

Branching Out



**Atwood
Livesay
Margetts
Sheppard**

canadian magazine for women
preview issue december 1973 \$1.

Branching Out would never have sprouted without the help of many people too numerous to mention. In particular we would like to thank:

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THANK YOU

Contents

Every Issue

2	Letters	
3	Branching Where?	Susan McMaster
4	Here and There	
6	Both Sides Now	Roberta Kalechofsky
37	Book Ends "I am Watching"	Susan Musgrave
	"memories, dreams, and, reflections"	Maureen Scobie
	"flying free"	Maureen Scobie

Features

8	Indian Rights for Indian Women	Jenny Margetts
9	CLASP - for the latch-key kid	Judith Kirstein
12	Across Canada - Women's Centres and Publications	
20	June Sheppard talks with Margaret Laurence	
29	Nattrass - Trapshooter	Susan McMaster
34	Miriam Elston and the Galicians	Dorothy Dahlgren

Women in the Arts

13	The Mother-in-law	Dorothy Livesay
16	Eva Diener	Jetske Sybesma Ironside
22	Poetry	Margaret Atwood
24	Junk Shop - a photographic essay	Alice Baumann-Rondez
30	Poetry	Polly Steele
31	Short Poems	C.M. Buckaway
32	Awakening	Sonja Chandra



She reeled the reel and reeled it hard, . . .
 Illustration by Linda Donnelly from
Fresh Fish . . . and Chips by Jan Andrews



letters

Dear *Branching Out*,

You're a feisty bunch, you women of *Branching Out*. And probably slightly out of your minds.

What sane person would enter the publishing business where 97 per cent of all magazines sold are non-Canadian? And who would be crazy enough to attempt a magazine with no money, no publishing experience -- nothing but a pile of determination and a lot of enthusiasm?

Well, all I can say is you may be nuts, but I'm glad you are. We need people like you and magazines like yours. I hope your stubbornness stays and your success grows.

Sincerely,

Dona Harvey

Dona Harvey
Staff Development Officer
The Edmonton Journal

Dear *Branching Out*,

Congratulations on a great idea and on the hard work put into making it a reality. We are looking forward to all the coming issues and wish you the best of luck in a most worthwhile effort.

In sisterhood,

Alberta Options for Women Council.

per Anne Lambert



Dear *Branching Out*,

I was most interested in our earlier discussion about the plans for the Canadian Magazine for Women *Branching Out* and am delighted to hear that your first issue is coming out very soon. The plan for this type of magazine is to provide an outlet for the work of women writers, and for concentrating on some of the areas of particular interest to women who are knowledgeable and interested in the changing opportunities available to women, certainly will fill a very real need in the community.

Your selection of material for the first issue of the magazine looks very interesting indeed; and I am personally looking forward to reading the first issue of the magazine. Best wishes in your endeavour.

Yours sincerely,

Isabel A. Munroe

Isabel A. Munroe (Miss)
Dean of Women
University of Alberta

Dear *Branching Out*,

I've been hearing some interesting things about the new women's magazine which you are starting, and I would like to offer you my best wishes and hopes for the publication. We desperately need more and better magazines which explore the special problems of women in all fields and which attempt to overcome the "second class citizen" attitude towards women which has been so prevalent in our society.

Good luck!

Margaret Laurence

Margaret Laurence

Branching to?

This magazine is by women and for women. Canadian women. However, we do not intend to deal only with "female" or "Canadian" topics -- either the traditional problems of how to get and keep a clean house and faithful husband, or the radical political questions which centre around the issues of female liberation and nationalism. There may be articles on these topics in some editions, but the focus will be upon the work that women in Canada are doing today.

Therefore, we have devoted a lot of space to artwork, photography, poetry and fiction. Some of it comes from grandmothers, some from housewives, some from professionals. In this issue we have work by well-known writers as well as some by unpublished, but promising, beginners. We have interviews with women in areas as different as pioneering in Alberta and trapshooting in Mexico. We have articles on topics as varied as the status of Indian women who marry "out", innovations in day care, and what it was like to be a female writer fifteen years ago.

Our aim is to provide a forum for the discussion of subjects relevant to Canadian women, whether these subjects are as general as current trends in English literature or as specific as the effect of certain Canadian divorce laws on women.

We have restricted the production (although not the purchase) of *Branching Out* to women because we feel there is a female point of view towards society and the arts which has not been sufficiently explored by either male-run general interest magazines, or traditional women's magazines. Canadian women as a group have reached a point in their growth towards cultural maturity at which it is necessary for them to become aware of what they have already, and to decide where they hope to go.

There are certainly many men who have sympathy for our point of view; we are not rejecting their ideas, support or suggestions. However, we feel it is important for us to discover, *for ourselves*, what it means to be a woman in Canada today. The ideal society would be one in which there were no discrimination of any kind, whether based on colour, religion, sex or anything else. But groups that have suffered from discrimination for many years must, we feel, separate themselves for a period in order to gain a sense of accomplishment and self-worth.

After the initial anger of the feminist revolution, we needed to act. We began to protest the outright forms of institutional discrimination against females. As a result, blatant sexism has become much less common. Now it is time to start building, to start exploring the potential of male-female relationships free of sexism. It is time to see what we are doing and what we can do. This will not be an easy process. It will probably take several generations, but hopefully by the time our daughters reach our age, they will have begun to create, with our sons, a non-sexist, integrated society which cares equally for all its members.

The name *Branching Out* expresses that idea symbolically. Without cutting ourselves off from our roots, we hope to reach beyond the first growth of radical feminism towards an awareness of our female culture. We want to branch into all areas of human experience and reinterpret them from the point of view of women in Canada today. We want to provide a place for women to exchange ideas and gain exposure for their work, whether in the arts, the professions, business, or in the home.

So please, send us your artwork, your writing, your opinions; submit topics or articles that interest you. Perhaps most important, tell us what you think of our ideas.

Susan McMaster

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here and there

A WOMANS CALENDAR

Herstory: A Canadian Woman's Calendar 1974 is a calendar -- notebook-- history book compiled by five Saskatchewan women and published by the *Canadian Women's Educational Press*. Each day the calendar notes a significant event in the history of women in Canada. Women in sport, the arts, education, politics and medicine are portrayed through photographs, graphics and quotations. Copies are \$3.00 each. Send orders to: Canadian Women's Educational Press, No. 305, 280 Bloor Street West, Toronto, Ontario.

Dorothy Livesay's newest work, *A Winnipeg Childhood* has just been published by Peguis Publishers Limited, Winnipeg at \$6.00. Order from your bookseller.

We recommend Myrna Kostash's article, "How to get into Consciousness-Raising", in *Chatelaine* October 1973. Accompanying Ms. Kostash's article is a list of books useful for women forming study groups. Consider also the three novels discussed in the book review, "Memories, dreams, and reflections" by Maureen Scobie in this issue of *Branching Out*.

Women in Canada Marylee Stephenson(ed.). Toronto: New Press, 1973. \$4.95

Mother Was Not a Person compiled by Margaret Anderson. Montreal Content Publishing/Black Rose Books, 1972. \$3.95.

Women Unite! an anthology of the Canadian Women's Movement. Toronto: Women's Educational Press, 1972, \$3.00.

Women Unite! is a collection of essays and poetry by women who have participated in the women's liberation movement in Canada. Most contributions have a leftist political viewpoint. Part 1, *Women in Canada*, includes historical articles; Part 11, *Strategies for Women's liberation*, has articles on the family, work, and the politics of sex.

Women in Canada edited by Marylee Stephenson is a collection of analytic papers about women in Canada. Many of the contributions are written in an academic style that might put off the casual reader, but this is to be expected in a book written primarily by university instructors and graduate students in the social sciences and intended to be suitable as an undergraduate reader. Topics include the status of women, marriage and the family, and work outside the home. There is a guide to historical literature as well as a comprehensive bibliography.

Mother Was Not a Person, compiled by Margaret Anderson, takes its name from the fact that Canadian law did not recognize women as persons until 1929. The essays and poetry that make up the book were all written by Montreal women, many of them students in a course co-ordinated by Ms. Anderson at Loyola in Montreal.





Batik Hanging by Eileen Taylor

This is one of the works in *The Art of Our Times*, the Provincial Museum and Archives.

Eighteen women are among the Alberta artists represented in an exhibition showing until mid-December at the Provincial Museum in Edmonton. Included are six etchings by Thelma Manarey; a seven-piece mixed media representation of the ages of man by Anne Pope; sculptures by Katie Ohe, Annemarie Schmid-Esler and other ceramic or stone artists; wool, woven, and batik hangings by several fabric artists; and two watercolors by Hazel Litzgus.

Why not make a point of getting to know the work of these women by visiting "The Art of Our Times" at the Provincial Museum? Over fifty Alberta artists are exhibited in this general look at "the peoples' collection" of Alberta art bought by the Foundation.

The Provincial Museum is free, and is open to the public from 9 to 5 Monday to Thursday and Saturday, from 9 to 9 on Friday, and from 11 to 6 on Sundays and holidays.

Have you read a recent book that you think should be mentioned on this page? Would you like to announce an upcoming event in your community? We welcome your contributions to *Here and There* and to the list of women's groups and publications on page 12.

both sides now

This column is intended to serve as a forum in which women can discuss their opinions on different topics. Submissions are invited; please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope with your copy.

This month Roberta Kalechofsky presents her view of some of the origins of modern sexism.

In the June, 1973 issue of *Ms.*, Gloria Steinem wrote an article, "If We're So Smart Why Aren't We Rich?" in which she implies that sexism and racism are similar, that they derive from similar causes and that therefore sexism is as bad as racism. This implied equation of sexism with racism has become popular lately, and should be challenged. Let me quote the passage:

We are just beginning to see racism and sexism as the twin problems of caste. One is more physically cruel and less intimate than the other, but both perpetuate themselves through myths - often the very same myths - of innate inferiority. Both are more ruthless than class, for they can never be changed or escaped. And both have an economic motive: the creation of a cheap labor force that is visibly marked for the job.

George Orwell once wrote that while capitalism is an evil, those who equate democratic capitalism with fascism "are simply frivolous people who have never been shoved up against realities." Ms. Steinem is not a frivolous person, but the equation she tries to make between racism and sexism is irresponsible and leads to frivolous thinking. One suspects it of being hortatory and propagandistic: we are all victims of the same phenomenon, let us band together. But are we all really victims in the same way? Can black people, Indians and women identify the same people as their oppressors, without resorting to those

cliché generalizations and metaphors that have become vogueish: exploitation, oppression, genocide?

Is there no difference between a male chauvinist and a lynching mob? No difference between a female lawyer who has been snubbed and kept down by her male colleagues and a black cotton picker? No difference between a suffragette movement that began in 1865 with women who had sufficient education and self-awareness to demand the vote as their starting point, and a movement that began in 1865 with a people just freed from slavery, whose every move upward for many generations has been accompanied by real -- not metaphoric -- danger to life and limb?

One could multiply these differences. The point is that sexism is a phenomenon in its own right, with its own history, its own kind of injustice, and does not require identification with racism. All inequalities are not equal. They are not equal in origin, in force, in expression or in effects.

Ms. Steinem treats racism, sexism, class and caste as mere variations of inequality. All these may be forms of inequality, but they develop from such different origins and along such different paths that their ultimate impact differs qualitatively. To use the language carelessly as Ms. Steinem does is to lose contact with social reality and to blur the discrimination between concepts. For instance, her definition of racism as "twin problems of caste" leads her to assert that racism and sexism "can never be changed or escaped." If this is true, then *Ms.*, all other

Women's Liberation movements, and Civil Rights groups should vote themselves out of business.

It cannot be shown that either racism or sexism derive from "an economic motive." In connecting racism with the desire to create "a cheap labor force," Ms. Steinem is thinking of the racism in the United States which derives from slavery, an institution indubitably rooted in the economy. One might accept this much of her argument, if it were not that racism

exists elsewhere with no apparent economic cause, as in the denigration of very dark skinned people by lighter skinned Africans in Central Africa, or the persecution of the African bushmen by other black men -- the African bushmen are nomadic and rarely work for their persecutors. Bestial persecution along racial lines without apparent economic motive exists also in South American countries.

The argument that sexism is related to economic factors is even more equivocal. One can imagine a society where men and women work equally for the maintenance of their society, and which is patriarchal. Side by side, men and women may farm, fish, mend the canvases for the boats, grind the corn and weave the cloths. Yet the idea that men are superior to women could be expressed through rites such as cannibalistic feasts. (To my knowledge, there has never been a cannibalistic society where women shared such equality with men.)

This suggests that sexism cannot be explained with a glib Marxist-like formula that it can be and often is expressed through rituals and for purposes irrelevant to economic factors. Yet the effort to explain sexism by Marxist thinking is becoming pervasive in Women's Liberationist thinking. In another article in *Ms.* (June, 1973), "Economic Reality and the Limits of Feminism," Ellen Willis refers to capitalism and racism as "male structures" and to women as a "proletariat of house-and-office-keepers ..."

The linkage of capitalism with patriarchy is curious. There is a great deal of accidental togetherness which takes place in history, but institutions which have developed together do not necessarily have a causal relationship. Capitalism emerged in western Europe as the worship of Mary (Mariolatry) threatened the worship of Jesus as the religious centre of Christianity. The worship of Mary has been linked with the earliest modern beginnings of the rise of women's social status. But this should not imply a relationship between the emergence of capitalism and the worship of Mary.

