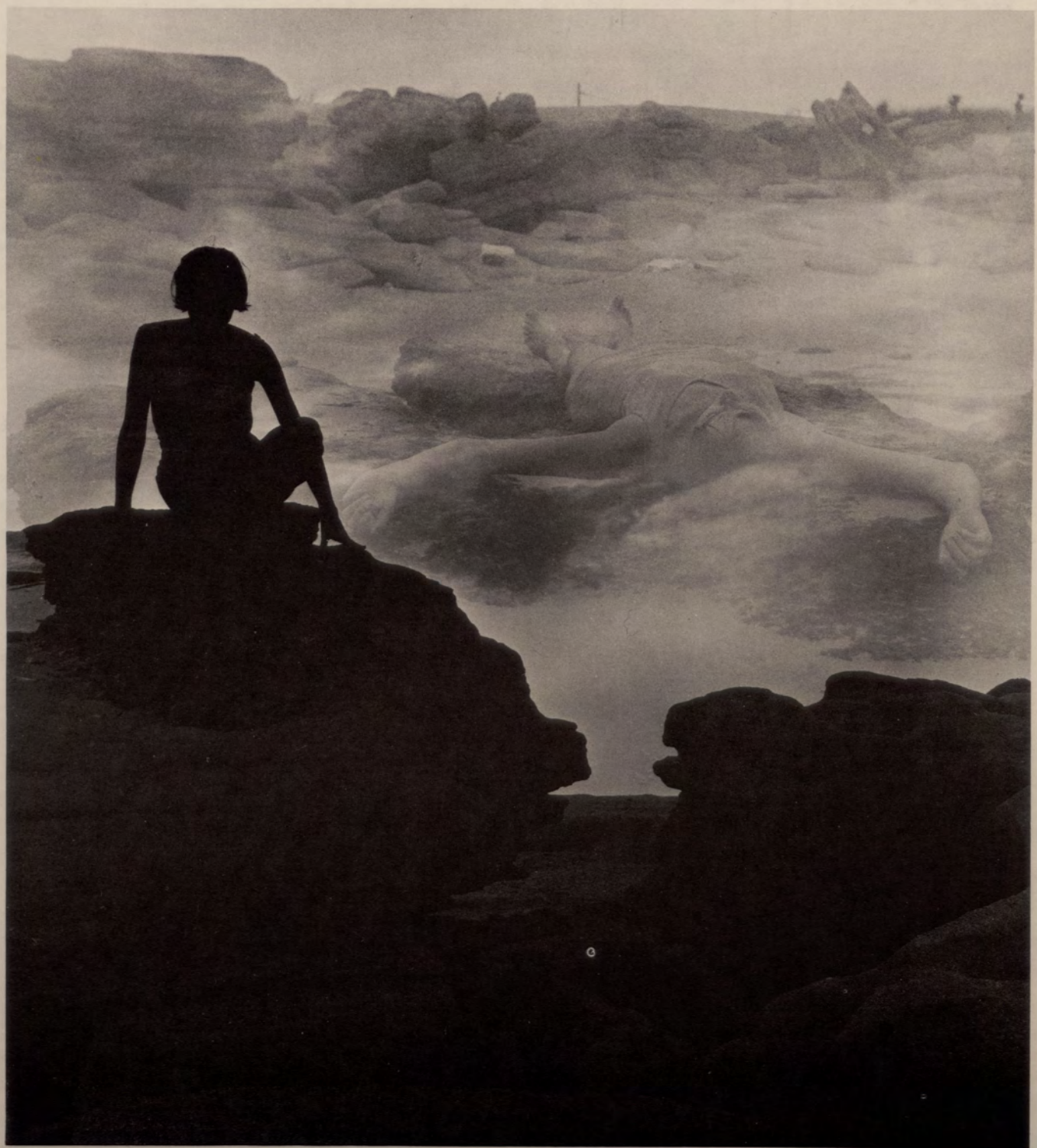
I can hear the clouds rushing
past the unmoving tree that is my world's edge.
And many birds
are the bonebranches leaves,
and their voices
are the winds' leaves.
The tree's black branches
scrape skeletonways the breathing day;
one branch has pierced it.
Now the day revolves uncentredly
upon a bent black vein
of the contoured electric tree.

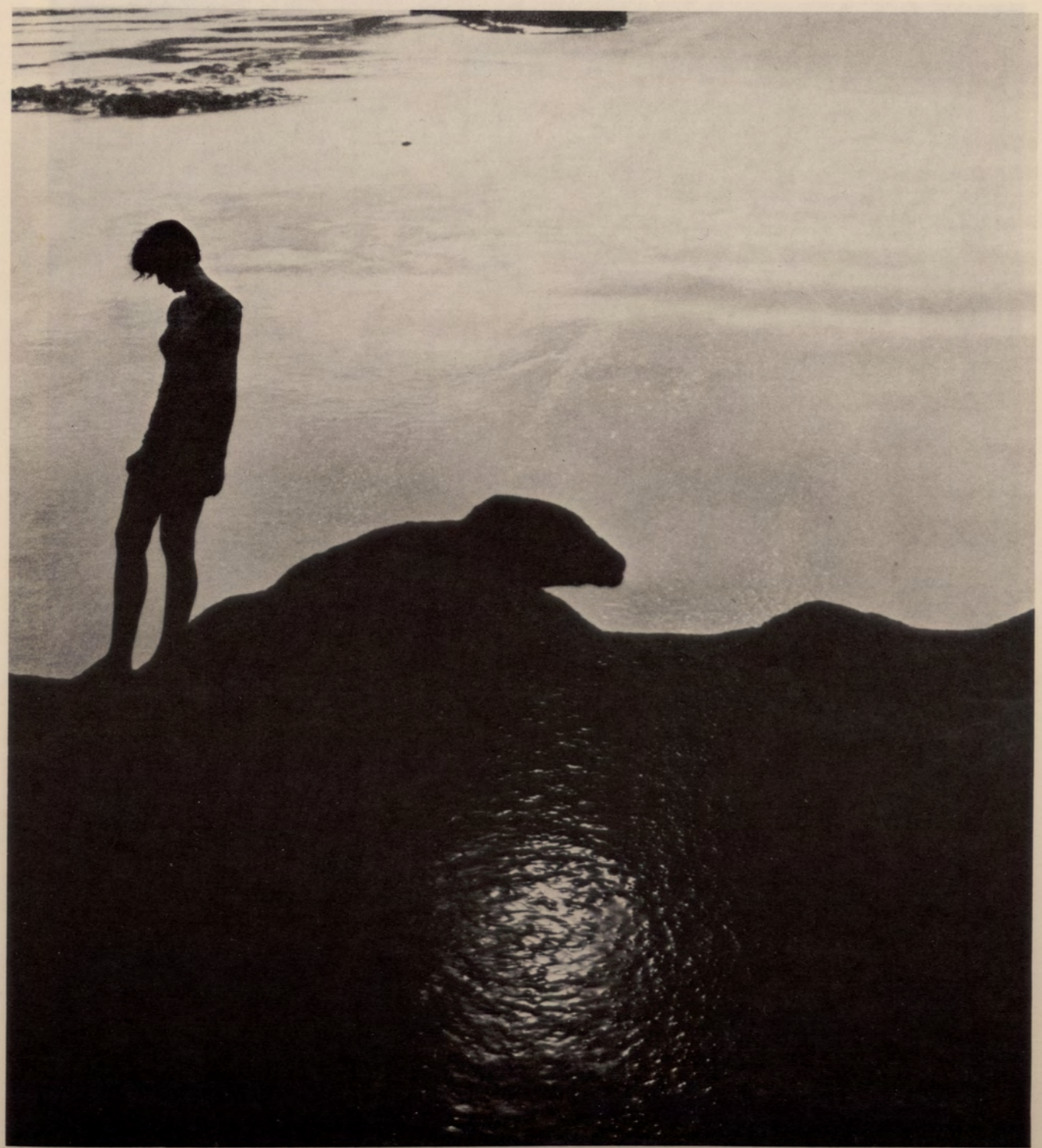
# Melanie Dugan

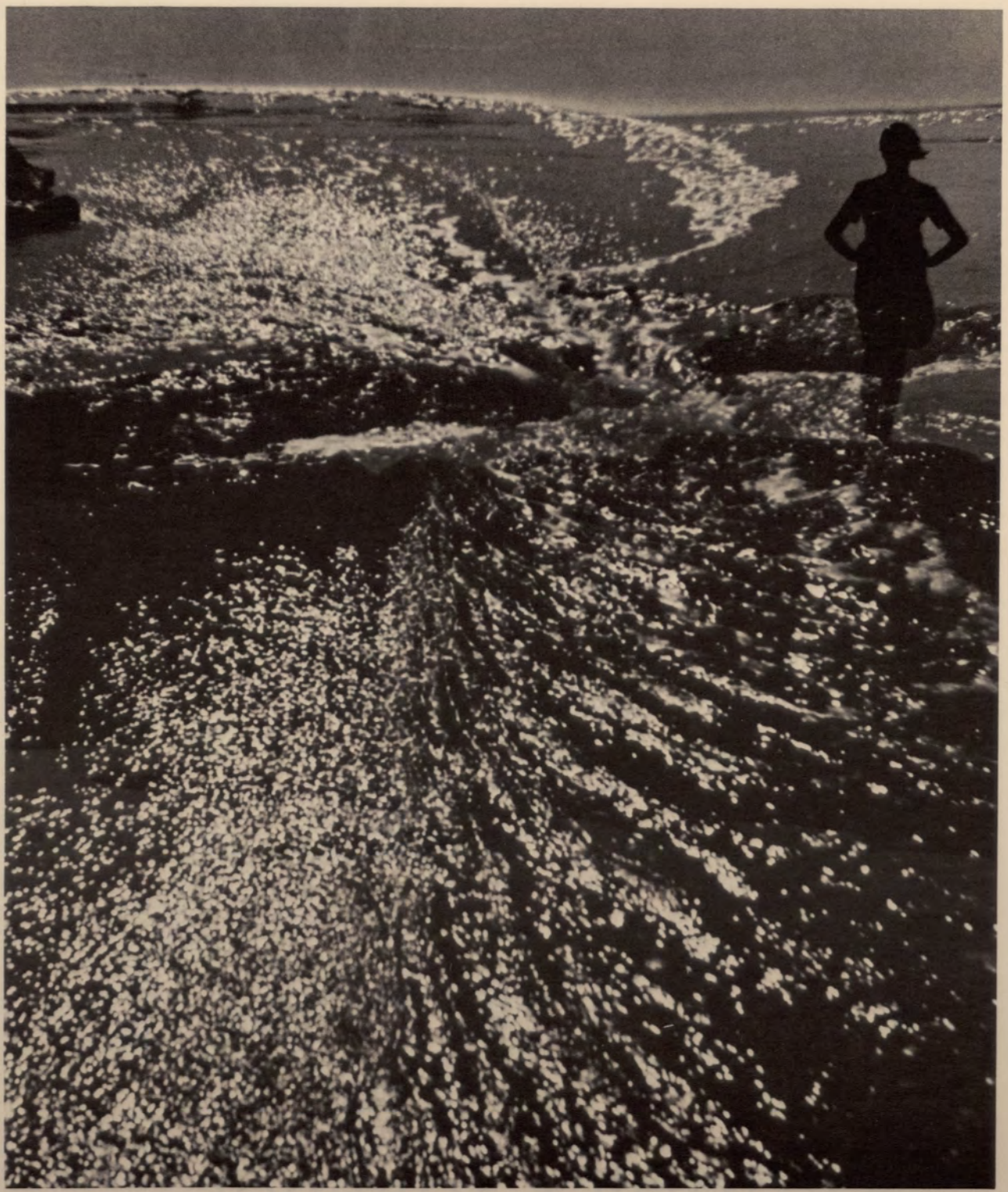


Dream Sequence

photoessay by Diana Selsor Palting







## SETTLING DOWN

He's planted pansies
and petunias
in green plastic boxes slung
over the porch railing;
today he papered the bedroom
in ambisextrous bold blue
flowers and talks of painting
the bathroom. In a year
or two, he says,
we'll buy a house.