It makes more sense to look for some

of the origins of modern sexism in the twelfth century development of romantic love than to suggest that it is related to capitalism. The age in which romantic love was first developed was one in which women achieved more importance than formerly in the economy of Europe. The Crusades began in 1095 and lasted for a hundred and ninety years. During this time the women of western Europe were left at home to tend castle and farm while much of the male population went east. Great social and literary changes took place. Balladeers began to sing of erotic love as the quintessence of life, sex became an individualising experience, and for the first time adultery was valued as a social and socialising experience. The woman's status was so much higher than it subsequently became that the adulterer was always female, the lady of the castle who initiated the chaste knight. The great romances of adultery, Tristram and Iseult and Guinevere and Launcelot were written during this age. They projected an image of woman as noble, elusive, a femme fatale, la belle dame sans merci which dominated male-female love and sexual-social relations to within the last two decades. Novels and movies from the 1920s to the 1950s frequently view women in this way.

It was, in fact, a domineering woman, Eleanor of Aquitaine, wife of Henry 2 and mother of Richard the Lion-Hearted, and her daughter, Marie, who, in the French court of their day, encouraged the view of woman as a romantic prize, as a goddess on a pedestal – a view which now haunts and entraps the modern woman who is attempting to change her image of herself.

The assumption that sexist views mainly derive, as do racist views, from myths of "innate inferiority" rests on a simplistic definition of myth. As Frantz Fanon, in *Dark Skins, White Masks*, brilliantly illustrates myths of "innate inferiority" and "innate superiority" about a group often exist side by side and have a complicated interrelationship. The view long held of the American black as a stupid but harmless shuffling darkie existed alongside the view of him as someone who possessed magical, sexual powers.

A myth is not simply an idea held about something. It is, at the least, a constellation of ideas, some of which seem contradictory, paradoxical. A myth sends out reverberations on many levels, attempting to relate the seen natural universe to the unseen universe of spirit. A

man may not feel that his wife is capable of balancing the books, changing a tire or soldering a pipe, yet he may still feel a holy inarticulate apprehension of other female powers which he feels she has.

The relationship between men and women, because it is sex-related, has psychological and social implications unique to itself that must set it apart from racism, if one is to understand either phenomenon. The language of racism and class warfare foisted on to the

problem of sexism has confused the issue. This type of language descends to the level of political jargon. Ms. Steinem herself falls prey to a myth – the myth of the innate superiority of historical materialism. After all, the Women's Liberation Movement in good part was originated by and is led by well-educated, middle and upper middle class white women for whom the language of exploited and oppressed peoples fits as badly as the Victorian bustle.

by roberta kalechofsky



102

Indian Rights for

Under the *Indian Act* of Canada, an Indian woman loses all the rights and privileges of Indian status if she marries a non-Indian or a non-registered Indian. Children of such a marriage are also denied Indian status. However, an Indian man who marries a non-Indian retains his status and confers it upon his wife and children.

In April, 1970 Jeannette Lavell, who was a member of the Wikwemikong Band of Indians, married a man who was not an Indian. When her name was removed from the Band membership list she protested that this was a violation of the *Canadian Bill of Rights* which affirms the equality of the sexes before the law. Judge Grossberg of the York County Court concluded that the *Bill of Rights* had not been violated because Mrs. Lavell, upon her marriage, had equality with all other Canadian females.

This judgement was reversed by Mr. Justice Thurlow of the Federal Court of Appeal. He concluded that because the consequences of marriage to a non-Indian were worse for an Indian woman than for an Indian man, the *Indian Act* infringes on the right of an individual Indian woman to equality with other Indians before the law.

The Crown appealed this decision to the Supreme Court, and the hearing took place in February, 1973. Indian groups in Canada were openly divided in their rep-

resentation at the hearing, with the provincial Indian organizations aligning themselves solidly behind the Government. The groups who had legal representation supporting the position of the Attorney General of Canada were the Indian Association of Alberta, the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood Inc., the Union of

New Brunswick Indians, the Indian Brotherhood of the Northwest Territories, the Union of Nova Scotia Indians, the Union of Ontario Indians, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians, the Indian Association of Quebec, the Yukon Native Brotherhood, the National Indian Brotherhood, the Six Nations Band and the Treaty Voice of Alberta Association. The individuals and groups that had counsel to support the position of Jeannette Lavell were the Native Council of Canada, Rose Wilhelm, Alberta Committee on Indian Rights for Indian Women Inc., Viola Shannacappo, University Women's Club of Toronto and University Women Graduates Limited, the North Toronto Business and Professional Women's Club Inc., Monica Agnis Turner, and Anishnawbek of Ontario Incorporated.

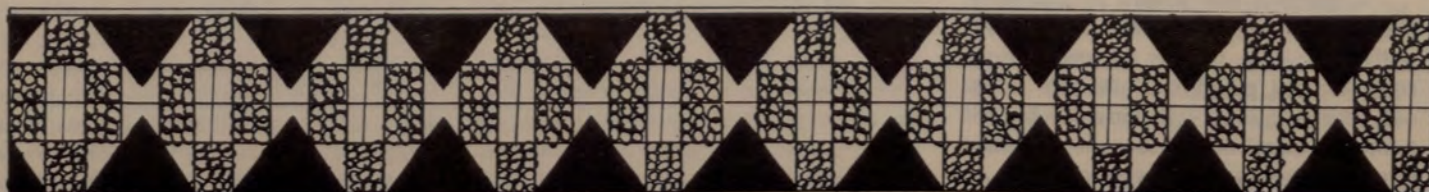
The critical sections of the law on which Jeannette Lavell's case was based were s.12(1)(b) of the *Indian Act*: 12(1) *The following persons are not entitled to be registered, namely, ... (b) a woman who married a person who is not an Indian, unless the woman is subsequently the*

wife or widow of a person described in section 11. and s.1(b) of the Canadian Bill of Rights: 1. It is hereby recognized and declared that in Canada there have existed and shall continue to exist without discrimination by reason of race, national origin, colour, religion or sex, the following human rights and fundamental freedoms, namely, ... (b) the right of the individual to equality before the law and the protection of the law; ...

The Supreme Court gave its judgement on August 27 of this year. The position of the Federal Court of Appeal was reversed and Judge Grossman's decision was restored. However, four of the nine judges supported the position of Jeannette Lavell.

Jenny Margetts is National Co-Chairman of Indian Rights for Indian Women. She is one of the thousands of women who have lost their Indian status following marriage to a non-Indian. In the accompanying article she gives her opinion of the Supreme Court hearing and the decision.

Staff



Indian Women

The intervention in the Jeannette Lavell case by 'Indian Rights For Indian Women' brought out hostilities never before expressed by our own Indian people, particularly by the male-dominated Indian organizations across the country. Many articles have been written about the non-status Indian women since then, and my intention in writing this article is to attempt to divorce opinion from fact.

Steps were taken to ensure that enough Indian chiefs and councillors were parachuted into Ottawa during the Supreme Court hearing of the Lavell case. These steps were taken as a show of strength, a show at the government's expense. It would be interesting to know just how much money was spent by these chiefs at \$50.00 a day honorarium, plus expenses for room and board. It was very evident that Jean Chretien, Minister of Indian Affairs, was doing everything in his power to circumvent an adverse decision. During the hearing the task of rewriting the *Indian Act* was delegated to the Indian Association of Alberta - an organization that intervened in support of the Attorney General of Canada.

Recognition by the highest court in the land that the existing legislation is unjust and discriminatory is an accomplishment, even though we lost the case. That recognition was given by four out of nine Supreme Court judges. Our lawyers tell us that the decision centered around the issue of whether s.12 (1) (b) of the *Indian*

Act was rendered inoperative by the effect of s.2 of the *Canadian Bill of Rights*. The majority of the court narrowly interpreted the *Bill of Rights* in its decision that no legislation of Parliament would be inoperative merely because it was discriminatory. In order to be inoperative, a law must deny a basic freedom guaranteed by s.1 of the *Bill of Rights*.

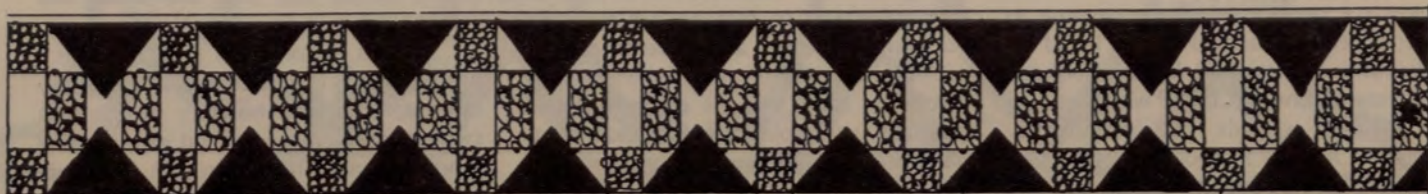
By joining with the Attorney General against Jeannette Lavell, the several treaty and status organizations conceded to Jean Chretien and his boys the power to define (again) an Indian. Indians in this day and age have been conditioned to accept the government policy of 'divide and conquer' and have also accepted the government's policy of fragmenting the native population and dividing Indian families. There are times I sit back and wonder who is truly being selfish in this situation - the treaty Indian or the non-status Indian woman.

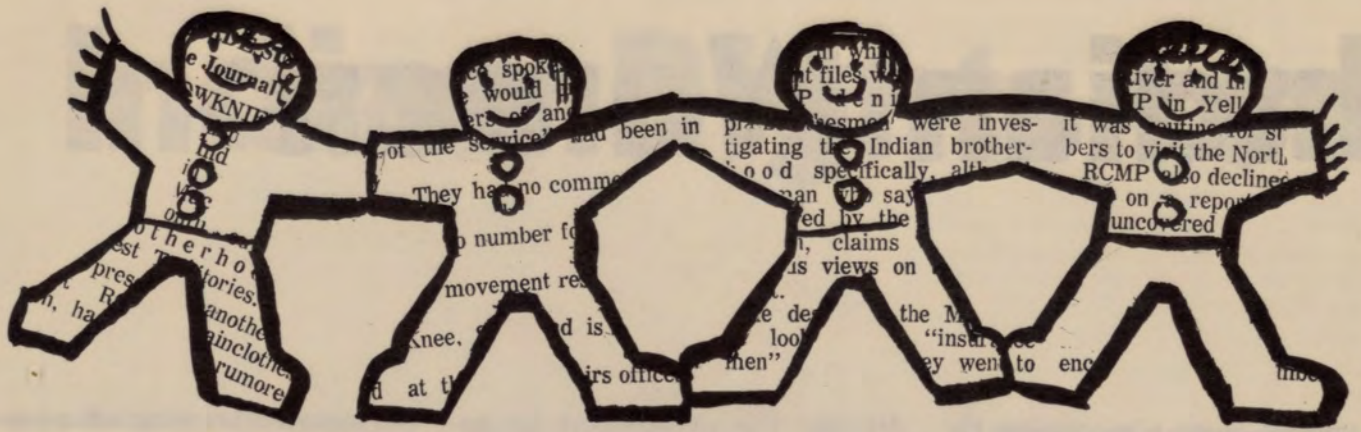
The allegation that treaty Indians feel threatened that our white husbands would take over the reserve is unfounded. My own family love visiting the folks on the reserve but have no desire to move there as we have been established elsewhere for years, and have a business to look after. I took up the fight for Indian women because I felt that it was downright unfair that the federal government should be allowed to decide who will be an Indian. My husband, children, and my

own family who are treaty Indian supported me in the stand that I took.

We should have collectively fought this policy forced on the Indian people. Indian Affairs, I feel, have been so successful in their brainwashing job that some treaty Indians actually believe that the *Indian Act* is based on Indian culture. In light of their success, it is not difficult to understand why so many Indians cannot accept the fact that extending Indian rights to one segment of Indian society would have been a 'victory' for all native peoples. Our intention *has been, was and is* to increase the rights of the Indian people.

Jenny Margetts





— clasp — for the latch key kid

Gradually the working mother is replacing the stay-at-home mother as the currently convenient social norm - although provisions for child-care lag sadly behind inflated salaries and tempting working conditions. In this respect, the pre-school child between 3 and 6 years fares better than others. There are few facilities for infant care or for older children whose parents work and whose school hours are shorter by far than the average working day.

In March of this year, I was faced with this problem. My six-year-old son was to enter Grade 1 in the fall, and after a lifetime of protected existence in a quality day care centre (he was one of the lucky few) would be effectively forced to fend for himself, or be left to a succession of babysitters. Like many six-year-olds he is carefree, irresponsible and totally unsuited to the solitude of a latch-key situation. I object in principle to babysitters - a prejudice I don't propose to defend here. It seemed to me I had no recourse but to start an "after-school day care" myself and so CLASP was born.

CLASP stands for Community League After School Projects. Our original plan had been to operate out of a

local community league (failing use of the school itself) but at the eleventh hour we found better premises and a more supportive attitude in a local church. However, by that time the tag was set and CLASP we remain.

Our program caters to twenty-five children of whom twelve are full-time and at least five begin their day before 8:00 A.M. The remaining fifteen may come for lunch only or attend whenever their parents are not around. We also cater to emergency cases and even act on a "Mothers' Day Out" basis, given half a day's notice. Our supervisor, Mrs. MacBeth, is a character indeed and has already stamped the program with her salty style. In addition, we have Meg who helps supervise the afternoon session, and Mrs. Klassen who knows everyone in the neighbourhood and relates all the best gossip. Recently we have also been lucky enough to have acquired the services of four volunteers so that we can maintain our staff/child ratio at not less than 1-10.

The day starts at 7:30 when Mrs. MacBeth bangs out the equipment and generally gets going, never without grumbling because equipment has to be packed away each night and set up each morning.

The children sip sleepily at cocoa and try to catch a few extra seconds' snooze. Later, the straggle-tailed crew leaves for school, six blocks away, to return at noon like a bunch of March hares. Bigger children come under their own steam but first graders are escorted - that is to say they stream out of school, spilling into gardens and hedges to the accompaniment of pleas for order from Mrs. Klassen and gasps from astounded passers-by. Lunch is a sit-down affair, with washed hands and faces, and nice manners. Afternoons are planned to the extent that a variety of entertainments and activities are available, for those who want them. Thanks to the Department of Parks and Recreation, we now have crafts and drama classes twice a week. Administration problems are numerous - they can wait. For the moment we have a viable, successful program and neither I nor my partner, Carol Olson, doubt but that the knots will straighten out as we go along.

What is important is that CLASP is a prototype. Its existence in the face of disinterest, and even hostility proves that two ordinary citizens armed with nothing more than persistence can gain for themselves the social services they require. So

often, existing services not only fail to meet quite widespread public needs but also fail to even recognize that they exist.

All over Edmonton, and the problem is surely worse in larger cities, young school children are being exposed to the dangers - physical, mental and social - which exist for the unprotected in an urban environment. To the young child fear lies in loneliness, in the unknown and in the unexpected. Conversely, there is often a blissful unawareness of more immediate dangers. School principals polled during the early stages of our campaign confirmed our suspicion that "latch-key" children showed signs of behavioural disturbance as well as poor academic performance and that, in their view, this was almost directly traceable to lack of supportive adult contact during the period between leaving school and their parents' return from work.

Quite aside from the fact that it is illegal in Alberta to leave a child unattended under the age of twelve, asking a six-year-old to be responsible for his own well-being for several hours each day is

handing him an oversized burden. Grade One is a big milestone in the life of any child, it brings many rewards in the form of new friends, new achievements and new independence. But also it is a time of great stress and dilemma: that of being a "big" child at home and being at the bottom of the pecking order in school. For the older child, too, the pressures, if different, are equally intense.

And what of parents? How can somebody work efficiently facing the knowledge that junior is waiting on the front steps or making mischief in the kitchen? And always at the end of a long day there is the mad dash home, without a chance to dawdle in the shops or drink beer with colleagues.

CLASP is one solution to the problems of both parents and children. It is only a partial solution. Ideally, after-school care should be part of the school program itself. Think of the empty school buildings, unused from about mid-afternoon each day - not to mention weekends. Surely a use could be found for those empty halls. And what a great

way of getting community people into the school, to staff after-school-care programs so that already overworked teachers will not be imposed upon. Whether in the schools or elsewhere, I feel there should be a systematic program of after-school care in every city. It can be argued that care of children is a parental responsibility but surely the hallmark of a humane and efficient society is that it enables individuals to meet their responsibilities adequately, particularly when those same responsibilities result from a response to societal pressures and/or economic need.

I think this is something to be pursued in the future, hopefully not only by Carol and myself but by the other parents using our program and by those who themselves need such a service in their own area.

Edmonton CLASP operates out of Garneau United Church at 84 Avenue and 112 Street. Mrs. MacBeth can be contacted at 439-0235 during program hours. Visitors are welcome at all times.

by Judith Kirstein



Across Canada

Centres

Women's Place
204 Water St.
St. John's, Nfld.

c/o Joanne Opperman
Wellington
RR 1
Grand River, P.E.I.

c/o Women's Bureau
P.O. Box 3596
Halifax South Postal Station
Halifax, N.S.

c/o Linda Gow
Y.W.C.A.,
27 Wellington Road
St. John, N. B.

Quebecoises,
3908 Rue Mentana,
Montreal, P.Q.

Englishwomen
3694 Ste Famille,
Montreal, P.Q.

Women's Info. + Referral Center

3595 St. Urbain
Montreal 131, P.Q.

La Centre des Femmes
4319 St. Denis
Montreal 131, P.Q.

Women's Centre
3764 St. Laurent Blvd.
Montreal 130, P. Q.

Women's Centre*
136 Lewis Street (rear)
Ottawa, Ont.

The Woman's Place
968 University Ave., W.,
Windsor, Ont.

Women's Collective
300 ERB St.,
Waterloo, Ont.

Women's Place*,
31 Dupont St.,
Toronto, Ont.

Women's Place
366 Water Street
Peterborough, Ont.

Women's Centre
306 Herkimer St.
Hamilton, Ont.

Women's Resource Centre
283 Dufferin
London, Ont.

L. Silvonon
c/o 318 Marks St.
Thunderbay, Ont.
'F'

Women's Liberation,
c/o Millie Lamb,
10, 812 Wolseley,
Winnipeg, Man.

Women's Centre,
147-2nd. Ave., S.,
Saskatoon, Sask.

Women's Centre
1 Angus
Regina, Sask.

Women's Programme Centre
Rm. 276
SUB
University of Alberta,
Edmonton, Alta.

Options for Women
10006-107 St.
Edmonton, Alta.

Lesbian-Feminists
10421-98 Ave.
Edmonton, Alta.

Women's Centre,
414-1029 Douglas St.
Victoria, B.C.

Women's Centre
Box 521
Nelson, B.C.

Women's Resource Centre
2961-272nd. St.
Aldergrove, B.C.

c/o Nellie Cournoyea
Inuvik, N.W.T.

Newsletters & Magazines

Quebecoises Deboutte,
3908 Mentana,
Montreal, P.Q.
\$3.00 per year

Feminist Communication
Collective
P.O. Box 455
Montreal 215, P.Q.

The New Feminist,
P.O. Box 597,
Station A,
Toronto, Ont.,
\$3.00 per year

The Native Sisterhood,
P.O. Box 515,
Kingston, Ont.

Tightwire
(Women's Penitentiary Newspaper)
Box 515
Kingston, Ont.
\$2.00 per year

Windsor Woman
76 University Ave., W.,
Room 603,
Windsor, Ont.

On Our Way,
P.O. Box 4508,
Edmonton, Alta.
\$2.00 per year

Branching Out,
11443 - 77 Ave.,
Edmonton, Alta.

The Pedestal,
804 Richards St.,
Vancouver, B.C.
\$3.00 per year

Priorities,
c/o 2803 Wall Street.
Vancouver 6, B.C.
\$2.00 per year

Status of Women Newsletter,
1045 W. Broadway,
Vancouver 9, B.C.

* has a newsletter

Branching Out



Eva Diener in front of *The Merry-Go-Round in the Sea* 1973
in the Edmonton Art Gallery

photo by Alice Baumann-Rondez

Eva Diener

by Jetske Sybesma Ironside,
Department of Art & Design,
University of Alberta

Recently recognised as one of the most talented of woman artists in Canada, Eva Diener was born in Switzerland but has made her home in Edmonton. In the past few years Diener has exhibited her paintings in Switzerland, Australia, and Canada. Her work is represented in various private and public collections. It has been singled out by the Art Bank of Canada in 1973 when nine paintings by Diener were selected to become a part of this important permanent collection of Canadian art.

Often it is quite unreasonable to require a visual artist to discuss, or explain even, her commitment to art. Artists working in the visual media tend to communicate their thoughts and feelings through the works themselves; they don't need to capture their commitment in descriptive words. Eva Diener thinks essentially in pictorial terms, like colour, line, and form. Once another person recognises the basic content of her work Diener feels that she has made an achievement through sharing her fundamental spark of inspiration. Such a moment of communication is for her more explanatory than a host of her own words.

Underlying all this artist's work is a need to express some intangible moment in her life which she experienced simply as "good" or "beautiful". For example, a piece of art might grow from the emotion which sometimes is evoked at a fleeting moment in spring, when one hears the cry of the first gulls. Such a moment, or even the memory of it, can inspire a new painting, and from that first one often grows a motif which can occupy her for months in a series of compositions. At other times she might find her inspiration in an almost nostalgic memory of the jungle of New Guinea with its dense, lush vegetation, or in a recollection of the brilliant light in the Australian desert.

The paintings made prior to 1973 seem to have a recurrent theme of a feeling of freedom. This can be seen in the repeated motif of the garden or jungle which has occupied her for several years. In these compositions the pictorial space

is frequently covered with dense plant forms which are juxtaposed to a single, boldly painted path leading diagonally up and across the canvas. Paintings like *Nanankepichu 1 and 2 (1972)* are examples of the expansion of the intimate garden theme into a more densely composed jungle motif. The title *Nanankepichu* relates in fact to a secret garden which can only be reached through a hidden pathway.

The colour in the paintings made prior to 1973 consists often of vibrant reds which are applied in a lush impasto. These thick layers of paint are at times contrasted to lyrical passages painted thinly in cool tones. The sensitivity of the latter areas forms an exciting counterpart to the boldly painted reds.

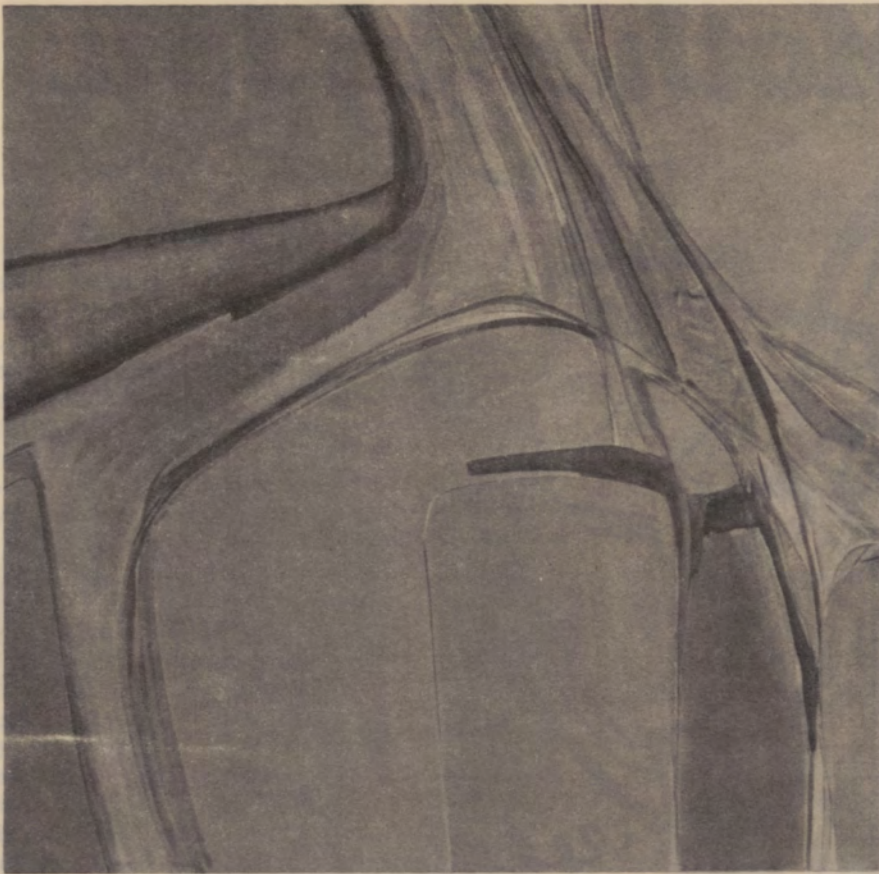
Parallel to the compositions with the intimate garden and jungle motifs developed a group of paintings which express a feeling of liberation from boundaries. In these works one obtains a sense of hovering above the earth. Eva Diener recalls that these paintings were indeed inspired through flying. She explains that, at that time she was not really concerned with space, but seemed to be more occupied with the pattern of land and vegetation which one sees below when flying in an aircraft. Like the *Nanankepichu* paintings, these compositions have a predominance of warm, rich colours, often thickly applied on the canvas. In general, one finds that the work made before 1973 tends to move away from a pictorial density in which the colours and forms are compactly composed with the physical boundaries of the four edges of the canvas.