I sell paperbacks
on Dundas Street to help
raise the down payment
and dream
of Charing Cross Road.

To ensure that I will
stay he bought a piano;
it weighs down on me
more heavily than his body
or his mind.
In the evening I play,
he listens. Occasionally
he applauds and I smile,
remembering the scent of hyacinths
in Hyde Park at Easter.

## MONOLOGUE

I always insist on the last word
and when I knew our thing,
our fling, was ending I
dug into my dictionary for the words
(with which) to leave you -

brutal words to bruise your brain
poignant words that would congeal in
your throat when you tried to repeat them,
mellifluous words that would slip into your heart.

I rehearsed one thousand times.

Someone dimmed the house lights
too soon, the curtains parted and,
startled, I blurted out my
word-perfect speech and heard,
as you did, an emotion-
muddled harangue.

I sensed your discomfort
and knew there'd be no roses
afterwards. I should have
given you a copy
of the script.

Jennifer Kilpatrick

# Bye Baby Bunting

by Helen J. Rosta

drawing by Barbara Hartmann

The child used to come here, it's true, trailing along behind her mother, a thin child with scratched legs and bare feet. She played with the rabbits, especially the white doe she called Snow-drop. She said it was friendlier than the brown or spotted ones and prettier too. Sometimes while the woman haggled with the old man over the price of vegetables, I dropped my hoe and went down to the hutches and watched her. She used to hold the rabbit in her lap and talk to it, combing her fingers through the fur. "You can pet Snow-drop too," she'd say to me, "just touch her and see how nice and soft she is," and she'd put her little brown hand on mine and guide it over the rabbit's back. She treated that rabbit just like a real pet. The first time I saw her tying a piece of string around its neck and trying to lead it, I told her that you couldn't lead a rabbit, but she said that Snow-drop was special and before I knew it she had that silly doe hopping along behind her.

Watching her, I'd forget all about hoeing the garden, and for a while the old man would be so busy looking at the woman that he wouldn't notice, but as soon as he did, he'd start to yell, "Hey you, you think this garden's going to hoe itself while you stand gawking? You think I pay wages for gawking? Well, if you do you've got another thing coming... get back on that hoe handle..."

The old man has a green thumb, people say. Ground jumping with potatoes as big as a bucket and cucumbers as long as your arm. The old man may have a green thumb but he is breaking my back. He's been breaking my back in his garden ever since I came to this valley.

But why ask me about the child? I didn't even know her name, anymore than she knew mine. One day she called me Mr. Funnyman, just like it was my real name. "Mr. Funnyman," she said, "does Snow-drop like candy?" Funnyman. I didn't hold it against her, a little child leading a white rabbit on a string. Children repeat what they hear.

They should ask the old man – he used to watch her sometimes, the way he watched her mother. Or ask the mother. She is a violent woman.

That day she could have killed the old man, coming at him with a hoe. I saw it myself. I was down at the hutches, helping the child tie the string on Snow-drop. We were going to take her for a little walk. "Down by the river?" the child asked. I looked back to see if the old man was going to yell at me but he was in the garden with the woman. She was bending over a row of peas – American Wonders – and she was wearing one of those thin print dresses you can see right through when you're facing the sun. With her legs astraddle that way the dress was hiked right up at the back. The old man was standing behind her, watching as if she were a snake charmer and he was a snake. I bet if I'd been closer I would have seen his little pointed tongue flicking out and licking foam from his lips. He has vile habits, the old man. When he eats, he dribbles from the corners of his mouth and then the tongue flicks out, and what the tongue doesn't get, he wipes off with the back of his hand.

Suddenly the woman screamed, Next thing I knew, she'd grabbed the hoe I'd dropped and was bringing it down on the old man's head. If he hadn't thrown up his arm and knocked the hoe out of her hand it would have split him straight down the middle.

The woman started shouting and jumping up and down in the pea patch like she was having some kind of fit. "Don't you lay your filthy hands on me," she yelled. The child was right there beside me, hugging the rabbit and watching her mother with big eyes. I could see she was scared but she wasn't crying or anything, like maybe she had seen her mother this mad before. "You can keep your goddamn vegetables and you know what else you can do with them," the woman screeched. She shook her fist at the old man and as if that wasn't enough, she deliberately kicked an American Wonder right off its stake. I told the child to put the rabbit down, grasped her hand and we ran up to them. The little fingers were as cold as icicles in my palm.

The old man was red in the face and making funny noises in his throat. He was trying to get the woman out of the garden before she ruined everything, but he didn't dare touch her so he was making little shuffling patterns with his feet. When she saw us the woman seized the child's arm and yanked her away. "Come on.... let's get out of here. Move!" The child dragged her feet, plowing small furrows in the loose dirt, and the old man was bug-eyed thinking that she might cultivate out a whole row. Then the child plastered herself to her mother's skirt, trying to slow her down, whimpering about Snow-drop, but the woman just tightened her grip and jerked her along. In a moment they were well out of the garden. "You're damned lucky I didn't split that watermelon head of yours in two," the woman flung back at the old man.

"Bitch," the old man muttered without looking at me. I didn't say anything, didn't even ask him what he'd done, just went down and took the string off the rabbit's neck and put her back in her pen. And after I finished my chores, I went to my shack like I always do.

The next morning the old man was stalking up and down the rows and he gave a kind of yelp when he saw that his best zucchini plant was wilting. The hoe had sliced it off just above the ground. Naturally, he blamed me for dropping the hoe in the garden. He didn't even mention the American Wonder that the woman had kicked out. And it was ruined too.

cont. on p. 42

# business

by Susan McMaster

Why, time after time, do women's groups with good ideas and good people gradually disintegrate after six months or a year of successful operation? Why do factions tend to form, rivalries develop? Why do a handful of women always seem to end up doing all the work, and resenting it?

Judging from our experiences with *Branching Out*, I think there are two main reasons – and they have nothing to do with the frequently heard chauvinistic comments that, for one, women can't work together, and secondly that women have no heads for business anyway.

The first reason is simple: we are untrained and naive. Many of us don't fill out our own income tax forms, arrange loans with bank managers, deal with engine mechanics, fight our way inch by inch from the bottom to the top of a hierarchical organization. We haven't been conditioned to be suspicious of every co-worker and business associate, to read every contract three times, and to never let on when we're not sure of our ground.

And, seemingly trivial things stand in the way of efficient operation. The percentage of women who can't drive and are therefore dependent on chauffeuring is much higher than the percentage of men in that boat. We also lack basic business skills; some of us know how to type, but few are familiar with double-entry bookkeeping or analysing legal documents. Our men still tend to keep track of the money and to sign the contracts.

The second reason for our recurring organizational problems is more complex. The feminist movement has, by and large, rejected the hierarchical structure of the traditional male-run organization as a model for group interactions. Because we are committed to a common cause, power struggles and wielding of authority seem to contradict our ideal of sisterhood. Usually we attempt to operate as equal partners working toward common goals and making decisions by consensus. Often we discover that one or two women are controlling the rest, albeit covertly; that a few of our sisters just never seem to be available when there's work to do; and that joint decision-making is time-consuming, wearing, and sometimes impossible.

It's at the point when all of these problems finally become unbearable that the original group tends to collapse. It may split into rival factions or impose Robert's Rules and strict structure – usually under the influence of a strong character.

That's the black side of the story. Some women's groups survive the hassles, solve the problems, and come out stronger and more unified. How? Why? What is it that makes the difference?

I am not suggesting that women's groups should start operating in the bitterly competitive ways that men's organizations often assume. But I am saying that we must temper pure idealism with a little hard-headed business sense. We must learn a few skills - accounting and filing for example; we must learn to keep our cool when that friendly, obsequious distributor/printer /sales manager or whoever shafts us but good; we must find out what our legal rights and responsibilities are as an organization. We can reject rigid hierarchy as a pattern, but it is naive to believe that any group can function without some kind of structure.

Women's groups across Canada are facing and dealing with similar problems every day. The purpose of this column is to allow us to share our ideas and to learn from each other, from the bad experiences as well as the good. If youor your group has discovered something worth sharing about funding, group dynamics, administration et cetera, please send an account of your experiences to Women in Business, P.O. Box 4098, Edmonton, Alberta T6E 4T1.

The first article in this series describes some of the problems Carolyn Bode, Mary Ann Kelly and Larraine Brown had when they compiled the *Toronto Women's Yellow Pages.* Illustrations for "What I did this Summer" are taken from the book.

# How I Spent My Summer

by Carolyn Bode

I put out a book... with two other, equally strong-willed women. Not "wrote" one, mind you, we "put one out". Just writing a one-page preface nearly did us in. A whole book would have brought us to blows and to the end of the project before the first chapter was done.

So, what have I learned? Never do it again. At least not in the same, blind, trial-and-error way.

It got off to a bad beginning. Step one, obviously, was to finance our book. Being new to the fund-raising field we bungled our first attempt. We just checked out the criteria and filled out the form, listing what we wanted to do. The greenest novice knows that you should arrange personal interviews (at least two), to find out exactly what the granting agency wants and then tailor the proposal accordingly. We approached Opportunities for Youth (at the age of 26 I had the grace to blush) with a proposal to put together a directory of women who work independently or own their own businesses, and of women's services and collectives, all in one handy booklet... sort of a feminist phone book. "Support and promote women economically!" we cried, waving Status of Women reports and Women's Bureau statistics.

"Women and Business? Humbug!" replied OFY. "You're promoting affluent women."

So there, all you freelance photographers and artists and shop owners who are pretending to live hand to mouth. OFY knows the truth.

But, they liked our credentials. So they took three of us and lumped us in with another women's project. We'd be able to gather a lot of the information we'd need for the book while working on the other project, so, grumbling, we agreed. We'd do our own project after hours.

And so started the women's directory.

How do you go about producing a women's directory? Well, you tell all your friends. Ask them if their doctor or dentist or plumber is a woman and would like to list with you. You get about 300 names of such women and half of them think you're crazy and toss your contact letter into the wastebasket.

Then you try popping into stores and asking the women behind the counters if they own the places. Reaction: immediate hostility. (Is this strange woman with her notebook a summons server? A building inspector in drag?) Result: an occasional listing.