The compositions of 1973 demonstrate a clear breakthrough towards a general feeling of space and flight. One can recognise this in the *Sketch for Merry-Go-Round in the Sea* and the subsequent painting *Merry-Go-Round in the Sea*. The latter is reproduced here in the background of the profile photograph of the artist. The composition of this painting is organised in two parts: one, the cool blue sea which forms the single back-

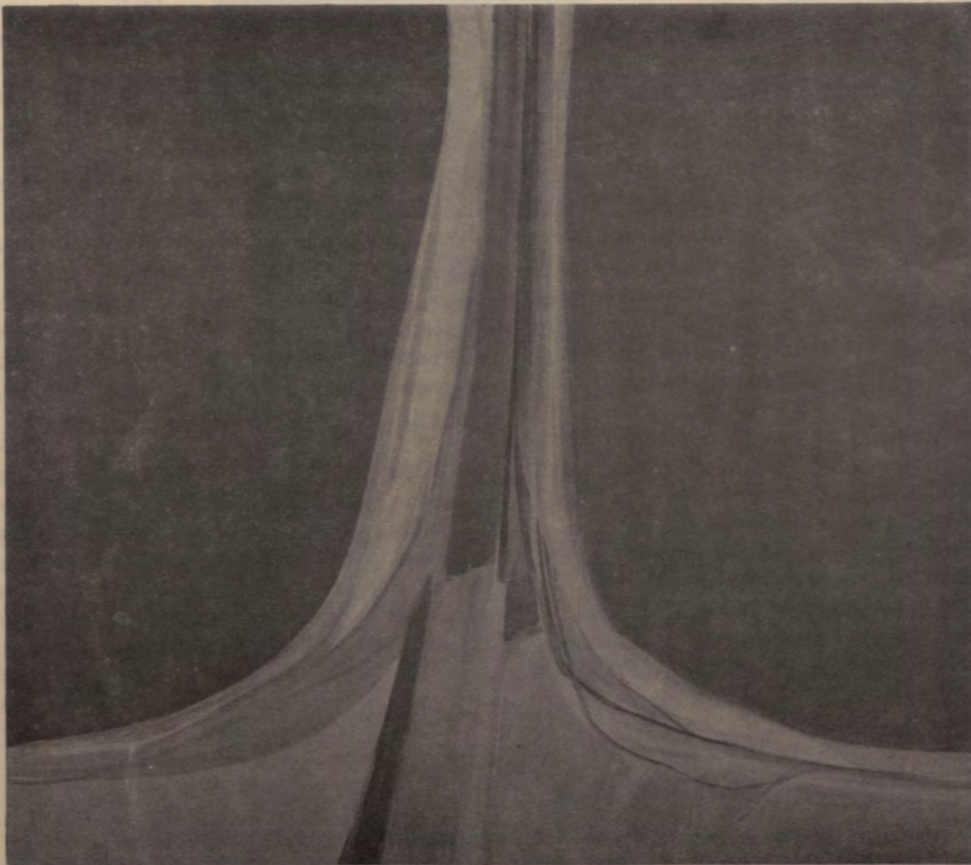
ground plane, and two, the vivacious red strokes which sketch the spinning merry-go-round. After these two paintings the artist created *Morning Green* and *Sea II*, both reproduced here. In these two paintings one sees that Diener moves a step further away from the earlier "earth-bound" paintings by simplifying her compositions even more into large planes of cool blues which are separated from one another by fragile membrane-like passages. These narrow bands, or strips of land if one wants to recognise them as such, are vibrating with subtle greens, whites and yellows. Occasionally there is a surprise in the tonal harmonies, as, for instance, in *Sea II* where the artist paints between the cool blues and greens some small purple-pink areas which make the colour seem to literally "sing".

Eva Diener's control over form and content is clearly present in these recent paintings. She contrasts in her compositions the large colour-planes with clusters of lyrically painted linear elements which formally reinforce the themes of sea, land and sky. This sense of control is expressed further in her technique which in the earlier paintings consisted of a rich impasto with warm colours, and which in the recent compositions has changed into thin "veils" of predominantly cool tones. Sometimes these veils seem to be stained into the cotton fabric of the canvas, a technique which requires the utmost of the artist's mastery of the media, for once a mistake is made, there is no repair possible by painting it over.

It seems thus that Eva Diener's paintings of this year demonstrate an important personal advancement. As is mentioned above, the artist's basic inspiration grows always from controlled emotion. One recognises this same sense of control in her handling of composition, technique, and colour. These formal aspects of her work create a personal lyricism which is balanced by a surprising boldness. Eva Diener has a very personal style which merits her position as one of Canada's most promising painters.



Eva Diener
Morning Green, 1973
48" x 50"
collection of the artist



Eva Diener
Sea II, 1973
42" x 48"
collection of the artist

The Mother-in-law

"It's o.k. if she comes to see us about a month after," Barbie was telling Ken as he sat over coffee, folding the letter. "It's just, I'd like to get settled into our own place first."

"Sure. Sure. Mother'll be no bother. Like I told you, she's plain and simple... never fusses. Loves to do things for people."

Barbie had heard that phrase before: "plain and simple...like *you*...else why would I love you so?" Well, Barbie didn't think she was all that plain...she made the most of her small blue eyes, she shampooed her blond hair every few days. She doubted, also, how he could call her "simple". But it didn't really matter. Once they were married, and on their own...with her own mother thousands of miles away, they'd be happy, happy. Yet it kept nagging her -- only that evening at supper, before Ken came over, she had opened the paper and went first to Ann Landers' column. It was all about advice to the mother-in-law. Now she wanted to read it to Ken, but she thought maybe she'd better not.

"D'you think she'll mind that I do things differently?" she asked him, snuggling down beside him on the chesterfield. He got up and turned on the TV "Like what do you do differently?"

"Why, even little things, like how you set the table or how you make a pie."

"Listen, Babs! She's grown up. Sure, she'll likely give you her recipe for lemon pie...because she knows how I like it. But she won't expect you to do it that way... It's just that I'm the only one, you know, the only son that she's got."

"Yes. But you are the only one I've got!" At that, he sat down beside her again and hugged her tight, till she forgot for a while what she had really wanted to say. Later, she tried again.

"But Ken..."

"Yes?"

"What about me not being Adventist?"



"You mean, what does mother say about that?"

"Uh-huh."

"Why, she knows I'm not really one, anymore. She knows you've had a kind of different background, back east...I told you about that girl from the farm next to ours...that she wanted me to marry?"

"So?"

"We had it out then. I told her straight I'd marry when I was ready and I'd marry someone that suited me... someone likely who would want to travel around and see more of the country than just one stretch of prairie."

"Then I guess it'll be o.k."

"Sure it'll be o.k. It's got to be! I respect my mother and so I know you'll respect her, too. She's pretty tolerant... and if you're tolerant too... but don't just go and memorize all the do's and don'ts about how a mother-in-law should never never do this this! Just let her be herself! And you be yourself."

She smiled back at him, relaxing. Maybe he *had* read the Ann Landers column! And he didn't quite agree. She saw

that. She'd better forget it.

The next week was full of all the last minute things...a lunch party for her at the office...a shower at Aunt Min's...the dressmaker's...the maid-of-honour colour scheme. Pale green, she decided. Francie was making it herself, but Barbie helped. Her own wedding dress would be white of course, with high bodice, long sleeves. "You're so slim, Barbie, those sleeves will look like wings!"

"Well, sometimes Ken calls me Angel!"

Aunt Min was arranging the reception at her house, and was getting the spare bedroom ready for Barbie's cousins, since her mother couldn't make it (it was the height of the tourist season, back east). Ken's parents had no relatives to visit with in Edmonton so they'd likely have to stay at a motel when they drove up from Lethbridge. They'd arrive just in time for the wedding service at Eastway United.

"Too bad Dad couldn't get away sooner...but it's just the wrong time for him, combining."

"Oh well...since it's not till five o'clock they can make it. You said they could, Ken."

"Uh-huh. So long as it doesn't make Dad drive too fast."

"Your Dad! Drive fast? But he's so slow and steady and quiet."

"Sure - but he sure undergoes a personality change, as they call it, when he's behind the wheel...Oh well, Mum'll keep him in check. I bet she's busy already, getting all dolled up."

Barbie thought of her own mother...the widow...the city businesswoman who knew good clothes when she saw them. Yet it had been a relief to get a way from her, last year when she came to Edmonton to take that Dental Assistant's course. It wasn't so long ago that Barbie had confided to Francie: "My mother, she kind of glitters. If you are dressed up nice and smart she

by Dorothy Livesay



fusses over you a lot. But if you let yourself go -- just padding around the kitchen in a beat-up dressing gown -- boy, she'll light into you! Same as if she doesn't really know who you are, unless you're dressed up."

Ken's mother sure was different. She would likely copy something out of Eaton's catalogue, and then try to make it herself. Of course she was heavy. She couldn't just walk into a store and find what would fit. Thank goodness, Barbie'd never be like that. Her own mother and Aunt Min were still slim as slim. Barbie smoothed down her hips as she got out of bed that wedding morning. Then she took off her nightie and stood before the mirror, tiptoe as if taking off in a ballet step. How slender she was! Would Ken like it? Would Ken...

But Ken's mother! She couldn't go on just calling her that. And Ken said she musn't call her Mrs. Olsen. "They're your new Dad and Mum," he told her.

Well, "Dad". Yes, she could think of Mr. Olsen as Dad. He was lean and thin, stoop-shouldered, weather-beaten and sort of worried looking. She'd like to make him happy. But maybe because her own dad was dead, and she'd never called her own mother "Mum", it was harder to say it to Mrs. Olsen.

Francie thought she'd come round to it. "I think Mrs. Olsen's a real nice kind of Mum" she remembered Francie saying, that day last spring when they all drove down to Lethbridge. ...Francie and Peter, Barbie and Ken. And they'd all had a grand pork dinner, baked country style, and were too full to do more than sit around on the porch and talk, all evening. Mrs. Olsen had put her arms round Barbie, at bedtime, when she showed her into the little side bedroom. "I'm sure Ken'll make you happy...real happy" she whispered, throatily, tears almost falling from her eyes. "He's a *good* boy."

"Yes, I know" replied Barbie, turning away to the window, throwing it open and taking in great breaths of night air.

"Oh, it smells so good on the farm. It smells so good."

"Glad you like it" Mrs. Olsen beamed. "And I hope you'll come down real often, after you're married ... and bring me a little one along too, just as soon as it's right."

"Well, I don't know if we'll hurry..." Barbie began, then broke off. "You know, Ken has to get through N.A.I.T. before we can afford to have a family."

"Well, the Lord will take care of it... you'll see. When the time comes, a woman is ready."

They kissed again, awkwardly, and Mrs. Olsen padded to the door and closed it firmly, leaving her alone...with Ken somewhere on the other side of the house.

It was a small wedding, but proper. Ken's friends on one side of the church, her friends on the other. Uncle Albert carried her down the aisle in fine style, though her heart was beating so fast she could hardly feel the rhythm of the wedding march. She felt as if her feet would cave in under her, any moment. Then there was Ken, quiet and steady beside her, only his eyes smiling. And before she knew it all went as smooth as the rehearsal...the ring was on her finger, she was kissed. Then out in the vestry Francie and Pete were hugging them and nearly crying, but laughing too as they all signed the register. But she was still nervous, like a string pulled too tight, when they walked back in triumph down the aisle towards the door to a clamor of tongues, jokes, kisses...and photographers. Her lips were set in a stiff smile, her eyes were glazed. Outside on the church steps the August evening was closing in on them, the sun fell through gold leaves throwing an aura around the white bride, the dark groom.

"Just one more," begged the photographer. So she and Ken just stood there facing each other and holding hands. As they turned away, everything suddenly breaking up, Barbie felt Mrs. Olsen pressing close to Ken. Her words seemed to hiss: "And where will you be staying tonight, dear?" "Oh, that's not for me to say, Mum. You'll have to ask the bride!" But then here was Dad saying: "We'll only be here overnight, Ken...we'd kind of like to see you before we head back south."

"Sure...sure. Maybe tomorrow morning, Dad." Then Ken seized her arm and together, under showers of confetti, they moved toward Uncle Albert's car and led off the procession to the reception.

"O Ken!"

He kissed her, harder than ever before. "You see, Barbie, it's all right. It's all right."

"But why would your mother ask where we were going? Nobody ever asks that!"

"And nobody ever tells!" He squeezed her arm. Then they were back at Aunt Min's and it was all free and easy again,

with a glass of real wine down her throat, and all the laughter and Pete making a toast to the bride. She cut the cake, circled and flew around from group to group; until Aunt Min came up to her quietly, touching her arm. "It's about time now. You just slip upstairs and change... the taxi'll be ready to take you to the Coachhouse Arms."

Upstairs, thank heavens, everything was packed and ready. She stepped out of the long whiteness and slipped on the pale blue suit, dabbed on lipstick in a last flurry of trembling concern. Was her hair right? Did her eyes shine?

Ken met her at the bottom of the stairs. He had already put their suitcases in the taxi. Now it was just a matter of standing at the door and waving... "Good-bye -- Goodbye." Her Aunt Min kissed her then, and Mrs. Olsen kissed Ken. Then they fled.

"Whew! Thank God that's over."

"Was it, honest, so bad?" she asked him.

"No, not really. As long as you liked it."

"Oh yes, everything went so smooth, Ken...it was like in a movie!" He smiled, squeezing her hand. Then they sat silent, exhausted, washed of all emotion as the cab sped along the highway to the new motel.

At the desk, Ken knew how to do everything right. The desk clerk never winked an eye and the bellboy carried their bags up as if they had always lived there, and were no concern of his.

"I'll just step in and draw the drapes, he said, switching on the light. It was a big, fancy room with gold drapes and blue trimmings. "Want the window open, sir?"

"Oh yes," said Ken. "And thank you for your trouble." The man accepted the tip without smiling. "Goodnight, sir. ...Just ring if you want room service."

Barbie skipped to the window. "Look, there's a lovely moon, Ken..."

"A harvest moon...our harvest." And he suddenly lifted her up and swung her around in his arms. Then gently he laid her on the bed.

"Do we have to undress right away?"

"Of course not. Let's just lie and rest a little...shall we? in the dark?"

"Yes." He turned off the bedside lamp, then lay down beside her, gently. She was grateful to him...so grateful.