You send letters to all sorts of women's organizations asking to be mentioned in their newsletters. You check out the community papers which carry free ads. And, then you sit back and wait for the calls to come rolling in – seven of them.

Time to escalate... resort to the most gruelling experience imaginable - reading the Yellow Pages.

Now you probably discover that you're about the only person in the province who's read this tome cover to cover – a dubious distinction. Even if you break it down – say do 100 pages a day – it can drive you nuts. What you're looking for is a business with a women's name – preferably not Laura Secord or Mama's Pizza. You find yourself beginning to hate categories like "Electric Motors - Sales and Service" which go on for pages and never have women's names. And then there are all those cute little messages: "Get Action, use Yellow Pages"; "Quick as a wink – Yellow Pages"; and, even worse, "You'll love a kitchen telephone." It's the kind of summer reading that rapidly drives you to hysteria.

But, when it's done, you have almost 1,500 names for your mailing list - well worth it. Visions of a directory listing 1,500 women (well, maybe 1,400 – not all will want to list) start filling your head...

Until you talk to your friend the community organizer and discover you'll be lucky to get 10 percent return on your mailing. Suddenly, that thick, glossy book dwindles down to something laughable.

So, you go out looking for more names.

We were fortunate. There was an election. Enumerators came around, wrote down names and professions and posted them on street corners. If one midsummer evening you noticed a woman standing on a corner in front of a telephone pole scribbling furiously, that was one of us.

Then, halfway through the summer, we got lucky. We renegotiated our OFY contract and were allowed to work full-time on the directory. We even got a small amount of money for expenses like postage. (We were about to ask the Royal Mail to make us honorary partners.) We found a woman to do our typesetting, one to do our layout and another to do the cover illustration - all free of charge.

Believe it or not, the listings started piling up. Then we got into the heavy stuff - policy decisions. The book was conceived as an aid to women trying to make it on their own. Do we include a woman who manages a prestigious restaurant? "Responsibility!", one points out. "Tokenism!", counters another. "Doesn't own the place. She doesn't meet the criteria," says the third.

She's scratched.

How about a woman who is co-owner of a store with her husband? "Has to be solely woman-owned." "You're saying a woman isn't equal to a man – that's sexist!"

We argue. She's scratched too.

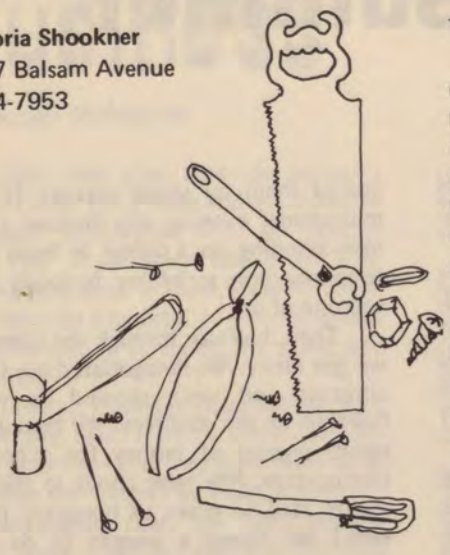
Even so, we wind up with close to 400 listings... pretty good for the first time around and no money to back us. We're almost ready to go into production. All that's left is to write the preface.

Maybe here we need some background. The directory is set up like a phone book – just listings under categories – no interspersed stories like those in the *Whole Earth Catalog* or Bell-type fillers ("take a phone to lunch"). So, we had nowhere to really express ourselves, except in the preface.

I sat down and wrote what I thought we should say. I showed it to one of my co-workers. Her lip curled. She sat down and wrote her version. I exploded. We called up our third partner, who was at home desperately trying to sell ads over the phone so we could pay our (woman) printer. We demanded that she write her version and said we'd

## FIX-IT LESSONS

**Gloria Shookner**
217 Balsam Avenue
694-7953



be over in 20 minutes to fight it out.

After some preliminary fencing, we agreed to list the points we wanted to make and the information we wanted to pass on. We'd deal with the style later. It took an hour to fill half a page, but we finally agreed on the content.

On to style. Mine was informal (flip, one of them felt). Hers was weighty (stodgy, I felt). The other started out, "Hi! Here we are!!" making mine seem as if it were wearing pearls and white gloves. Two hours later we had the roughest of outlines, and went home. That night I typed up what we had outlined. I added a little colour - some personal touches - to set up a bond between us and the reader. Needless to say, the next day my revamped version was not well received.

We decided to take a different approach. Who was our audience? Every person living in or visiting the city. Okay. We tried it another way. Who are we going to offend? "Formality will turn off the feminists." "Flippancy will turn off the professionals." "How about, 'Hi! Here we are!!' for everybody?"

We hammered away. Do we use contractions? Do we use the passive voice? We spent half an hour arguing over whether to say "produced by a collective group of women" or " by a collective of women." More hours went by and it was done... neutered... offensive to no one, exuding all the charm of computer poetry. Gone were all my little bits of immortal prose. Gone were my co-workers' bits of immortal prose. Worst blow of all, I showed it to a friend and occasional editorial consultant, expecting biting criticism, and she thought it was fine.

I decided never to collaborate again. To hell with next year's edition.

But, first we had to deal with distribution and marketing. For some reason we had thought once it went to the printer we were set. The book would somehow sell itself. We had some vague ideas about the business aspects of it, but just as we were beginning to come to terms with these, a crisis occurred.

It turns out that Ma Bell doesn't believe in sisterhood. We had used the title *Toronto Women's Yellow Pages* without checking with a lawyer, because I knew of at least a dozen other publications using "yellow pages" and because I knew a title can't be copyrighted. Form and content, yes, but our directory differed radically from Bell's in both.

At the end of the summer, we had duly registered our copyright. But, then Bell phoned us. They'd been going through their new listings and came across ours. They were phoning to tell us we could be listed as any colour but white or yellow. Bell had "Yellow Pages" (and "White") trademarked so we couldn't use it.

Trademarked?

I rushed off to a (woman) lawyer. We started the incorporation process (non-profit – all money, should it materialize, would go into future editions) so that if Bell sued they couldn't take away our televisions and scheffleras. At the same time, the lawyer started researching the trademark and patent acts. It was too late to change the name (besides, we were furious that they were doing this to us), so I wrote to a couple of the other yellow pages publications to find out how they had avoided legal hassles. One in Montreal was at that time working it out with Bell, and a whole series of directories were put out by the American Society of Friends. I guess even Bell wouldn't sue the Quakers.

That same week our grant ran out, so we solved the immediate problem of the phone listing by removing the phone. As for the rest, we decided to wait.

Eventually the books were printed. A few, unfortunately, came out with the middle page upside down, but not enough of them to devastate us.

We sent out a press release to all the city and neighbourhood papers, radio and television stations, and some magazines. To the bigger papers and stations we sent more than one copy - one to the city news editor, one to any talk show producer, and of course one to the women's section editor, as well as one to any personal contact we might have at the particular paper or station. We sent review copies to the women's editors or to our contacts and to book review editors. This last step we almost didn't take (I mean, my god, a little 48-page paperback vanity press thing with two typos in the preface?), but it paid off! The first week of January the reviewer for one of the major papers did a sort of end-of-the-year bit on women and publishing, devoting about a third of the article to our book. Naturally, he was snide, but we didn't care as long as it let people know the book existed.

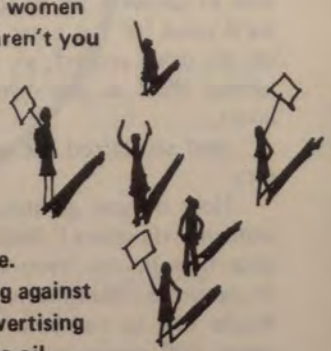
For distribution, we started with the women listed in the directory – book store and boutique owners, and women's centres – and then, book in hand, hit individual book stores in the downtown area. We figured they'd be more likely than the larger chains to take a chance on us. Of course, after the storm of publicity (we were lucky), a couple of the big chains started showing interest, too.

So did Bell.

At the moment, that issue is still unresolved. We'd like to take on Bell, but, aside from the fact that we'd almost certainly lose (legal aid vs. a platoon of highly-paid corporation lawyers), it would be a waste of our energy. We got into this to help women, not to

cont. on p. 43

**When the little women you see on tv aren't you at all make you feel small, complain! Phone Helen at 789-5230, Telephone Tree. Women fighting against false, sexist advertising and other snake oil.**



# books

review by Maureen Carrington

*The Urbanization of Sophia Firth*, by Sophia Firth, Peter Martin Associates, Toronto, 1974, $8.95.

Sophia Firth's autobiographical book, *The Urbanization of Sophia Firth,* disturbs me. Her unsentimental and often humorous chronicle of her family's struggle to survive in Toronto after moving from New Brunswick is honest and direct in its impact. There is much in this book of poverty, of tensions within the family, of work, of quarreling and worries over money that summon up, for me, memories that hurt no less than did the experiences they are kin to.

I do not want to pretend that this book has not hit some personal sore spots. My view of the book is coloured by where I have been. Like many kids who come from poor families where drinking is the main escape valve, I lived through hundreds of fights, spent countless nights trying to distinguish between police sirens and ambulance sirens, wanting my dad to come home sober tonight, anticipating the yelling and screaming that would start all over again about where the last penny was spent and where the next one was to come from.

This family experience was measured weekly against the fantasy life of that middle class American TV dream of the Fifties, "Father Knows Best." I watched my parents, clinging to the idea of the family, trying to withstand within its framework the external pressures of the daily skirmish with poverty.

Their anxiety for their children was evident ; I don't know which fear was stronger – that we would end up starving in the streets or that we'd be found cooling our heels in jail. Maybe, when you're poor in this country, it's the same fear.

That was my starting point when I read Sophia Firth's book. I think to be poor is hell. I am angered by cavalier glossing over of the *real* damage suffered by people who live in poverty. I am tired of thoughtless romanticizing of poverty. How in hell can love keep you warm if you are physically exhausted from working for criminally low wages and emotionally torn to shreds by having to fight for every measure of respect? Sophia Firth is not writing any modern-day fairy tale.

Statistics tell us that one Canadian in every four (in 1969) was a member of a family unit whose income was below the poverty line set by the Senate Poverty Committee. That adds up to 5,000,000 Canadians. Sixty per cent of the Canadian poor, we are told, are not on welfare but are working poor. (Of those on welfare, almost half are children; of the rest, over 4/5 are people who are old, sick, disabled or women who have to look after their children.)

In a significant report, *Alternatives to Poverty and Welfare in Alberta*, Ted Parnell quotes from *The Nature of Poverty*: "It is somewhat ironic that while the affluent society has become increasingly visible to the poor, the impoverished have become increasingly invisible to the affluent." Parnell continues, in his own words: "We either do not see or choose not to recognize the 60 per cent of the poor who work and do not receive welfare, the aged, the disabled, the ill, mothers without breadwinners, and the unemployed who would desparately love to have a job so they could leave the welfare rolls.

"Surely it is time for us to open our eyes and see what is really there, rather than what makes us comfortable to think is there. We do not suffer from lack of detailed and documented information as much as from myopia."

Someone once said that the myopia of the single mind is corrected through the perspectives of other minds. Sophia Firth's perspective is one we need. For, with her story of her family's life in Toronto, she makes visible the working poor whom Canada would like to sweep under the carpet.

Challenged by her relative, Gloria, to write a book about the family and its neighbours, Sophia Firth started writing: "I wrote in bits and pieces, a few minutes at a time. I would have loved to sit down and work for hours but that would have upset our family life too much."And disappointingly, that's about all there is about the actual writing of this book, which, primarily in dialogue, presents Sophia, her husband, their five children, their close circle of relatives, their neighbours and a motley crew of landlords, teachers, policemen and government officials, all interacting during a recent period of four or five years in downtown Toronto.

Sophia Firth, who grew up in a farming section of the Gaspe County, Quebec, had been living in New Brunswick for 17 years when she and her husband, Tom, decided that they had to gamble on a move to Toronto to find work. Sophia was 39; her husband 57; and the children ranged from 5-year-old Jenny to 17-year-old Don.

Sophia is the most remarkable person in the book. She is an intelligent woman, willing to challenge every authority, determined to be treated fairly and tolerating no attack on her family. She will take on the Unemployment Insurance Commission, the landlord, Toronto City Hall, the school, and the Canada Council if she has to. And the trouble is, she *has* to.

She goes to the library to study the law on U.I.C. benefits, the laws on obscenity, or the laws on Hydro authority. She wants the Department of Health to do something about the unsanitary conditions in the chocolate factory where she works. She protests about having to work unpaid under filthy conditions in a government retraining program: "This protesting or fighting I do is not to get me anywhere except a state of mind. It gives one a sense of honour or something. "

But this constant battle for honour exacts a price. Tranquilizers give her an escape from the pressure, from the fear of another nervous breakdown.

Perhaps the most moving theme in the book is Sophia's fight to be respected, to have her abilities recognized. When she tries an intelligence examination sponsored by Mensa, everyone is ready to laugh at her: "'You're having a good laugh now,' I told them, 'but wait. I've enjoyed a

last laugh before and watched people eat crow; I'm not like some people I know; scared to try anything new for fear of failure. If I fail, so what? I'll be the same old me. If I pass – well I'll have found a way out of this damn rut – a way I can afford.' "

Sophia passes this test, but Tom's violently angry reaction when she wants to join the Mensa club highlights the tensions between them. Any move Sophia makes to get out of her rut is threatening to Tom. Sophia, however, is not unaware of the pressures on Tom. She tries to explain it to their son Billy: "He works himself into a crazy rage. He isn't really mad at any of us. It's City Hall or whoever made the mistake in his pay. He was counting on that money and he's disappointed. He can't take these things so easy now. He was mad when he started drinking but not at his family."

But it is the family who pay the price, physically and emotionally, for all the social mistakes that throw people out of work, the callousness that allows human beings to be used as pawns in a colossal economic game. The family is the only source of emotional support for those who are on the receiving end of an economic structure that bulldozes people as if they were junked cars ready for compressing.

Look closely at the women in Firth's book. How many beatings, how many nervous breakdowns are the price exacted from them for the Canadian dream? Look at the children. How many teenagers are crying alone in their rooms after having stopped their parents from killing one another? "I had my pills to help relieve my tension but the kids had no such thing – not even alcohol as older men did."

Sophia and Tom Firth are good people struggling against bad odds. Ultimately, they value one another. And they have a strong sense of responsibility toward one another and toward their children.

Sophia, looking at her marriage, concludes that it is worth saving: "It gives me emotional security since I know Tom will stand by me – and so will the kids and other family members as long as they are able. I need to belong to a family - the kind of family I have already. And our family relationships have required work on my part - years of it." Sophia wants to get things right between her and Tom: "I just want to improve the relationship between me and Tom so we don't stifle one another. If I could just come to a better understanding with Tom, or make an agreement.

"Suppose I just go ahead and do certain things for myself – get a job – finish the book – go to bingo – what can happen? The relationship will change as we age anyway whether I deliberately change my lifestyle or not. It has been changing since we met, naturally. We are, after all, of different sexes and we've been changing year by year."

Sophia Firth has written a book we need. Her publishers call it a "valuable social document." I think it has a lot to tell us about the family, about women like Sophia and men like Tom and, of course, about the children whom I've not talked about here. The children's confrontation with Toronto is an exciting and moving part of the story.

My own feelings make me concentrate on the tensions within the family structure. Sophia Firth, with her sense of humour and incredible determination, has the whole in balance.

What will Sophia Firth do next? I'm hoping we will have a book soon about the rural Quebec where she taught school as a young girl or perhaps a book about the New Brunswick where she lived for 17 years. Interviews with Gaspe farmers or Campbelltown workers might be her starting point. Whatever Sophia Firth does, it will be done with that strong sense of clearing away sham and looking at life straight on.

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*Alternatives to Poverty and Welfare in Alberta* is published by the Edmonton Social Planning Council, 10006 - 107 Street, Edmonton. This report, with a supplement, is available for $2.00.

review by Alison L. Hopwood

*Colombo's Canadian Quotations*, John Robert Colombo, ed., Hurtig Publishers, Edmonton, 1974, $15.00.

How does an editor choose what to include in a collection of quotations? Colombo says in the Preface to his *Canadian Quotations* that he admitted the words of Canadians "on any subject under the sun," but limited those of non-Canadians to "observations about this country and its people." A sound principle no doubt, but in practice he seems to have made efforts to include every American entertainer who happened to have been born in Canada, even if the person never said anything worth quoting and every figure, famous elsewhere, who has referred to this part of the world, even if the remark was a commonplace or was made before there was even a country called Canada. Hence there are entries under Jack Carson and Ruby Keeler; Noel Coward and Charlie Chaplin; Herodotus and Marco Polo; Ronsard and Shakespeare; Rupert Brooke and Col. Robert McCormack; and numerous other entries equally Canadian and relevant to Canada, although many Canadian writers are only quoted briefly or omitted entirely.

What makes a passage quotable is that it is brief, striking, and self-explanatory. But many of Colombo's choices are wordy and pedestrian, and when the quotation is not expository. Colombo adds a note that is. To Humphrey Gilbert's aphoristic "We are as near to heaven by sea as by 'land," Colombo adds nearly a column of history; to Trudeau's euphemistic "Fuddle duddle," a whole column of comment. So the reader finds the pithy or humorous buried in long paragraphs of sources, attributions, circumstances, explications, and cross references. Colombo seems to be concerned with writing a history of who said what, rather than with letting the words speak for themselves.

Northrop Frye, in his "Preface to an Uncollected Anthology," quotes twenty passages of poetry illustrative of "themes that seem to make Canadian poets eloquent." Of these, only one is in Colombo's collection. In *The Bush Garden*, Frye notes that he took his title from Margaret Atwood's *Journals of Susanna Moodie*, which he calls "a book unusually rich in suggestive phrases de-

fining a Canadian sensibility." Colombo does not quote that volume of Atwood's poetry at all, neither the phrase Frye uses as a title nor Atwood's title, which is itself an example of a kind of literary quoting.

That poetry is in short supply in the *Quotations* seems odd at first, as Colombo is best known for having published what he calls "found poetry," but his practice of using others' prose as his verse may indicate an inability to appreciate poetry. From some writers well-known as poets he quotes prose only: for example, from Dorothy Livesay, Eli Mandel, Charles Mair, and P.K. Page. When he quotes poetry, the length allotted is scarcely in proportion to the poet's stature – E.J. Pratt gets less space than Leonard Cohen; Isabella Crawford less than William Henry Drummond. Colombo's preference for discursive rather than imaginative prose shows in the quotations he chooses from Margaret Laurence, Alice Munro, Ethel Wilson, from all of whom he draws more on articles and interviews than on their fiction.

Colombo's record of quoting by and about women is mixed. He includes little-known and quotable passages by May Clendenan on democracy, by Marjorie Pickthall on being a woman, by Therese Casgrain on women's liberation. On the other hand, Catherine Lyle Cleverdon, the historian of the women's suffrage movement in Canada, is not quoted directly, but an anti-suffrage editorial which she quoted in her book is entered under her name. My impression is that women are underrepresented. There is nothing by Dorise Neilson or Grace MacInnis, who spoke for many Canadians in political campaigns and in the House of Commons; nothing by Rosanna Leprohon, Laura Goodman Salverson, Marie-Claire Blais, Marion Engels, whose novels give Canadian views of Canadian experience.

However, the deficiencies in selecting quotations by women is perhaps less due to an anti-feminist bias than to an inadequacy of standards by which to judge what is significant and worth quoting. The absence of certain women is paralleled by the absence of some men whose writing gives insight into Canadian consciousness: E.W. Thomson, M.A. Grainger, Bertrand Sinclair, for example. The inclusion of "big names" from imperial powers suggests a colonial mind that sees us not through out own eyes but through the eyes of others. Canadians generally are past that stage and look for books written or edited in a secure sense that we are a people with our own identity, that what we think and say ourselves is rightly important to us. Anne Marriott's "The Wind Our Enemy," Dorothy Livesay's "Night and Day," George Ryga's *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe*, Roch Carrier's *La Guerre, Yes Sir!* – Columbo quotes from none of these – are at once more quotable and more significant for Canadians and anyone else who wants to know about us than all the platitudes of governors-general, the trivia of movie stars, the journalism of foriegn visitors.

American and British publishers sometimes put out books about Canada for readers in their countries that give an outsider's view of us and our country. From Mel Hurtig, Canadian publisher, we expect something different and better.

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## HERE AND THERE

cont. from p. 5

At a meeting in January in Vancouver, the Advisory Council on the Status of Women recommended the establishment of a federal Human Rights and Interests Commission. A wire sent to Marc Lalonde, Minister responsible for the Status of Women, condemned the federal government for its inaction on Human Rights legislation. Other recommendations were made concerning the proposed new Citizenship Act, passports, family courts and the "Omnibus Bill." Write to the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 63 Sparks Street, Box 1541, Station B, Ottawa.

*Women and Literature* is an annotated bibliography of women writers, published by The Sense and Sensibility Collective, Cambridge, Massachusetts. It has 399 entries and is illustrated with attractive black and white graphics. The cost is $1.50, with reduced rates for orders of 10 or more. Some Canadian writers (six, to be exact) are included in this edition, and the publishers promise *"lots* more" in a new edition. They invite suggestions of Canadian women novelists who should be included. Send orders and suggestions to Sense and Sensibility, 57 Ellery Street, Cambridge, Mass., 02138. Remit in U.S. currency.

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## FREDA BAIN

cont. from p. 12

before and from deeper levels, expressing itself through images, which are gifts, as it were, from the muse, or as we 20th Century creatures prefer to say, the "unconscious."