It seemed they had only been shyly touching one another for a few minutes, when the phone rang.

"What's that?" She sat up rigidly, started.

"It can't be for us...Oh, the stupid desk!" He let it ring four times before he answered.

"Hello!..." She could hear the woman's voice on the line...but could not make out the words. She sensed Ken standing there, tense, "Oh...did you?...well, however did you find our?...Oh, I see...Oh, she's fine. A bit tired, I guess. Yes. We're just resting a bit, after all the excitement...Oh dear, I don't know... Well, I'll have to ask her. Just a minute."

He covered the receiver with his hand, bent towards her. "It's Mum and Dad...they're here! They've taken a room here."

"Oh no-no-no-o-o."

"They want to know if they can see us for a little while...because they're driving back to Lethbridge tomorrow."

"Oh not here...not here, Ken!"

"Well, supposing I say we'll just drop down to their room for a few minutes?"

She did not answer. "Eh...Barbie? Barbie?"

"O.k." she whispered. She got up, to go into the bathroom and wash her face.

It wasn't too bad, really, Ken kept telling her as they came back up the elevator...Just a friendly hello and goodnight. ...No harm done, eh Barbie?

She nodded. She sure wasn't going to have a fight, *now*. And just being with Ken, alone at last, that was all she wanted. And Ken spent the night making it up to her, making up for everything, everything...It was O.K., being married. But something you couldn't talk about— not even to Francie. Towards dawn they slept the deep, deep sleep they had longed for.

"Br-r-r." That goddam phone again.

She waked up enough to say, "Don't answer! Don't answer!" He let it ring, six times. Then it stopped. By then they were both wide awake. "What time is it?"

"Eight o'clock."

"Kiss me."

It was going to be a crazy, lovely morning, she thought, her body beginning to open out, rise and fall at his least touch. Then the phone rang again.

"Oh Barbie...I'm so sorry, so sorry kid."

He answered it. Mrs. Olsen was asking if she could talk to her new daughter.

"Here...you've *got* to..." He handed her the cradle. And she did it, somehow.

She said hello to Mum and then to Dad and when they said they were leaving soon to go back to the farm and couldn't they all go down to the cafe and have breakfast together, she said yes, sure, maybe in about fifteen minutes? And she fell back into the sheets, burrowing to hide her tears.

"That's my girl. Come on, we'll get it over with. It'll be the last time we'll see them for ages..."

"I sure hope so!" But she said it only under her breath. She plunged to the bathroom for a shower, and Ken joined her and they were laughing again when they went downstairs to the diningroom. Mum beamed and said Dad would do the ordering ... "It's all on him," and would they like hot cakes and sausages? So breakfast wasn't too bad, really.

Mum did all the talking, going over every inch of the wedding, the guests, the food. Dad, sitting beside Barbie, was kind of heavy and silent but when the coffee came and she said, "Oh, that's just what I needed!" he patted her hand and beamed at her through his thick glasses. "I just wish I was Ken," he said, "but I guess my old car wouldn't be any good on a honeymoon."

"How is the Chev running, Dad?" Ken leaned forward, serious.

"Oh not so bad, the little we use it. She'll need a check-up soon, I guess."

"You got enough help this fall?" Ken asked him.

"I kin do with it. Could do with your hands too, if you'd like to come along!" But he wasn't serious at all, he was just joking...she could see that. She smiled back at him and was pleased to have his rough quick kiss on her cheek as they parted, in front of the Olsen's car.

"Bye, bye."

Ken took her arm firmly as they moved back to the motel.

"That was the right thing to do. Seeing them off."

"But don't tell anybody, Ken. Honest, on our honeymoon! Don't let anybody know," she begged.

"Of course I won't. *I'd* be the joke, just think of that!"

She would have forgotten it all—perhaps, the embarrassment, the frustration, the fury all bottled up inside her, that wedding night. Because now it was all right, now she knew her Ken. So good a man. But at five o'clock that evening when they were down in the lounge, turning in the key and preparing to go out to a smart

place to dinner, a policeman came up to the desk and then came alongside and touched Ken on the arm.

"Are you Mr. Olsen?"

"That's right."

"May I speak to you in private?"

"In private? Why, I just got married...my wife..."

"Very sorry, sir. But I'm afraid it's bad news."

Shaking, she sat down on a stiff chair in the lobby. Ken went back in the manager's office with the RCMP officer. It seemed ages before he came out, terribly white... "I've got to go" he told her, "down to Calgary with the police."

"You'll have to tell me!"

Ken looked back at the desk, at the policeman silent beside the manager. "It's very hard to take, Barbie." He held her hand and sat down beside it, holding her hand and rubbing it, hard. "Soon after they left Red Deer Dad must have had a blackout...leaped the ditch and into the other lane. A truck was coming the other way...his car piled into it - was found practically *under it*." She could hardly understand... "You mean?" "Dad's in hospital...but he rolled over on top of Mum, and the door flew open and she was thrown to the other side of the road, and down in the ditch."

"I can't believe it."

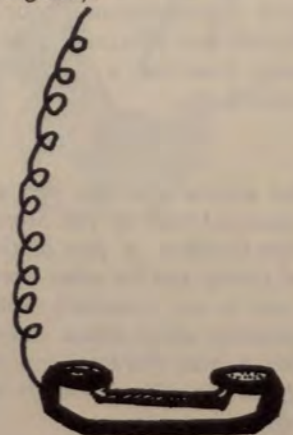
"She died right away."

"O Ken!"

She stood up and he seized her hard, pulling her close as if he was welding her to his body.

"I'm coming with you," she said. But all she could think of was that she was so small and thin, so barely able to support his weight. "If only I could put on some pounds," she was thinking. "Then maybe, maybe, he could rest on me."

Arm in arm they stumbled out towards the highway.





I have interviewed writers over a cup of tea, a cup of coffee, a cold drink of this and that, but never before over a piece of Saskatoon-berry pie as I did recently with Canadian novelist Margaret Laurence.

For this Manitoba-born writer it was the first piece of pie made from the prairie fruit since the days of her teens in Neepawa. To say she savoured it is an understatement.

Such simple pleasures, coupled with her warmth and directness, tend to give Margaret Laurence a deceptively uncomplicated air.

But anyone who has read and been enthralled as I have by *The Stone Angel*, *The Fire-Dwellers*, *A Jest of God*, *This Side of Jordan* and her other works know that she is an immensely subtle and sophisticated writer whose insights into complex human character and the interplay of person with person are deep and moving.

The first time we talked was seven years ago. A lot has happened to us both. Children have grown up. Marriage has broken down. We are women living alone and yet very much in the mainstream. How has she changed?

"I've written a lot in this time. The kids have reached 21 and 18 years. I've been divorced. And yet a part of me has never changed. A part of me is still the girl from a small Manitoba town.

"I loved my old house in Buckinghamshire in England but I belong to Canada. I need to live in this country in terms of my work. I need to hear the idiom. I need to be part of the daily life."

We talked about the women's movement in the context of the place in it of women of middle years.

"I believe it would be a good thing for the movement if there were a lot more middle-aged women in it. Not that they would come in feeling they carried all the wisdom. In fact, most middle-aged women are rather shy about it. The youth cult has been so emphasized in our society that age is not generally looked on as any sort of asset."

"I think there are certain problems that women in middle-age have which can be considerably alleviated by discussion with their contemporaries and younger women. The problems of the menopause, for instance, are just as important as the problems of sex and child-bearing. Many problems of younger women are just not taken seriously by the medical profession. But this is true of the menopause too."

We talked of our good fortune as older women to have warm and loving relationships with younger members of our sex.

"My sense of rapport with them is very satisfying. I've seen so many of them trying to establish relationships with their men based on true equality, and I have enormous sympathy for my younger sisters."

"Mind you, a lot of things women's liberation is working for, the women of my generation and yours have known for a long time. But it wasn't brought out openly. A lot of us felt really isolated because we didn't know there were so many other women who had the same feelings. I'm sure there will be fewer women who are young today who will wake up 20 years from now saying 'my God, I've been stagnating. What can I do about it?'"



June Sheppard talks with Margaret Laurence

Margaret Laurence wants no part of a liberation movement which has as its object the emasculation or damaging of men.

"But one of the most difficult things for women to combat is the situation where men don't see that they are putting down women. It's very hard to tell someone to put down a weapon that he doesn't know he's carrying."

Speaking of the games we play, I wondered if she had gone through a period of having to prove that her writing was really something serious in her life.

"My writing never was just a hobby with me. My family thought it was at first but they learned. A great many women of my generation did pretend that things that were vital to them really were not important because they would be disapproved of, but I think that is changing. There are more women of my daughter's generation who dare to be themselves -- who don't feel they have to be apologetic about their work."

One of the social problems that has come more and more to public attention in the last decade is the deserting husband. Young, with no financial problems, with love for his wife and children, he has been unable to take the

strain of being his wife's prime contact with the world outside the home. Can one person ever live through another?

"Physically the husband can stand it but spiritually -- no. I think it is equally wrong for women to try to live vicariously through their children. What you aim at is not to set your children free but to recognize that they are free and that you have never owned them."

Margaret Laurence will have a new novel out in the spring. The main character is a middle-aged woman who is a writer. Autobiographical -- no. But it does start out in that same prairie town of Manawaska -- the setting of several previous works.

"You sure have mined that vein about as far as it will go." She laughs when she quotes this comment recently made to her.

I look forward eagerly to reading her new book at its spring release. As I also anticipate talking with Margaret Laurence again some time in the future.

margaret atwood

CHAOS POEM

i)

I return to the house,
the lights are on, you aren't here,

damp towels on the chairs, cat fur
matted in corners, dishes

eaten off, crusted,
books abandoned and bent open;

it looks as though you've just moved out,
but it always looked like that.

ii)

Don't worry, I won't cut
anything, I won't leave

sloppy red messages for you
on the bathroom floor.

The fact is I don't like pain,
I don't have that kind of energy,

I'm getting fat,
scenarios wipe me out

in advance and my wrists are lazy.

iii)

I lie on the mattress; re-
playing the man trudging
through the snow, hunting

for his enemy / which is the snow
looking for something to shoot
and finding nothing / I rehearse again

the polite and terrible slogans
by which we live (no matter
how courageous failure is failure)

This is no eviction.
I wish you would shut up.

iv)

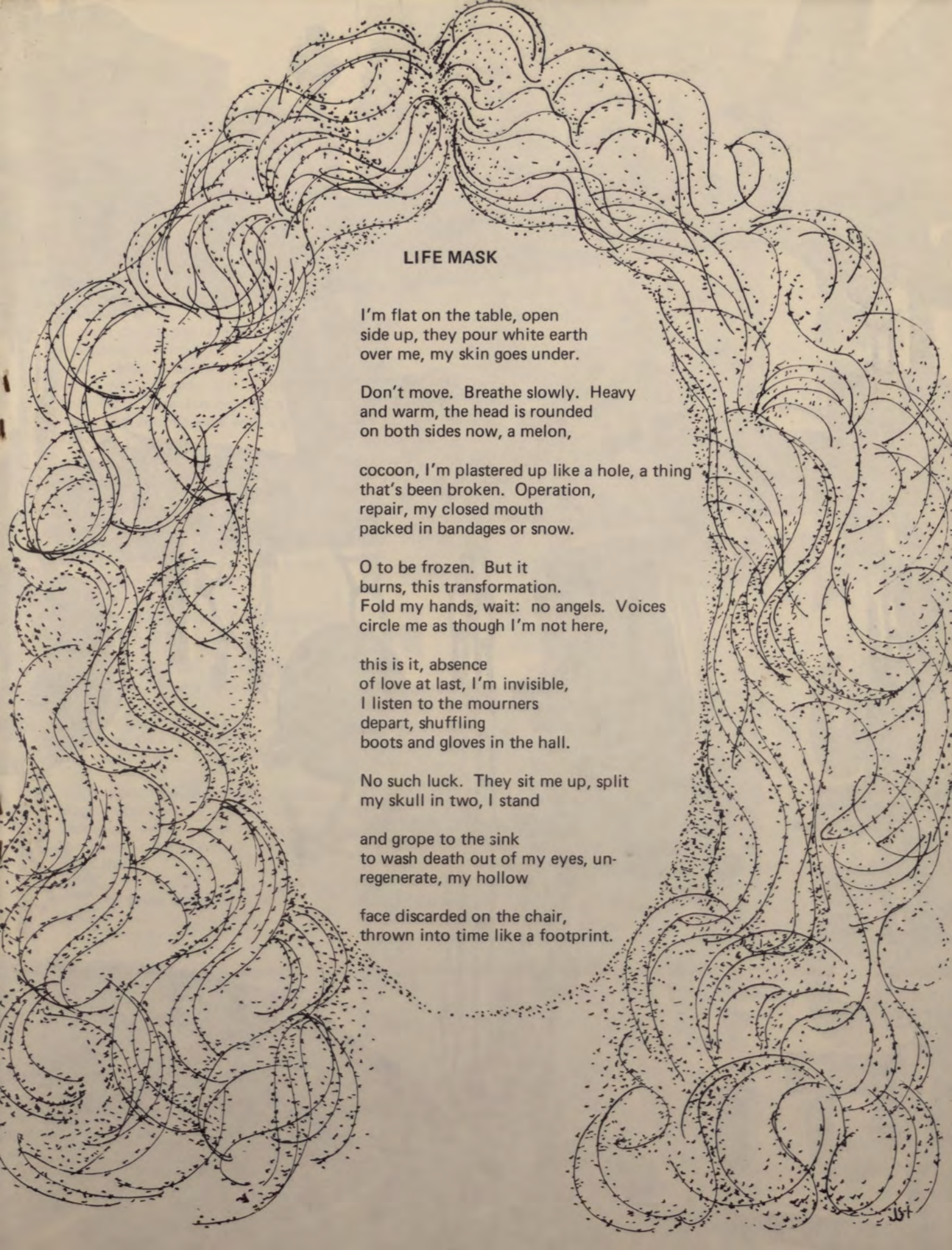
I wash my hair
which gives me the illusion of safety.