Freda's feminism has revealed itself to the viewer in an intense, often self-critical exploration of the images of woman's world. Frequently she has, as she puts it, "resorted to irony." She wonders if this is evasion; for, why should we laugh about the things that really hurt? Her best work, however, has a purity of feeling, be it anger or joy. A series of dolls, grotesque parodies of polite ladies—putrid pink, lace-gowned—strikes out at the enemy within us all—the tight-mouthed mommy who carried dolls about and tortured/loved them from the time we could walk and talk. Of one, the artist said with disgust, "It reminds me of the baby pig in *Alice in Wonderland.*" For her 1972 was the "year of the beast," bringing forth a series of terrifying male figures, so ugly as to revolt the stomach, but so beautifully designed, coloured and printed that the viewer finds them irresistible—an angry scream at our endless, morbid fascination with sadistic men.

And yet, two years later, in this new show, Freda's work projects beauty and quietude. Freda wonders about her love of beauty. "If I have something to say, why do I make it so beautiful?" This question certainly must engage the feminist artist; traditionally women have been seduced by their concern with beauty into being clever interior decorators, an unnecessary fear in Freda's case, but one which suggests how seriously Freda takes her work.

Freda admits that the Garden of Eden has been an obsessional theme with her, but she says quite forcefully that she is finally finished with it. As a lover of art and as a feminist, I am intensely curious to see where she and, indeed, where we all will be going from there. Wherever it is, Freda Guttman Bain will be in the vanguard, working with our world and for all women.

The exhibition of Freda Guttman Bain's works which opened at Gallery 1640 in Montreal in October 1974 may be seen at Gallery Pascal (334 Dundas St. W., Toronto) April 12th to 30th, 1975. Some of her works may also be seen in the following places: Thielsen Gallery, London, Ontario; Galerie Royale, Calgary; Wallach Galleries, Ottawa.

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# film

by Brigitte Kerwer

Psychoanalysis and subconscious illuminate two recent films, "The Night Porter" and "Scenes from a Marriage." In both, marriage is seen as bourgeois, restricting and repressing, its women search for truth outside their well-established, orderly lives. Initially strong and independent, they are fixed in a patriarchal value system which reduces women to images and tokens whose values have been determined by and for men. In both films, woman only appears positive; essentially, her weakness and lack of freedom is confirmed, one in masochistic dependence, the other in trivialized domesticity.

"The Night Porter" has won international acclaim and box office success for Liliana Cavani, Italy's foremost woman director. There, it has been the centre of political and critical controversy, for on one level it can be interpreted as a compassionate study of fascism. Some critics call it "masterly" and "humane", but the prevailing opinion is that it is inferior, a combination of "Cabaret" and "Last Tango in Paris." Certainly, in its attempt to bring us to a better understanding of the psychology of Nazism as practiced by the SS, the film is an ambitious failure. For me, the interest of "The Night Porter" centers around the director herself; her conception and execution of the film reveal a preoccupation and long involvement with the nature of fascism in Europe, especially in Germany and Italy.

Cavani's career began with television documentaries. "Storia del III Reich" (The Story of the Third Reich), a four-hour documentary made in 1962, was the result of screening hours of newsreel material about concentration camps. Another television work, "Twenty Years After," a series of interviews with the post-war generation in Germany, convinced her that young people were ignoring the Nazi period; her story for "The Night Porter" grew out of this material. Cavani is particularly knowledgeable about the SS officers and her detailed information comes out in the film: the Nazis' love of filming torture scenes as a hobby; their homosexuality, latent or overt; their narcissistic obsession with uniforms as a symbol of superiority.

Her first feature film, "I Cannibali" (The Cannibals), concentrates on the complicity with which people accept murder in a post-revolutionary society; it is based on the events of 1968. The screenplay of "The Night Porter" was finished by 1970, but Cavani could not find a producer for the film (now a Robert Gordon Edwards/Esa de Simone production, presented by Joseph E. Levine for Ital Noleggio Cinematografico and distributed by Avco Embassy). The dubbing from Italian to English is of inferior quality.

"The Night Porter" is a sado-masochistic story of love between a former SS officer and his former teenage mistress, now wife of a successful concert conductor. Their early romance started in a concentration camp; now, years later, they meet in a luxury hotel where he is night porter. They return to the roles they played in the camp. Defying a group of ex-Nazis who hold secret trials as group therapy, they retreat to his flat and are finally shot as they cross a bridge.

Lucia (Charlotte Rampling), as victim/lover, struggles, laughs and screams as she wrestles with and submits to her now "quiet as a churchmouse" lover, Max (Dirk Bogarde). Cavani agrees that "The Night Porter" is a love story and claims for it Shakespearian dimensions; psychological and socio-political insights are offered through the protagonists, who possess "great experience, great knowledge." Max and Lucia both feel guilty "about what they have been in the past. They know their relationship - their living together - will bring them to their deaths. There's no way out. They can't just pack a suitcase and go off to the seaside. It's coherent: they pay right up to the very end." There is never any question of Lucia going back to her anxious husband with his middle-class career. She starves and waits for death: her sexual politics are not transcended but re-enacted.

Cavani seems to have more than a passing interest in fascism; she tries to humanize it, even to raise it to a kind of metaphysics: it is hardly surprising that her current project is on Nietsche and Lou-Andreas Salome.

Memory through the use of flashbacks is used to keep a distance between the audience and the horror of concentration camp scenes: we see SS officers using 1940 Leica cameras to photograph and film their victims.

Memory and time are themes also of "Scenes from a Marriage." Bergman studies marital relationships from within, from the interaction of personalities. The film begins with a woman journalist interviewing Marianne and Johan as the "perfect couple." Marianne (Liv Ullman) is embarrassed when their friends, another married couple, quarrel during her dinner party. Her panic begins when her husband confesses that passion cannot be sustained in marriage. After the "Innocence and Panic" episode, we are exposed to "The Art of Sweeping under the Carpet," i.e., pretending that the couple are still happy, although Johan (Erland Josephson) chafes at the orderliness and routine of their lives. Marianne, unlike Lucia in "The Night Porter," comes from a conforming middle-class background and accepts her routinized existence.

However, her normal life is shattered when she learns that her husband wants to leave her for Paula, his mistress of four years' standing. Marianne goes through an agonizing process of self-liberation in "The Valley of Tears," and when, in "The Illiterates," she presents her husband with divorce papers, they have a violent row with blows being exchanged. Although this scene is painful to watch, it is quite different from the night porter's vicious assault on his mistress, and in some ways even amusing in its humanity.

A kind of reconciliation occurs when "In the Middle of the Night, in a Dark House" [somewhere in the world], the two meet again ten years later and spend a weekend together comforting each other. Both have remarried, but Johan is not reconciled to Paula's jealousy, nor is Marianne to her "sexual athlete." Ingmar Bergman, says Liv Ullmann in an interview, "thinks

that women are often stronger than one expects, they have a greater capacity to survive. The comfort and safety of marriage matter more to men, and they want to divorce much less than women. If a woman decides to go, then she goes more easily. You can never stop a woman breaking something she has decided to break." Ullmann believes that the moral of "Scenes from a Marriage" is that those who "seek and value permissiveness had better make sure first quite what it is that they are after." The film shows that Johan and Marianne are more loyal to each other than to their respective new partners.

In a moving scene a year after they have separated, Marianne tells Johan that she has started psychoanalysis and is writing a diary. She writes, "I really don't know who I am," and realizes that all her life she has been taught to please, to ingratiate herself with others to get what she wants. Bergman feels affection for his female character, but his sympathy lies with Johan, a self-confessed failure who has not lived up to expectations, his own or anyone else's.

Pathetic and human in his failure, Johan is cruel in rejection of Marianne's self-sufficiency; she becomes self-doubting, searching, questioning and hesitant. We follow her "progress" from marital breakdown to new and saddened self-awareness. One of Marianne's clients describes her own lack of feeling and sensation after 20 years' loveless marriage: in a close-up, Marianne identifies with the older woman; although her situation is less radical, it differs only in degree. Women in marriage are forced to be evasive.

Bergman's attempt at total honesty results in a stunning performance by Liv Ullmann. As she reads her diary we see in the retrospective images of her young face innocence and charm, passion and secretiveness. As a teenager, she says, she could never tell anyone of her obsession with sexuality. Bergman uses the camera to psychoanalyze Marianne. He follows her sexual development from vague impulses to conventional marriage to multiple relationships. His attitude is subtly sexist: she must accommodate herself to her husband's in infidelity, his values, his life style. He succeeds in purging her of old-fashioned emotions like loyalty and undermines her strength and confidence ("I don't think I have ever loved anyone, do you?" she asks Johan in the last scene). She still doesn't know who she is except in relation to the men in her life. As in "The Night Porter," the woman in "Scenes from a Marriage" responds to a situation given by a man. The woman adapts to it, in one case dying for it, in the other compromising for it to the point of self-sacrifice.

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# music

by Beverley Ross

drawing by Audrey Watson

Cleo Laine: "A Beautiful Thing," RCA. CPL1-5059
Turiya Alice Coltrane/Devadip Carlos Santana: "Illuminations," Columbia PC 32900.

The "female vocalist"... rows and rows of her hidden in some unfrequented corner of the record store, image after image of her flashing across the television screen. She bats her false eyelashes at us briefly and then fades into obscurity. Though she is faceless, we are generally more concerned with what she looks like than what she sings. And, judging by her usual choice of songs, so is she.

Hopefully, this image of the plastic *chanteuse* is becoming outdated. Though always significant as interpreters of other people's songs, women are beginning now to create more music of their own. Audiences are listening to the music of Carole King, Joni Mitchell, Carly Simon; the songs they sing are their own.

But in the past, the most accomplished female artists emerged as vocalists. (Think of Billie Holliday, Peggy Lee and Barbra Streisand.) And today, a number of talented women are trying to make their way as vocalists through the present "mixed bag" musical scene.

Among them, Cleo Laine stands out; no "sweet young thing," she has waited her share of years before making it, and her maturity proves to be an advantage to both her music and her image. Years of musical theatre in Britain finally brought her to a sell-out concert in Carnegie Hall in 1973 and her records to the North American public.

Her newest album, "A Beautiful Thing" is just that. The material is drawn from a remarkably versatile repertoire: everything from Gershwin ("I Loves You, Porgy") to Buffy St. Marie ("Until It's Time For You To Go") and Donovan ("Skip-A-Long Sam").

Cleo Laine is a consummate actress. The album flows along like a series of miniature plays while she enacts each experience as if it were her own. She portrays with her voice all these changes of character: the little girl of "Skip-A-Long Sam," the sad lover of "Send In the Clowns," the glad lover of "A Beautiful Thing." It's as if she has a new voice for every song.

Ms. Laine's husband and arranger, John Dankworth, understands that the music here must play a supportive role. The result is a variety of arrangements usually interesting but never intrusive. And thankfully, producer Mike Berniker is sensitive to the fact that Cleo Laine is an actress; for her, the feeling is the art.

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Perhaps is was inevitable that Carlos Santana and Alice Coltrane would do an album together. Coltrane made a guest appearance on the Santana album "Welcome." Certain elements in their styles suit each other. Since the death of her husband, saxophonist John Coltrane, Alice Coltrane has delved deeply into Eastern mysticism, and her music has become correspondingly ethereal. The clarity of Santana's guitar work at times expresses a similar quality.

The album opens with an "Om" and an aphorism from Guru Sri Chinmoy: "Love is God's life-breath within us." The following tracks are meant to be an extension of the statement; Coltrane's harp, her high-pitched trilling strings, with guitar, flute and soprano sax, fly up in a series of crescendos, anchored alternately by piano and bass. Having no destination, the music flows from climax to climax, dissolving finally at the end of the first side. But this lack of culmination lends the music its mood of unendingness. Like a movie sound track, it evokes scenes of the Ganges, of eternal India.

The second side is more definite. On the first track, Santana launches out on his own, backed as usual by an array of percussionists. Yet, this too has an Eastern flavour; two Indian instruments, tabla and tampura, figure prominently and Santana's style is very sitar-like. The piece eventually evolves into a foundation for solo work by sax and synthesizer.

A beautifully fluid last track demonstrates Coltrane's abilities as an orchestrator -- the whole piece shimmers like light on water.

"Illuminations" isn't the best work of either artist, but perhaps Santana's drawing power will introduce more listeners to the music of Alice Coltrane.

I recommend: Alice Coltrane: "Lord of Lords," Impulse! AS 9224.

Carlos Santana: "Welcome," Columbia, PC 32445.

AND.....

Maria Muldaur: "Waitress in a Donut Shop,"Reprise, MS 2194.

This is Maria Muldaur's second solo album, again with a star-studded cast, a mixture of styles and many tunes tickled with a 'Forties feel. An *a capella* arrangement of "Travelin' Shoes" stands out. Ms. Muldaur's sense of humour (especially in songs like "Brickyard Blues" and "It Ain't the Meat, It's The Motion") make the album warm and engaging.

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cont. from p. 30

One day I said to him, "She hasn't come back, the woman with the little girl."

He scowled and pulled a weed I'd missed, dangling it in front of my eyes as if I'd never seen one before. "Russian Thistle, let them get started and they'll take over the whole place. Potato bug on a vine this morning. One you missed with the poison. Squashed it," he smacked his lips and snapped his fingers together, "... like that."

The old man has ugly hands, broad at the base with stumpy crooked fingers and thick curving fingernails. He uses his hands to kill the rabbits, holding them up by the ears, one heavy blow to the back of the head... he has no feeling for those rabbits even though he watches them being born and feeds them greens from the garden and sometimes pets them. He sells the meat or eats it himself. He makes money on the skins too, puts them on boards and stores them in a shed down by the hutches and waits for the hide man from town to come by and pick them up.

Everytime I see those hides, I think of Mickey. Smartest mouse I ever saw, Mickey, snow-white all over except for shiny black eyes and thin pink tail. His tail was always a bit cold. He used to climb up my arm, trailing his long, cold tail over my skin, up over my shoulder, along my neck and into my hair. He loved to nestle in my hair. It gave my aunt goosebumps. Poor Mickey. Lying all stiff and cold in the palm of my hand. I put him in a matchbox and buried him in the backyard. But after I went to bed, I couldn't stand the thought of Mickey out there decaying in the ground and nothing to remember him by. I got a flashlight and went out and dug him up... maybe my aunt saw the light or heard the door... next thing I knew she was standing there in the kitchen screaming, clutching her chenille robe and screaming at me, "Nasty, unnatural child. Skinning your pet." I only wanted to keep something to remember him by. I couldn't keep him all, he would have rotted. She wouldn't listen to me. Made me throw him in the garbage. I think she burned him... she never liked me... only liked her own kid —always rocking the little girl to sleep and singing in that funny high voice she had, "Bye Baby Bunting daddy's gone a-hunting..." I haven't seen her since she sent me away. She wasn't my real aunt. I only called her that. As far as I'm concerned it doesn't matter.I was better off after I left, educated myself and everything. I have books in my shack, real educational books with information about how to do things, books like American Handyman. I bet I know more than most of the people in this valley.

I like it here. The place, that is, not the old man. I like the way the river banks drop straight down to the water, and the way the trees bend over when the storms come. Sometimes there are violent storms in the valley. The clouds gather on the horizon, massive shapes rolling in upon one another, a shadow passes over the hills and a cold wind rises out of the west. On such a day, the child came alone. I found her huddled behind Snow-drop's hutch, holding the rabbit in her arms. She wasn't wearing a sweater and the wind was cutting right through her skimpy little dress. She looked afraid. When she saw me she just hunched down over the rabbit, as if she thought that I might scold her. She must have been there a long time, hiding behind the hutch.

"Bring the rabbit into my place," I told her, "out of the wind." She shook her head. "... it's warm inside... I have books with pictures in them."

There was a wariness about her body. "My mother said I'm not to come here. She'd be mad..."

"Warm up and then run home."

No answer, just shaking her head. "Snow-drop missed me."

"She's O.K.," I said. "I look after her real good." There were goose-pimples on the child's arms and legs. "You'd better come in."

I was glad she had refused when I saw the mother striding toward us, swishing a willow switch as she walked. The child sprang up and the rabbit tumbled from her lap. "I told you not to come here," the mother shouted. The child began to run but the woman lunged at her and caught her by the arm. "Don't run from me... ." She brought the switch down across the child's back. The child didn't scream, but her mouth sagged and tears started in her eyes. Then the woman turned on me and said I'd better keep my distance or she'd whip me too. So what could I do? The child broke loose and started to run again but the whip slashed across her legs. "Now march," the woman snapped. The whip snaked back and forth, first one leg and then the other. The child fell into step. I watched them as they disappeared down the road, the child marching to the rhythm of the whip, like a tiny soldier.

She is a violent woman.

One day I asked the old man, "Why don't you give the white doe to the little girl who used to come here with her mother?"

"You think I'm crazy?" the old man said. "You think I got this land by giving away to all the riff-raff on the edge of town? You think I work my fingers to the bone for riff-raff, eh?"

The old man is breaking my back in the garden but all he thinks about is his fingers.

"Maybe you gave away everything you owned. Maybe that's why you came begging me for a job with just the clothes on your back, eh?"

"Look," I said. "I could buy her from you, take it off my wages."

The old man scratched his head as if he had to give it lots of thought, "Maybe yes and maybe no. Anyway the doe is barren."

It's true she has no young, but who ever heard of a barren rabbit?

"It doesn't matter," I told him.

"We'll see," he answered, "Maybe yes and maybe no. You left the hoe out again, dropped it right where you stopped working. I damned near fell over it and broke my neck. Sometimes I wonder what you use for brains... like a damn kid mucking around the rabbits when you got work to do."

The next week, he killed the white doe, lifted her up by the ears and thumped her across the back of the head right in front of my eyes. so fast that I couldn't believe what I was seeing.

"Got this sudden yen for meat," he said, throwing her limp body on the ground. He knelt beside her and took out his jack-knife, slit the skin up the back of the legs, shoved his hands inside and began working them around under the hide. Then he started to pull it off over the head. It was like peeling a sweater off a baby.

There was no sense asking the old man for the skin. That's why I stole it. I figured by the time the hide man came around again, I'd have a chance to work on it and the old man couldn't do anything about it. I spent a lot of evenings on that skin, and afternoons too, if the old man wasn't around, and I read up on tanning from books I got out of the library. I was afraid that if I

didn't get it right, the hair would fall out and what was the sense of keeping a skin that didn't even look like Snow-drop?

I didn't expect the child to come again, not after that thrashing her mother had given her. I didn't expect her to be standing there in the open door of my shack shuffling her bare feet back and forth, looking at me and asking, "Where's Snow-drop?" She was a funny child. I thought she'd want something to remember her pet by. She never screamed like that when her mother thrashed her. I've never heard a child scream like that.

But why ask me about the child? All I do is help the old man in the garden and with the rabbits. I would have given Snow-drop's skin to her. After all it was her pet but sometimes now I'm glad she didn't want it. I've finished it, just the way the books said, and it's white and shining with not a hair missing. In the evening, when I lay it across my legs and stroke it, I seem to hear my aunt singing that song and rocking her little girl to sleep.

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cont. from p. 34

bust Bell. We're still up in the air about it, but most likely our solution will be to call a press conference, sadly note that Ma Bell is no sister of ours, and announce our new name. But what? *Toronto Women's Saffron Pages*? Maybe "Yellow" with one "l"? Or, maybe *Toronto Women's Un-Yellow Pages*? Why stop at Bell? Give Seven-Up a chance to sue us, too!

There are other problems to be worked out as well. Many of them business problems - retail sales tax, vendor's license, efficient book-keeping, responsibilities of a non-profit corporation. But, I've got to admit it wasn't only over the preface that the three of us clashed. We need to radically revamp our collective.

To backtrack a bit, when we organized the project, we had asked for six people and ended up with three. We now know that's far too few - for the amount of work to be done, obviously, but also for internal dynamics. Any disagreements among three could too easily be taken on a personal level. So, business decisions, the real issues we were discussing, were often obscured by personalities.

We came into the group with different backgrounds in the straight world, the women's movement, community organizing, working styles, and areas of interest and expertise. It could have been interesting, enriching. But, we were too small a group. Two of us worked from 10:00 to 5:00 or so; the third started around noon and worked evenings. The same two of us were interested in the compilation and editing, the third in advertising and marketing. Unfortunately, the third woman took her vacation, which we had all okayed, at the beginning of the project instead of after we were underway, when the others did.

Obviously, lines of contention were drawing up from the start. The work rhythm had been established by the time the third woman returned, and a lot of decision-making (and shit work) had already been done.

In addition, two of us working different schedules were very good friends going into the project (and are still); the third was only an acquaintance. As the project wore on, the two of us who were close started having problems working with each other. One was irritated that the other never seemed to be in the office and didn't seem to know what was going on; the other was angry at being made to feel she wasn't working as hard because she started work later in the day and because she had been away when the project began. It's one thing to be friends with someone who has a totally different work style; it's another to work daily with her. Part way through the summer, we split the office – the two early birds working in one place, the other woman in another. So, most of the discussions, work and personal, took place over the phone... rotten for communications. The third woman stayed out of it as much as possible, feeling it was a personal matter to be worked out between the other two. Wrong. It was using up group energy.

All of this was compounded by the fact that we were worried about money; we were worried about Bell's threats; and we knew absolutely nothing about publishing until we were in the middle of it. Sure we researched it, but somehow that's not quite the same as down-to-earth experience. So, it's not surprising that we occasionally cracked.

When we started the project, we had definite ideas about how it would work – as a collective, everyone participating in every area. None of the strictures of a straight office about hours or workdays. We'd be fluid; we'd be human; we'd be working on something that was really important to us– we'd be working with women. It had to be terrific.

But, outside pressures weakened us, and internal arguing broke out. We haven't solved all these problems. We're in a hiatus now, trying to sell out this first edition, not yet fully working on the next. But we've made some changes and have ideas for more – mainly to revamp the collective... make it larger, to ease the work load and depersonalize disagreements. Also, we intend to get someone involved who's experienced (or interested) in business or law, to advise us over taxes, licenses, etc. Finally, we must define more clearly areas of individual responsibility and group responsibility. A strict collective doesn't work for us; we work better with one person having ultimate say in certain areas to avoid our spending hours arguing over a phrase or an advertising rate.

You might say our major problem, past and future, is to keep the project working efficiently without turning into machines ourselves.