You're going and you hate going
as much as you hated staying here.

The rest of my life
is not what you imagine.

I stay awake, listening
to the right half of my skull, spinning
its threads of blood

I have started
to forget, at night I can hear
death growing in me like a baby with no head.



LIFE MASK

I'm flat on the table, open
side up, they pour white earth
over me, my skin goes under.

Don't move. Breathe slowly. Heavy
and warm, the head is rounded
on both sides now, a melon,

cocoon, I'm plastered up like a hole, a thing
that's been broken. Operation,
repair, my closed mouth
packed in bandages or snow.

O to be frozen. But it
burns, this transformation.
Fold my hands, wait: no angels. Voices
circle me as though I'm not here,

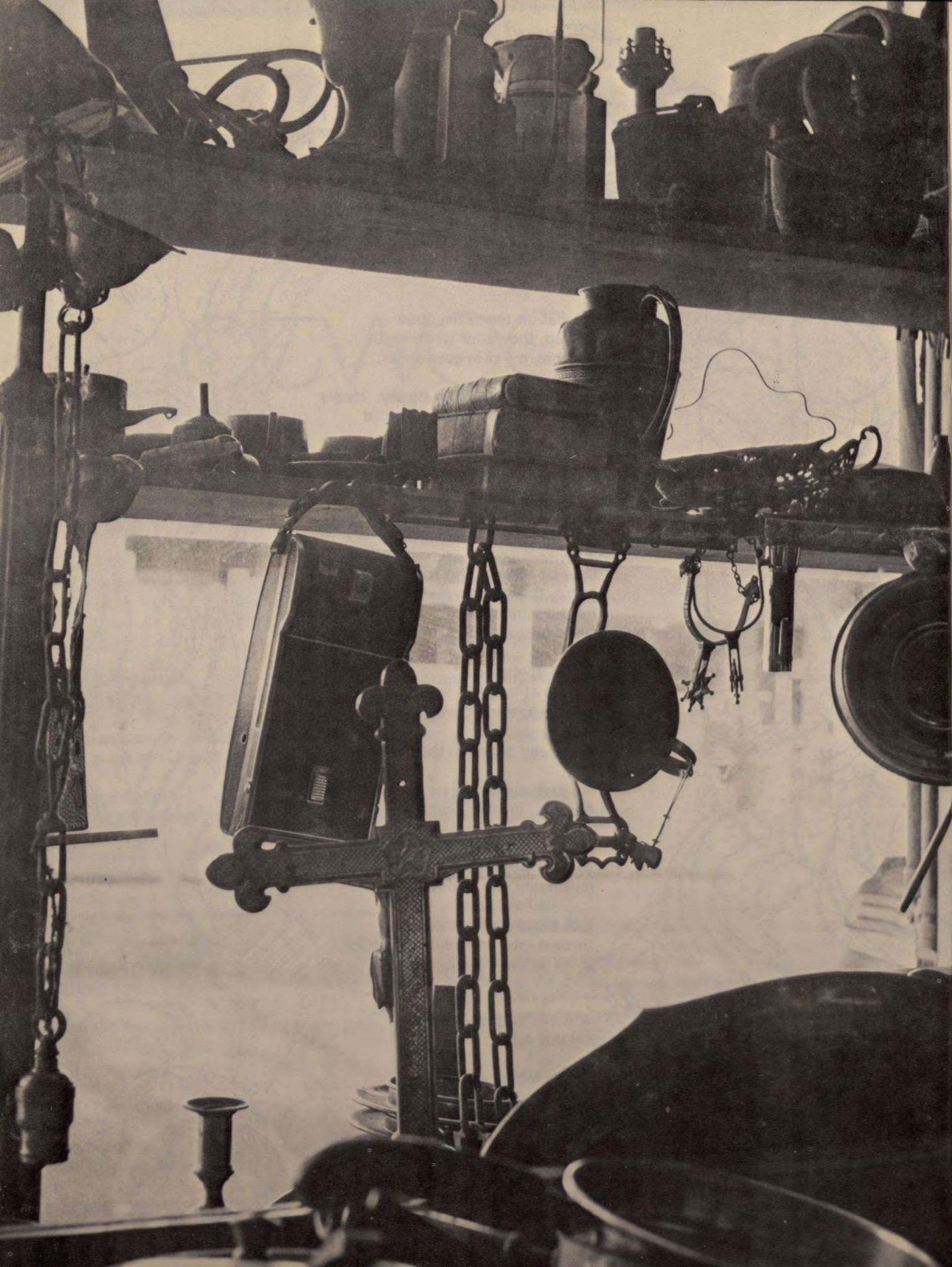
this is it, absence
of love at last, I'm invisible,
I listen to the mourners
depart, shuffling
boots and gloves in the hall.

No such luck. They sit me up, split
my skull in two, I stand

and grope to the sink
to wash death out of my eyes, un-
regenerate, my hollow

face discarded on the chair,
thrown into time like a footprint.

55



*Photoessay and interview with
Hakon Josiassen*

by Alice Baumann-Rondez

Walking down 97th Street in Edmonton is an experience. Here life quite often presents itself in a simple and unpretentious way. While taking pictures of a second-hand store, I was surprised to find a whole array of people who came into the store to look around or rummage through the old and used, hoping to find something practical or pretty, maybe even a genuine antique. But there were others who just came in to sit down and talk. Many were Indians, like Charley, who came into the store with a big gash above his eye.

"Have you been in a fight again, Charley?" Hakon Josiassen, the owner of the store, asked. "Come here, I'll wash it out."

He went to the back to wet a J-cloth, then washed Charley's wound.

"I'm sick. I don't feel too good," Charley said.

"Aah, you'll live, you'll get old, just stop fighting," Hakon replied.

I am sure that Charley felt better quite soon, since he didn't hesitate to give me a pat on the rear just before he left.

A week later I returned, and met Maggie, who emerged groaning from the back room, where she had been snoozing. She came forward and put her arm around Hakon.

"Feel better now?" he asked.

"Hhhmmnn."

I asked her if I could take some pictures of her. She agreed, and posed beautifully, but got angry when I began to take notes of the things she told me.

"You're a cop, you're nothing but a cop," she said.

I had a hard time convincing her that I was a photographer, who was taking pictures of the store. I showed her all my equipment, and Hakon told her that I was all right. So she posed again.



Hakon Josiassen in his store

Browsing



JURK S h o o p



Charley came into the store with a big gash above his eye ...

She told me about her fifteen kids, ten girls and five boys, about the son who was killed in a car accident, about her alcoholic husband. She said nobody cared about her. At that point she started crying, saying over and over again, "I am no bum, I am a good woman. I begged my husband to come home just once sober, not to drink anymore, but he didn't listen. So I started drinking too. But I am no bum."

Hakon reassured her, told her that she was all right. She stopped crying as fast as she had started, got into a play fight with Hakon, and topped it with a song. She gave Hakon another hug, and life seemed to be bearable again.

I wondered if things like that happened often, and after she left asked Hakon to tell me more about his store and the people he knew.

"Oh ja," he said. "A lot of people come in here. The drunk, the sad, the lonely, their last hope is a second-hand store. They got to come in, they got to get it out to somebody, you know. They have no money, they don't want to see a psychiatrist or anybody like that..."

"People I've never seen in my life walk in here, all drunken, sick, with hang-overs, so on. They might start crying. So it all depends how they feel; I will say, what's the trouble? They might say, my friend left me, my mother is dead, or I have no money to go home, all that kind of stuff. Usually when they come that way, I turn them over to a laugh. I don't feel sorry for them. If you do that, you never get rid of them. I tell them some kind of bullshit. Then they say, O.K. Then it's all over, you see." The door opened, and an older man walked into the store, to look at some fishing rods.

"How much is that one there?" he asked.

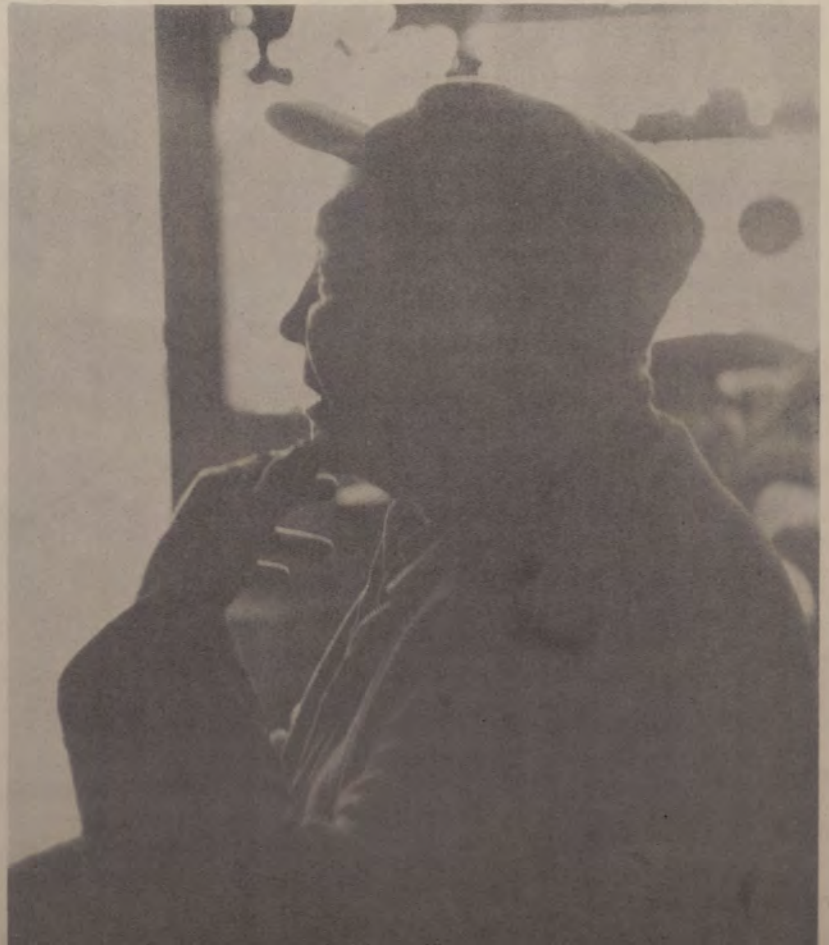
"Four bucks."

The man thought that was too expensive.

"Can't get it so cheap, can't take the money with you. There are no pockets in the coffin," said Hakon.

But the old man couldn't find anything to please him, so he left.

... but he felt better soon.



Hakon continued: "There are a lot of people walking up and down the street. Sometimes I feel sorry for them, kids that come to town, they are new here and completely lost. They don't know nothing. So I call them in and say, you're lost, you don't know where to go, you've been up and down about twenty times now. Where do you come from? They will say, I come from Cranshaw up north, all different places. So I say, what's your plan? Do you want to go home again? Or do you want to stay in town? So they say, I want to go home. So I send them to the Indian Affairs and they ship them right back."

"Who brings them into town?"

"Most of the time what happens, is up north, all the lumberjacks, the truck drivers, all the guys, they sit there, have a drink with them and they say, we want to go to Edmonton. So they pull them right into Edmonton and dump them in the street. But they have no money, nothing, no place to go. The town is too big. They're used to live in a small place, where they know every corner, but here they don't know nobody. They walk forth and back, forth and back. Some of them carry a little suitcase, what we call an Indian suitcase, a shopping bag, you know."

Two girls entered the store. They greeted Hakon and sat down. Hakon asked about the boyfriend of one of the girls. She said that he was in B.C., and finally got locked up in jail, that he had been in a fight again. She felt he deserved it. She asked what time it was, because they wanted to go to the bar - it opened at ten o'clock. It was ten to. One girl said, "If you have to wait for something, it seems you have to wait for a lifetime." At ten sharp, they left. We watched them walk out of the door.

"There is a lot of misery," Hakon said. "It's an awful rough life here in the drag. Like the girls, when they come up from the riverbank in the fall, after sleeping there all summer, oi-yoi-yoi-yoi, they stink. They lay there maybe with fifty guys, never get washed, get drunk, sleep. So when they come up from there, they stink. A lot of them want to come in and I say, you stop at the door, I can't stand the smell. There was one young girl, only about eighteen, she came in here, and I said to her, you wash yourself,



Maggie posed beautifully

She gave Hakon a hug



you're always so dirty. Boy, you smell. You haven't washed for a long time. Ah, to hell with you, she said, you're always complaining. Wash yourself and I won't say a thing, I tell her. So she asked to go into the back and sit down for a bit. O.K., I said, and went in there and told her, now here is warm water, there is soap, the there is everything, you can lock the door so nobody comes in, and you wash yourself, you're stinking all over. There are some clothes here you can put on too. Put the clothes you're wearing in the garbage can. No, she don't want to do it. So I took the pail, threw it over her head, and said, now, you have to get washed, you have no choice, you're all wet and soaked in. Oh, she was swearing away. But she got washed. You never do that to me again, she said. She never came into the store again, she just stands in the doorway and says hello."

I asked if he ever gave them any money.

"Money, no! Never give them a drink either. They know that. If you give them ten cents, they ask, how's about a quarter? No, I don't believe in handouts. This here is my business, my living."

Had he ever had any trouble with the people who came into the store? He grinned and shook his head.

"If they don't behave, I clobber them. Sometimes they go haywire, crazy. So I throw them out. But they all come back, they apologise and say, I'm sorry, don't get mad on me."

Since I had seen all kinds of people in the store, including well-dressed people, I asked if they too came to talk about their troubles.

"Oh, yes, some come and talk, too, about their divorce, and so on, only with them you talk different. Rich people are much better actors, they act a lot to keep up appearances. Indian people come right up, they don't act."

I knew that this part of 97th Street was coming down soon to make way for new buildings. I asked Hakon what he would do and where he would go when that happened. Would he set up another second-hand store?

"Oh, no, I will travel. I am a traveler. I have been around the world twice. I'm going again. I love to observe people, different customs, see other cities, to do what I want. I always did."

A "buying" customer



Nattrass trapshooter

Sue Nattrass has just broken another world record, this time at the Championship of the Americas at Mexico City. She smashed 145 clay pigeons out of 150 to erase the former women's record of 143 out of 150 held by Countess Von Sodden of Germany. At the age of twenty-two she has set three other world records and won the silver medal in the world in 1971; she's the first woman and first Canadian to shoot 200 out of 200, and has the longest straight run (323) of any Canadian woman.

The list of her achievements could go on, but if you're like me before I talked to Sue, you may not even know what trapshooting is. It's a sport involving shooting of clay pigeons that are thrown up into the air at different angles by a machine, at speeds up to 120 miles per hour. It requires excellent eyesight, fast reflexes, strong legs, back and shoulders, and a high level of mental, emotional, and physical control. Teams compete in the world championships from France, Italy, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Russia, Australia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Egypt, India, and almost every other country you can name. Sue Nattrass is one of the top three or four women trapshooters in the world. If you're not from Edmonton, you've probably never heard of her. Why not?

According to Sue Nattrass, it's very simple. Canada, she feels, treats its athletes worse than most other countries in the world. She points out that most countries support their top athletes, train them, provide them with equipment, and send them to competitions; they also recognize their achievements, giving them much more publicity and honour than we do here. Even with prize money, it costs Sue a lot to attend competitions; she must support

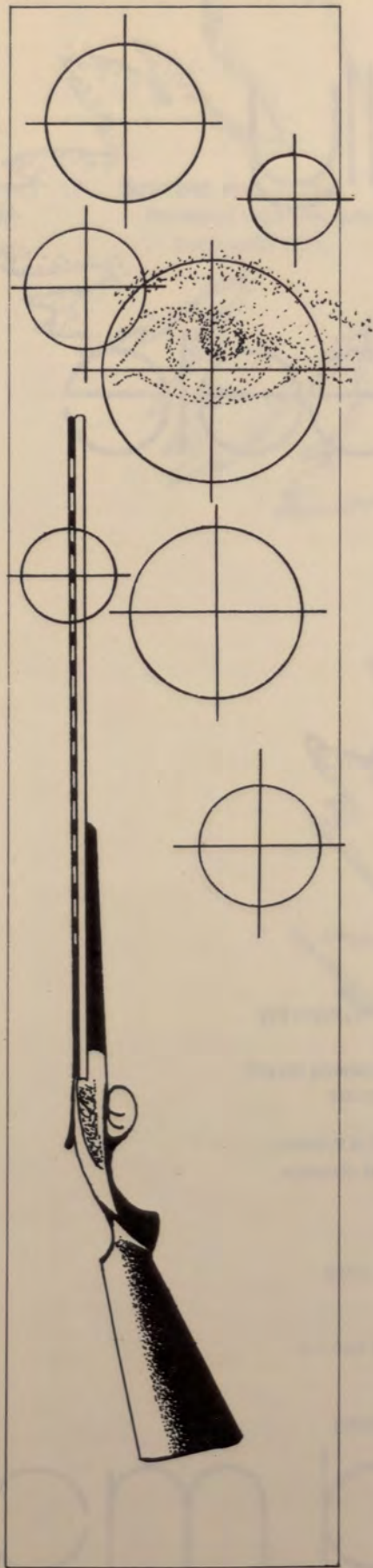
herself at another type of job - recently she had to quit a good one because she wasn't allowed time off to attend meets. She has little time, comparatively, to train, because she's working; professionals from other countries often shoot 20,000 birds a year - Sue Nattrass is only able to shoot about 2000. She feels that problems like these make it difficult for Canadian athletes to be as good as they should be. One of her interests is in educating Canadians about sports, and trying to get more support for athletes of all types.

There is no particular age at which a trapshooter 'peaks out' (loses his or her ability) in trapshooting, unlike athletes in sports such as swimming and running. The current world champion is about 35, but Countess Von Sodden, still competing, is in her fifties. In the 1971 world championships the man who won third place was 65 years old. There are many men and women still competing who are middle-aged, although Sue says that the toughest competition does tend to come from those in their 20's and 30's.

I asked her about the history of trapshooting. She told me it originated in England and was at first intended to be training for hunters, though now it is a sport in itself. Sue herself has only been hunting once - that was enough.

"I just never really wanted to. When I was little, my father took the whole family hunting. My eldest brother and my father went shooting, and my younger brother and I were sort of retrieving...we had a station wagon, and all the ducks were in the back seat, and then Garry and I were in the next seat - and I kept looking back at those beautiful ducks, and I got really upset, started crying...So I think, if I don't need the food, then I won't go hunting...To walk around hunting just is no big

Cont. on p. 41



ANNA'S PILGRIMAGE

the first man she lived with
was a blues-rock musician
who taught her
that the nine-to-five world
was for straight
walking dead losers
who didn't know the score

but he didn't object
when she worked as a waitress
to buy gas and groceries
and cartons of cigarettes
and all of the other
workaday world things he needed

and at night
while he played in the jukebox bars
she practiced the flute
watching the silver notes
like scented smoke
curl towards the ceiling

the next one
was thin and hard as the Path
and he told her
that booze and dope
were fucking her head
and gave her some books on Zen
she was beautiful he said
and he wanted to make her
body a vessel for something
she didn't quite understand

and though his lips were set
in a saintly smile
she thought she heard snarls
behind his eyes

now Anna has gone
to the mountains again
with her books
and her flute
and another new friend
who she met on the road going west
she's not eating meat at all anymore
and she's mastered
the lotus position
she's hoping that this time
she'll finally find
the reason
she's been falling
behind

polly

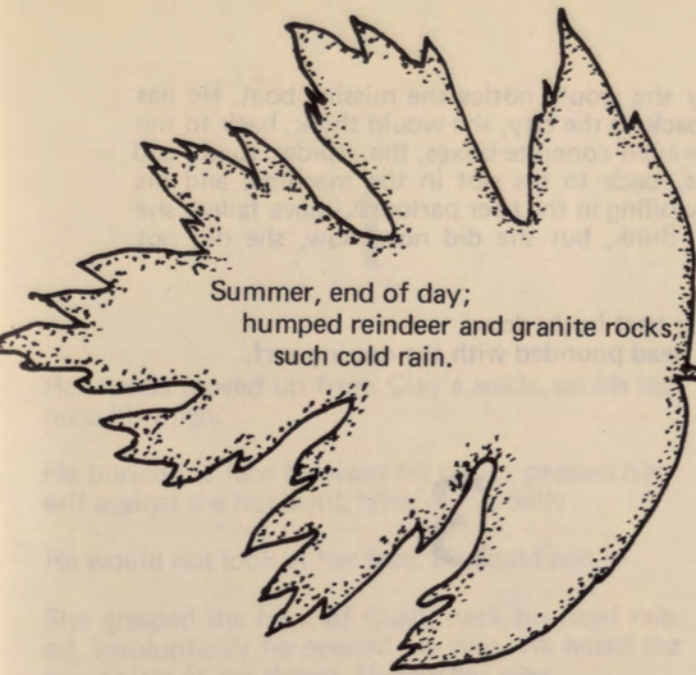
steele

FUNDY HAIKU

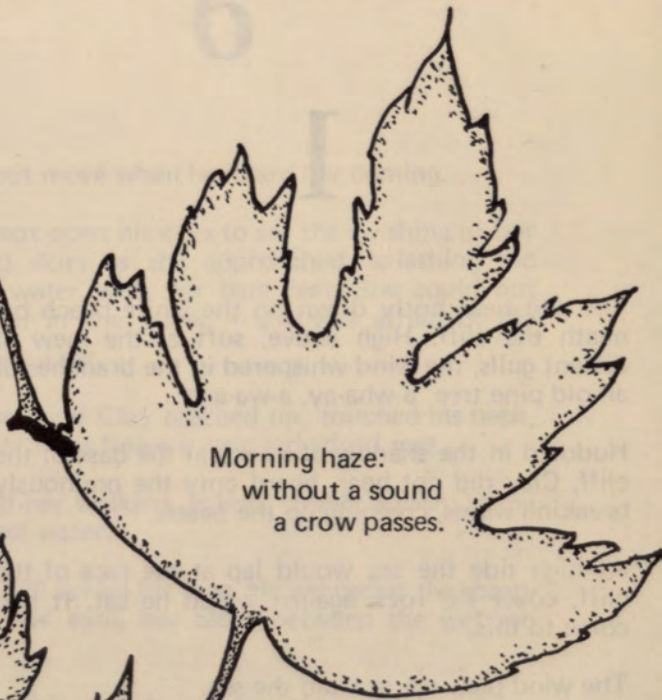
one great blue heron
punctuates a line of weirs
beyond the sandbar

COME HOME: ALL IS FORGIVEN

the last time i remember seeing myself
i was sitting a little off-center
on a bench that read
REST AND READ THE JOURNAL
i saw myself from a great distance
very small
through the wrong end
of binoculars
i have been looking ever since
and once i thought
i caught a glimpse
of someone who seemed like me
curled up in a chair
in the corner
but i might have been wrong
when i looked again
i was gone



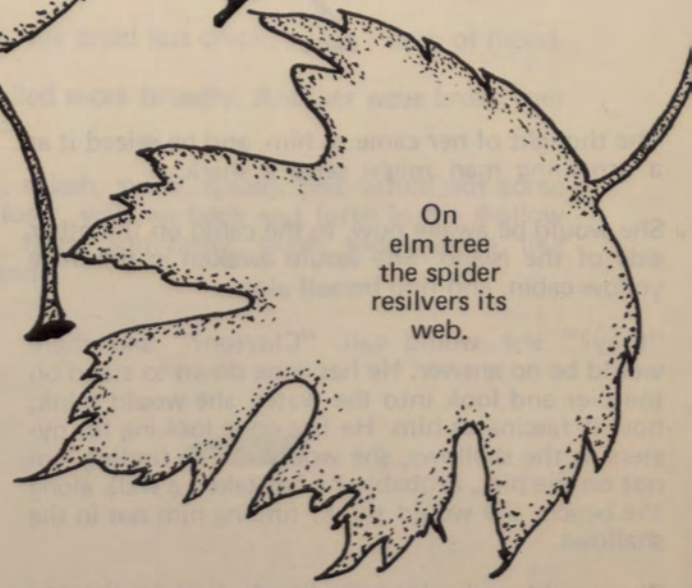
Summer, end of day;
humped reindeer and granite rocks;
such cold rain.



Morning haze:
without a sound
a crow passes.



Wrecked on
a breakneck of rocks,
a small rowboat.



On
elm tree
the spider
resilvers its
web.

Awakening

1

The sun beat hotly down on the white beach beneath the cliff. High above, soft as the mew of distant gulls, the wind whispered in the branches of an old pine tree: a-wha-ay, a-wa-a-ay.

Huddled in the shadow of a rock at the base of the cliff, Clay did not hear, heard only the ominously breaking waves, creeping up the beach.

At high tide the sea would lap at the face of the cliff, cover the rock against which he sat. It had come to this.

The wind blew warm from the sea.

The sun shone hotly down on the white beach.

The sea rolled, winking and rippling in the sunlight.

2

The thought of her came to him, and he seized it as a drowning man might seize a shark.

She would be awake now, in the cabin on the other side of the island. She would awaken in the little yellow cabin, and find herself alone.

"Clay?" she would call. "Clayton?" and there would be no answer. He has gone down to stand on the pier and look into the water, she would think, how it fascinates him. He has gone looking for oysters in the shallows, she would think, finding him not on the pier. Probably he has taken a walk along the beach, she would think, finding him not in the shallows.

She would walk along the beach, first on the one side, then on the other side of the little yellow cabin, not far, for she knew that he would not go far. He disliked walking and the island. She would not come here, for they had never ventured this far. She did not know the cliff.

Finally she would notice the missing boat. He has gone back to the city, she would think, back to the hollow-eyed concrete boxes, the spider roads and bridges, back to his slot in the machine, and his nightly oiling in the beer parlours. I have failed, she would think, but she did not know, she did not know.