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Carolyn Bode, Mary Ann Kelly and Larraine Brown compiled the *Toronto Women's Yellow Pages* in the summer and fall of 1974. It is a telephone book-like directory of 400 businesses run by women in the Toronto area and is available from Postal Station Q, Box 153, Toronto. The cost is $2.00 plus 25 cents tax and postage for individuals, and $5.00 plus 44 cents tax and postage for institutions.

cont. from p. 20
released from the machine and the card registers in the $20.00 box. The changegirl keeps the card and pays the customer $20.00 from her bank. At the end of the day a cashier tallies the changegirl's cards with the money left in her daily bank. If she's over, she can keep the extra money only if it's under a dollar. If she comes up short, the money is taken out of her paycheck.

Aside from hopping around like a chicken trying to keep the bells and lights under control, the changegirl is subject to a variety of other pressures. Serving an impatient multitude, she is constantly subject to minor assaults upon her person. "Did you hear, some lady grabbed Lydia by the collar and ripped her blouse?" Girl, girl, nickels, nickels, it is an interminable litany. "All these people were yelling at me at once. I was pushing myself. I had all of section 3A to myself. I was just running around and crying. That old, anxious feeling came over me again" (Christine). Veering groundward with 25 pounds of coin draped around her waist, the changegirl is at a distinct physical disadvantage.

"Slots was really hard physically, for one thing. You constantly get ruffed around by the customers. On really busy, congested nights you get pushed and shoved. One night this guy tripped me in front of my supervisor. I really hated that job" (Linda, former changegirl, Harvey's; dealer, Harrah's).

The casinos belong to men. In an environment difficult for any worker, it is the woman casino worker whose dignity and self-respect is continually being undermined.

As an object of pleasure, the cocktail waitress is the casino showpiece. She is paraded through the casino in a mini uniform, cut for a cleavage and leg display. At the casinos there is a fixation on tits, cunt, and ass. This enduring state of pubescent arrest is displayed by workers and customers alike and is alienating indeed. "I wasn't used to people making such attacks on my looks even though they were positive" (Christine). Humiliated by her own anatomy, yet mindful of its power, ashamed yet proud, yet ashamed, a casino girl takes on societal valuation as her personal one.

"I have a pain down there since I started wearing this belt," said a changegirl, pointing to her vagina. "I know the dirty names for it, but I can't think of the real one." She was ashamed.

"The whole thing about cocktail waitresses – like old men will always throw money into their cleavages. One reason they won't let us, as dealers, wear low-cut blouses is so that customers won't throw money in or at least that's what they told us. But for cocktail waitresses, it's alright" (Linda).

A man heads up cocktails and he chooses the tail. Most women want to be cocktail waitresses. Their status is coveted and rewarded. They get great tips. "It really seemed strange that I could come and make that much money. It seemed to me that the people who had worked for longer should have gotten the job" (Susan).

For women, approval based upon appearance is a familiar and penetrating experience. They are taught to lure men with their looks. Then they are judged by the men they lure. Self-esteem and fulfillment are taught to be contingent upon an ability to please men. "You see, there were these men who were being nice to me. So, I thought, here is a chance to feel good about myself" (Christine).

Ladies' room conversation: "I didn't want to say this in front of Linda, but HE doesn't like blonds." A 27-year-old woman told me, "I'd really like to get into cocktails but I'm too old; they just like the young ones."

In an environment such as this the old tyranny flourishes. Old memories are stirred. The unconscious clamors with an oppressive weight. "It was a bad experience. I think mainly because it reminded me so much of high school, and that was a bad time. Prior to working at Harvey's I felt pretty good" (Lois, changegirl, Harvey's).

At Harvey's, where I worked change for three months, there is a keyman in each slot machine section who is in charge of four, five, or six changegirls. In her section each changegirl is assigned a bank, which is stocked and replenished by the keyman throughout the day. Although the changegirl regularly refills her apron from her bank, it is the keyman's job to tell her what coin she needs. "Depending on the keyman, some were very chauvinistic – poor dumb changegirl. You know when they check your bank for you, when they tell you what you need. I need dimes or I need quarters. Well, let's look in your bank and see. Oh that would really piss me off" (Lois).

Very often keymen are in charge of women who have years of seniority. Tim, a Harvey's employee for about three weeks, couldn't understand why Pama was hostile toward him. She had been a changegirl for seven years and she was in his charge.

The policy at all the casinos is to hire both men and women in change. Any man, if not severely backward, is trained and promoted from changeman to keyman within 30 days. If they have proven themselves beyond the pale, one or two changegirls are promoted to cashier after several months of service. At Harvey's, changegirls and cashiers make the same money; keymen make more. At Harrah's, the hightest paid cashier makes less than the highest paid keyman. Supervisory personnel are never drafted from amongst changegirls or cashiers but always from the keyman's ranks.

They say that girls really can't be keymen because the machines that the keymen cart around are too heavy for girls. Yet, last summer at Harrah's they had one keygirl and this summer they had a couple. If the machines are not too heavy for one or two women, why are they too heavy for more women? After serving as a changegirl for several months, Linda was asked by a supervisor if she would rather be a cashier or a keyman. "Keyman," she replied. "He said, 'you come right over here and pick up one of these machines.' He was trying not to sound annoyed. And, I picked it up and I had my change belt on besides" (Linda).

If in dinging off a jackpot, the changegirl does not insert the card into the machine at the proper angle, a hole is punched on the line and in two boxes. This is called a liner. When this happens, the changegirl cannot pay the winner off but must alert her keyman immediately. The idea is for the changegirl not to pay the winner off until the keyman has opened the machine. The changegirl cautions the winner not to let anyone

play it until the keyman checks it out. The winner stands guard at the machine while the changegirl fetches the keyman. The higher ups figure that if the keyman doesn't check the pot out, the changegirl might cheat. Let's say there's a liner between the $6.50 and $20.00 box. They figure the changegirl will tell her keyman the pot was $20.00 when it was really $6.50. He'll initial the $20.00 box; she'll pay the winner $6.50 and keep the rest.

When she started working at Harvey's, Lois didn't fully understand about liners. So, when she got a liner on a $37.50 pot, she paid the winner off and then asked Hubert, her keyman, to sign the card. Hubert's supervisor, Don, happened to be supervising him when Lois asked him to sign her card. Hubert said, "Let's go pay the winner off," and Lois said she already did. Then Don yelled at Hubert, "You don't see it, you don't pay it."

If she has to go to the bathroom, the changegirl must ask her keyman's permission. If she wants a drink of water, he must escort her. It is the keyman who decides when the changegirl will take a break and when she will go home, whether she will be first, second, third or last out. The woman's well-being becomes, again, contingent on the man. "The only thing that is saving me today is that I have a nice keyman."

Given absolute authority over the changegirl, the keyman is able to act out his power struggles with the world. One day, as I scrawled my name madly onto my cards (each IBM card must be signed), distracted by the white distress signal lights and the customers' irksome chants, I saw my keyman as he strutted by me. Then I heard, "Anyone I see signing cards when they have lights gets a number eleven rammed up their ass." I continued signing. The bells were ringing. I felt tears welling inside me. "Hear me, Robie," he addressed me again. The lights flickered. The customers chanted. I told myself not to cry. I stifled tears. "Address me like a human being and I'll answer you," I blurted out, hoping I sounded angry. I kept telling myself not to cry. Discipline. I spent the rest of the day addressing myself to the question of human dignity as I dashed around dinging.... dignity.

At the casino I had constantly to remind myself. That suffering 14-year-old that encroached upon my mind was not me. It was just a gnawing shadow of myself that kept taking me over. How is it to be whole? "Let's check your bank now, Robie." It's sticking at me. I am a 28-year-old woman. I have been inside and outside myself. I have spent time alone, spent time in psycho-analysis, been a school teacher. I read *War and Peace* twice. I have lived, suffered and enjoyed for 28 years and I got these keymen coming at me with, "Let's check your bank now, Robie," as if I were an idiot. "Anyone I see signing cards when they have lights gets a number eleven rammed up their ass." I'm crying. They're shouting at me. ***

cont. from p. 16
about symptoms and possible causes and cures of a disease process, then she could briefly be considered as an equal by the prestigious doctors. Thus many students come out of nursing school with the opinion that nursing is mostly routine (women's work), but getting in (vicariously) on medical aspects is challenging and rewarding.

Studies in this area support a conclusion that nursing is "women's" work with all the devalued connotations the concept carries. Reissman and Rohrer found that nursing instructors, nurses, patients, and doctors place high value on nurses being patient, kind, compassionate, gentle, unselfish, pleasing, submissive, and obedient. All these groups placed significantly lower value on nurses being assertive, intelligent, or having judgement, knowledge, or leadership ability. Given such pervasive expectations toward "womanliness," it must be difficult for students to act otherwise. The point is not to scoff at these "womanly" attitudes. Men generally, and doctors in particular, could do with a great deal more of them. The point is that if the traditionally male-oriented attitudes are not expected of nurses, we cannot act as true professionals.

**Like the housewife, we have no definite area of expertise.**

The overriding problem in nursing today is not one of *defining* the content or nature of our role, as is usually assumed. It doesn't matter whether we are "nurse practitioners," physicians' assistants, or "clinical specialists." The main problem is one of enacting our professional role. Our inability to act and interact professionally is largely a result of individual and collective female conditioning. We manage ourselves and allow others to manage us as non-adults.

How does this happen? One way to conceptualize it is to see the nurse as "housewife." Driscoll lists the qualifications but doesn't identify the role. A nurse is a jack-of-all trades in the same sense that a housewife is. We have long berated ourselves for an "incredible versatility" (Driscoll) that allows us to do anything and everything nobody else feels like doing, to the point where we have no definable area of expertise. What we haven't understood is that this is part of our training and history as women. Also like the housewife, we feel we must serve and serve and keep on serving. This is related to women's inability to limit and define themselves. We are afraid to have any particular identity. If we say, "I will do this; that's nursing, but I won't do that!" then we would displease someone or cause conflict. Housewives are there to please. Nurses are also "loyal" and "selfless" (Driscoll). Here again, we see the traditional housewife who gives her whole life to husband and children, giving all, demanding nothing in return, and nothing apart from them.

The nurse, like the housewife, allows "her talents to be exploited," her "skills to be diluted," and her energy to be dissipated (Driscoll), because she is always deferring to the authority and expertise of others, particularly of doctors. Even where a nurse disagrees, with good reason, with another professional's judgement, she finds it hard to say so like an adult. Ross gives us examples of nursing students learning to give an idea to a doctor so that he will feel it is his own. This is a classic housewife game. In this way, she enhances his ego and demeans her own. Nurses exercise their resentment toward non-adult status in the same ineffectual ways housewives do. One study shows that 21 out of 22 nurses will carry out a medication order from a doctor, even when they disagree with it, but will sabotage the process in some indirect way, such as by not processing the order correctly. This is just like the ineffectual and eventually self-debasing behavior of a housewife who cleans the house or cooks sloppily because she resents being ordered around like an unthinking servant. Nurses, like wives, get together to "bitch" about doctors (husbands), but rarely take their complaints to the persons to whom they belong, because women have been taught to defer to male authority no matter how much it hurts.

Driscoll's conclusion, in essence, is that "nursing is still nursing practiced under the supervision of medicine." This raises a profound question. How has a group, which calls itself a profession, managed to put up with the traditional "housewife" role for so long without open rebellion, or better yet, some energized change or practice? Nursing has never answered that question, but it must be related to a system of sexual politics whereby the exploited "serving" group is both rewarded and devalued in complex ways by themselves and the "authorities" and by the society in general. Moreover, once a "serving" group has been sufficiently socialized, it finds itself unable to initiate those behaviors which could turn serving into responsible contributions.

Morris has done an insightful job of pointing out to nurses the delusions that we hold about our practice. Our delusions protect us from painful awareness of sexist problems in our development as a primarily female profession. Such awareness would touch off a terrible, yet potentially rewarding, inner search. Once this work begins, our practice and our theory building would be more energized, directed, and potent. We have merely to delude ourselves that we do agree on what nursing is, because of the before mentioned difficulty women experience in self-definition and self-determination. In fact, pressures from medicine and hospital systems determine nursing practice. We delude ourselves that we care tenderly and sympathetically for patients, because this is the traditionally accepted female role. And it is seen as natural, automatic, not learned. Since we have, up to now, bought this sex-stereotyped definition, we have avoided the difficult work of developing care as a professional concern process with ill persons. Thus, we are unable to face the fact that providing so-called natural, instinctive, womanly T.L.C. for hundreds of human beings is impossible. We have to delude ourselves that nurses influence patients' lives, because nurses, like all women, are not supposed to be influential. In reality, nurses, patients, and doctors subscribe to and perpetuate nurse passivity and powerlessness.

Another sexist problem in present nursing practice is our devaluation of each other, of female doctors, and, importantly, of female patients. Iafolla points out that nursing supervisors over-individualize their supervision of nurses, criticise them coldly for minor errors, are automatic and unable to trust the skill of those they supervise even where that skill is shown to be adequate. Simone de Beauvoir has explained that women leaders, in general, experience an initial inferiority, which they defend against through exaggerated affectations of authority.

Staff-level nurses also undervalue each other. They face many common problems in self-management and complex issues of patient management. Yet rarely do they consult each other informally as serious colleagues. Formal efforts at mutual problem solving (team meetings etc.) often become boring re-

citations of clichés, because unconsciously the group has agreed that real thinking is beyond them.

As nurses, we don't trust our own judgement. One nurse friend of mine laughingly admitted that she correctly assessed a common health problem in herself and then checked with a medical resident she worked with *to be sure*. Once I called a nurse in charge of a gynecology floor for advice about an urgent, but basic health problem. She gave me correct advice, which I was comfortable with, but then added that I had better check with the on-call doctor *to be sure*. He, of course, told me exactly the same thing, but with such a brisk manner that I wouldn't have felt free to ask any more questions. Through such indirect, but powerful messages, we tell patients constantly not to value our contribution because we are not able to be responsible for our own professional actions.

Female nurses tend to treat female patients with disrespect. Many nurses openly admit to disliking work on female wards because women are constant complainers, hysterical and demanding. In male wards, nurses find reasonable behavior and flirtatious good humor. Nurses also fail to speak up on issues of particular importance to the treatment of female patients. Many patients receive radical mastectomy as the treatment of choice for breast cancer, even when current research indicates that removal of the lump plus radiation assures an equal chance of cure. Women often are pushed quickly into a hysterectomy without thorough evaluation of the indications and contradictions. Doctors would never remove penises with the same lack of appreciation for the consequences. In these and many other situations nurses fail to provide the opportunity and assistance women need to make decisions and to face issues as adults. Instead, we berate them, finding their inabilities too uncomfortably like our own.

Nursing is the only profession which so devalues itself that it calls upon another profession to legitimize its practice. Nurses do not engage in a primary responsible contract between nurse and patient. Rather, we look after Dr. X's patient. We rely on doctors to write "orders" to define most of our daily work. Nurse-initiated work with patients is rare. All other health professionals receive "consults" and "requests" from medicine; nurses are "ordered." Nurses receive much reinforcement of their worthlessness from medicine and from the society at large. We did not become the doers of an illegitimate work all by ourselves. In unintentional and some intentional ways, doctors constantly reinforce their belief that nursing is not a legitimate practice. For instance, a nurse posted a sign informing fellow nurses that at the next team meeting, the clinical specialist in their cardiac unit would discuss and practice with them the use of the stethoscope. A resident happened by and jokingly said that the nurses were getting pretty "uppity." This nurse caught her temper and calmly replied that the nurses thought it was crucial to their practice in a cardiac unit. The doctor did a turn-about and agreed with her, showing respect for her opinion. Many times, such fleeting incidents are not rebutted and perpetuate the devaluation of nursing. Society at large also constantly reflects its belief in doctor-oriented health care, even while it complains about the actual care it receives from medicine. Doctors, not nurses, write the health columns in newspapers. Advertisers know that doctors' recommendations sell health aids. Medicine and society still believe in medical infallibility, despite protestations to the contrary from both groups.

A sexist analysis of nursing practice paints an apparently depressing picture. The solution of our "female" condition will have to be many-faceted. We will genuinely have to search, individually and collectively, for strategies which do not yet exist in our professional culture. To begin with, each nurse who feels anger and frustration at her present state of practice must begin to identify situations in her daily work which give rise to these disturbing emotions. Then she must share them with other sympathetic nurses, and together they must work out an analysis, create solutions, and, most importantly, support each other in trying them.

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2. Driscoll. "Liberating Nursing Practice." *Nursing Outlook.* Vol. 20, No. 1. January 1972. p. 24-28.

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BRAZILIAN WOMEN
cont. from p. 9

"I *dared* enter Law School when I finished my secondary education," says Lygia in her letter to me. "My mother was quite upset about it, but she couldn't quite conceal her pride when she said, 'You know, my child, don't you, that the girls there have such a reputation. You'll never get yourself a husband.' "

Even when a Brazilian woman sees herself as liberated and emancipated, she still isn't able to destroy the traditional stereotype of the helpless female that has been imposed on her. In her latest novel, Lygia depicts the lives of three young Brazilian women, all of them confused and aimless as they try to step out of the stereotyped images.

"My novel reflects the condition of the young woman in our present society," says Lygia, who sees a great discrepancy between theory and practice in the behavior of the so-called emancipated Brazilian woman.

"I have a friend who's highly educated. She's politically involved and she lectures on women's emancipation and advocates the most radical measures. She's a talented painter; her art is imaginative and revolutionary. But whenever a keylock is out of order, or a tap in the bathroom leaks, she immediately picks up the phone and calls her ex-husband (they are separated but inseparable), and he rushes to her place to help her with her domestic problems. With her spiritual and financial problems it is the same. See what I mean? The action doesn't correspond at all to the words. And this is the rule, not the exception. This is the way the Brazilian woman acts."

Lygia, who published her first collection of short stories in 1944 while still attending law school, feels that as a writer only recently did she start to speak with her own voice: "I was always censoring myself fiercely, out of fear, FEAR." Lygia says that she has now devised a symbol for herself - a banner, with two colour bands. "A red one, which stands for anger and passion. Passion and anger. And a green one, which stands for the hopes of the woman free in her life and in her profession." ***

# people in this issue

### ELOAH F. GIACOMELLI
Eloah F. Giacomelli was born and raised in Brazil. She has taught in Brazil at both the high school and the university levels. In 1969 she immigrated to Canada, and spent her first year teaching at the Université de Moncton, New Brunswick. She lived for a year in Ontario before she moved to Vancouver, B.C., where she has decided to stay. Her translations from the Portuguese have appeared in many North American periodicals, among them *Mundus Artium, Prism International, The Malahat Review, Poet Lore, The Antigonish Review, Contemporary Literature in Translation*. She is a regular contributor to *O Estado de Sao Paulo*, one of Brazil's leading newspapers.

### SUSAN POTEET
Susan Poteet teaches Women's Studies at Dawson College in Montreal. She does freelance art and literary criticism, and has recently organized poetry readings at Powerhouse Gallery.

### PAT AUSTIN
Pat Austin is a member of the London Poets' Workshop and coordinator of Poetry Participation, London Public Library. She is author of the Fiddlehead book, *A Time for Lilies.* "

### BEVERLEY ROSS
Beverley Ross is completing her B.A. in music and English at the University of Alberta. She writes songs and is active in musical events of all kinds. She is also involved in freelance radio work.

### BRIGITTE KERWER
Brigitte Kerwer studied English at the University of British Columbia, an; later became interested in film criticism while living in England. She now lives in Edmonton.

### DIANA SELSOR PALTING
Diana Palting is currently teaching photography classes and co-ordinating the photography program at Grant MacEwan College in Edmonton. Prior to immigrating to Canada three years ago she taught photography in Washington, D.C. She has exhibited her work in various cities in the United States and Canada.

### MAUREEN CARRINGTON
Maureen Carrington was an editor and regular contributor to the Newspaper *On Our Way* for several years, after she moved to Edmonton from Vancouver. She is currently studying linguistics at the University of Alberta, and plans to spend next year writing a book.

### ROBIE DARCHE
Robie Darche lives in New York where she has worked as a teacher of typing and shorthand in public and private schools. She and her husband spent a year traveling in the United States, Mexico and Canada, picking up odd jobs along the way. It was then that she worked at the casino. Upon her return to New York she taught at a drug rehabilitation centre. She gave birth to a son in September, and in February began working toward a masters degree in fine arts.

### HELEN J. ROSTA
Helen Rosta is a social worker with the Edmonton Public School Board. Her fiction has won prizes and has been published in various literary magazines.

### JUDY LASSEN
Judy Lassen was born in Vancouver where she still lives. She worked for a year as a clerk for the Department of National Revenue, and is now in her third year of literary studies at the University of British Columbia.

### MELANIE DUGAN
Melanie Dugan is 18 and lives in Toronto. She has recently travelled between that city, the U.S. and England.

### CONSTANCE SOULIKIAS
Constance Soulikias is a poet living in St. John. Several programs featuring her work have been produced on CBC radio.

### ALISON L. HOPWOOD
Alison Hopwood lives in Vancouver where she teaches English part time at one of the community colleges.

### CAROLE L. TENBRINK
Carole TenBrink lives in Montreal with her husband and small son. She has a B.Sc. in Nursing and a M.Sc. in Psychiatric Nursing, both from the University of Michigan. After seven years of Nursing practice and teaching she dropped out of practice to write. She has published an article in *Nursing Forum*, and her poems have appeared in the *McGill Literary Magazine, Time Pieces* of the Montreal Writers' Co-op, *Mr. Cogito* and the *Ball State University Forum.*

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### ERROR
Jeanne Henry wrote the book review of *Bonnie McSmithers You're Driving Me Dithers*, which appeared in the last issue. Her name was accidently omitted from the review.

### FANTASY ART
We have received a number of interesting graphics in response to the request printed in the last issue, however we decided to hold the feature for the May/June issue. Artists wishing to submit visual ideas on a fantasy theme should send black and white drawings and sketches to Art Department, P.O. Box 4098, Edmonton, Alberta, T6E 4T1. The deadline for these submissions is April 7, 1975.