The sun beat hotly down.
Clay's head pounded with the roaring surf.

3

Far down the white beach she was coming.

Coming on all fours, hoisting her long red skirts ahead of her knees with alternate hands, her glistening black hair hanging alongside her face, brushing back and forth across the sand.

Clay huddled further into the shadow of the rock, but he could not stop her.

Something must stop her. The words sizzled in his brain.

Escape. He dug his hands into the base of the steepening embankment behind him. The dry sand yielded under his fingers, dry white sand cascading down the slope behind him.

He could not move, trapped, like a child running backwards on a carousel.

He dared not look behind him. He heard her heavy breathing. Furiously his hands continued to dig into the dry sand.

He would bury her in sand. Drown her.

Her hand grasped the cuff of Clay's pantleg. Still he dug with his hands and with his feet, kicking against the grip on his heel, but he could move no higher.

He was sliding backwards on a river of sand. Sliding toward her on the river he had created to drown her. He could not drown her.

He could not. He heard her chuckling softly, deep in her throat beside him, gurgling like a freshet.

4

Her hands moved up from Clay's ankle, up his leg, onto his thigh.

He buried his face between his hands, pressed himself against the hot sand, lying on his belly.

He would not look at her face. He could not.

She grasped the back of Clay's neck, his head raised, involuntarily he opened his eyes. He heard the low noises of her throat. He saw her eyes.

Black eyes, sparkling, glistening like the sea in sunlight, like the bead of saliva at the corner of her smile.

Her red mouth drew him closer.



5

He let the tide roll against him, closing his mouth for the bigger waves, feeling his body rocked gently back and forth. The cool clean water washed over him, lifting him, cleansing him.

He lay like a drifting log on the tideline, surrendered to the mercy of the sea, raised and lowered, rocked, back and forth, (gently, peacefully)

He lay in the tide and listened to the wind whispering in the pine, to the mewing of the doves.

He lay in the tide and listened to the sunlight, sparking against the waves.

6

He did not move when he heard her coming.

He did not open his eyes to see the swishing of her long red skirt as she approached, splashing the shallow water with her bare feet. She could not harm him in the water -- she was afraid of the water, like a cat.

With one hand Clay reached up, touched his neck, tracing with his finger a long red-edged scar.

He heard her walking, splash, splash, splash, in the shallowest water.

The sun fell across his face. He winced at the sharpness of her eyes, her teeth between the wet red lips.

Swish, swish, splash, swish, splash, he heard her moving back and forth. Still he did not open his eyes.

He was safe here.

He smiled -- a broad grin at the warmth of the sun on his face.

He felt his dried lips crack, tasted a drop of blood.

He smiled more broadly. Another wave broke over his face.

Swish, splash, swish, splash. She would not come any closer, walking back and forth in the shallow water, faster and faster, swish, swish, swish, like the wind.



Cont. on p. 42

Sonja Chandra





Miriam Elston and the Galicians

by Dorothy Dahlgren

One of my dearest friends is having her one-hundred and first birthday this spring. Miriam Elston is her name - and any Edmonton lady with a consuming interest in hats must have met her, sometime or other! For many years, Miriam and her sister Dinah had their own millinery shop upstairs from Heintzman's on Jasper Avenue.

I still remember the first time I went into it - at the end of a long and discouraging trek through every other millinery store in town. I was going to be married and I wanted a very special kind of head-dress for my veil. Nobody had anything remotely like it - and everyone agreed they couldn't possibly make one for me. Even the fanciest hat shops wouldn't try! Then, I saw, hanging on the outside wall of the Heintzman building, a modest little display case with one hat in it.

I climbed up some rickety old stairs and entered a plain little room crammed with hats and boxes and pieces of ribbon and lace. A tall, rather severe-looking lady

greeted me, and when I had explained what I wanted in the way of a wedding head-piece, she broke into a sudden smile. "Of course we can make it for you," she said. "We love to make things for weddings." That was more than a quarter of a century ago, and though I didn't know it at the time, that was Miriam.

I didn't get to know her really well until a few years later, when I joined the Canadian Women's Press Club - and discovered that she had belonged to the Edmonton branch longer than anybody else in town. By that time, she wasn't doing very much commercial writing, but in her heyday she had outshone every other member with the diversity of her writing - and with the first-rate literary markets she could command. All the big London papers and magazines - top-notch publications such as the old *Literary Digest* - were happy to pay her cash for contributions. She also had a series running in the Edmonton papers for a while, when she was the official poet of the *Woodland Dairy*, writing weekly jingles in praise of milk. She had a book accepted by a well-known British publisher, but unfortunate-

ly that was in the spring of 1914, and by the time it was all proof-read the first world war was on, and there was such a paper shortage that printing had to be suspended. Consequently, it never did reach the stands.

Which was a pity, because Miriam Elston's book was to have been about some people in Alberta in whom she had been especially interested. At that time, they were called the Galicians, and they'd settled here in the late part of the nineteenth century. Some of them were from Galicia in the Austrian Empire, but others were really Ruthenians or Ukrainians from south-western Russia and Poland. They had settled not far from Edmonton, around places such as Wostock and Andrew and St. Michael. At that time, because they were "different", they were looked down upon by many people. But not by Miriam; she got to know them and wrote of them with love and understanding.

The first Galicians came to Alberta in 1894 - nine families in all. They sent home such good reports about the new country that by the time Miriam Elston came in 1909, there were more than seventy-five thousand here-poverty-stricken but happy.

The average home was a long, low hut, built of poplar logs roughly plastered with white-washed mud. The roof was made of sod, with grass sprouting out all over the place. The only door usually led into the stable; the furniture consisted of home-made tables, and bedsteads of round poplar logs, covered with blankets. More often than not the man of the house was absent, earning a bit of cash by working on one of the railway gangs. When this was so, his wife and children were left to clear the land, sow the seed and harvest the crops. In many instances, having neither a plow, nor a horse to pull one, the first twenty or thirty acres had to be dug by hand with spades! In that way, they were able to raise their first small crops of oats, rye, and potatoes.

These new Canadians raised everything they ate with their own efforts. Their clothing, like their furniture and food, was of the simplest. They went barefoot in summer, and in the winter they wore shoes only out of doors.

With his first earnings from the railroad, the Galician homesteader usually in-

Dorothy Dahlgren

Dorothy Dahlgren has been a writer for TV and radio all her life; she was publicity director at the Citadel Theatre for some years, and she has had two weekly programs on CKUA Radio for thirteen years. But in spite of her long career in the media, she is not a publicity seeker -- at least not for herself. "My job is to publicise other people," she says, "... to give a publicity to ordinary people who really shouldn't be forgotten There are so many interesting people who've lived in this province for so long, and they haven't had any publicity ... yet nobody wants to be forgotten."

The kind of people she means are the early pioneers of Alberta. Dorothy Dahlgren travels around the province talking to these history makers and recording their tales.

"Mind you," she says, "I have to sit on a lot of stories until someone dies. I am the repository of more untold tales than anyone you'll ever meet ... Of course, the most interesting people are the rascals."

She rewrites each story to fit a ten minute time slot for CKUA each Sunday morning, which means it is only possible to take one incident and expand it. Often Ms. Dahlgren will come away from an interview with two or three full tapes. "You might not get much, but they've had a pleasurable afternoon."

Dorothy Dahlgren's opinion is that old people are not treated well in our society.

"We provide very very nice places for them to live ... in some cases more comforts than they've probably known before, at a very reasonable price, and then we give them all kinds of cards

and bingo ... and then we're able to sit back and feel very virtuous and forget about them, which is awfully sad. Our western society is the only one where the old are considered useless ... and a nuisance."

She illustrated her point with a story about Agatha Christie (who is her favorite mystery writer.)

"She's married to Mallory, who's an anthropologist, and she said this is absolutely a beautiful arrangement, because to an anthropologist, the older you get, the more interesting you are ... I think that's a lovely comment."

I asked her what changes she would suggest in our treatment of the aged. She felt that anything that got them into the mainstream of life would be good.

"There's a place for old people in social work of all kinds. While they have no degrees, mostly, they've had a hell of a lot of experience."

We began discussing some of the people she has interviewed, and she told me about Miriam Elston, whose story is on the preceding pages. Besides running a hat shop, Miriam Elston had been a practical nurse with the Galicians.

"She did very remarkable work with them. For example, when they had a smallpox epidemic she *lived* with them."

Miriam Elston is still living in Edmonton, and is almost one hundred years old. Thanks to Dorothy Dahlgren, publicist for Alberta pioneers, we have at least part of her story recorded for history.

by Susan McMaster

Cont. on p. 44

I AM WATCHING

by Shirley Gibson

Anansi \$2.95 paper; \$6.00 cloth

by SUSAN MUSGRAVE

These unpretentious poems explore the intense emotional strategies involved in human relationships – particularly between man and woman. They are about a series of conflicts which arise from a woman on her own attempting to work out her feelings and find clarity in separation and aloneness. The poet is uncompromising and consistent. She doesn't spare any feelings or fake honesty. In fact, she is honest to the point of ruthlessness:

*That night you take me like
a conquistador.*

*There are no terms of surrender;
I simply fight off the attack.*

In each of these three sections the speaker addresses a different "you", although each is an extension of her own thoughts and each leads further into herself. Yet things develop slowly and with insufficient drama, so that the poems soon disappear from memory and one is likely to finish the book with a feeling of discontent. The poems stimulate the appetite but never satisfy it.

Most of the poems touch on painful aspects of experience, though the poet believes in love. She sees that perhaps pain is a necessary part of growth in a relationship, that it helps to maintain a feeling of self-awareness and respect for the other person as a separate human being. In one poem she writes:

*today words go in clean
touch bone
explode
leave crude splintered wounds*

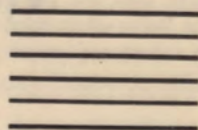
Later she says, "when we meet/we will compare our wounds" implying again the constructive aspect of suffering. Involvement becomes a battle:

*soon I stop talking
give myself up
complacent victim of this
planned attack*

However, she isn't complacent and does not give up. She waits and is patient, and one inevitably wishes she would get angry enough to make her "bloodletting" believable and worthwhile.

The images of blood, wounds, wrist-slashing and weapons are so tightly controlled and seem so well under control that it is difficult to imagine the actual experience that went on behind the words. They do not bring any worlds into life. They remain one-dimensional and most often unevocative.

But the poet does have patience and a persistent voice. One is eventually caught up in the flow of her thinking. The whole book in a sense becomes a long poem and, while in places it lacks vitality and intensity, Shirley Gibson succeeds in creating an overall atmosphere of considerable emotional impact.



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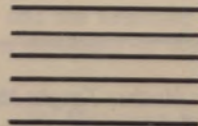
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Memories, dreams, and reflections

"Buckets of time, you put your hand into it, deep down as far as the elbow, and it is like putting your hand into the abyss."

NIGHT Edna O'Brien

Women in current fiction are dipping into buckets of time and staring into the abyss. Their explorations through memory are the subjects of three novels published this year. Audrey Thomas, Edna O'Brien and Doris Lessing have created characters who examine their lives from the points of view of an adolescent girl and two middle-aged women.

In Audrey Thomas' novel *Songs My Mother Taught Me*, Isobel Cleary remembers, in minute detail, her discontented childhood. As a character, Isobel is both interesting and irritating. A seventeen-year old girl growing up in a middle class American family in the 1940s and '50s, and pouring out self-centred, misery-filled recollections of her embarrassments and frustrations, is not a very sympathetic character. Disappointments are too copiously documented. Reader saturation with Isobel is caused, in part, by the first person narrative. Isobel tells the story; everyone else is filtered through her consciousness. Because of her age, Isobel lacks the deep insights into other characters that would give the novel resonance.

She strikes enough chords to arouse some compassion. Her pictures of the family's repressive power over children, and society's restrictive model for female behaviour are strong.

Isobel feels trapped by an acquisitive, unloving family. Idolizing her grandfather (who insists upon being called *Uncle* so fearful is he of becoming one of the *old* in America), she is little concerned with his humorous contempt of her school-teacher father. Her father, afraid of almost everything in life, obsequiously seeks recognition from chance acquaintances. He records temperatures in his diaries and leaves no "statement of joy or pain." Her mother is desperate to achieve middle class respectability; it is crucial to her that Isobel and her sister be accepted socially. She begs invitations for her unpopular daughters, torments the girls' hair into smelly "permanent" waves, seeks out magazine advertisement clothes.

Isobel is aware of the undercurrents of violence and hatred in the family, but does not understand them. Her mother's outbursts of violent anger and her shame at exposing the violence are not understood. Not knowing why they happen, she can do nothing but turn her back and pretend they do not happen. In her own pain, Isobel cannot conceive of the reasons for her parents' emotionally truncated lives.

Unable to find the love she needs within her family, Isobel looks for affection from the young men she meets during her summer vacations at the lake. She wants the lifeguard to seduce her so that she can at last be "successful": "*No man had ever wanted me... Why not? ... Was I really unattractive? ... Why should the men have so much power?*"

In her life, men have this power whether they want it or not. But she doesn't understand *why* they have it and she doesn't know *how* to feel attractive without a man's sexual recognition of her. Her sexual needs and her need to feel worthy as a human being are confused.

Audrey Thomas gives a strong picture of a turbulent, emotional period in one young American woman's life as she tries to break away from her family and achieve her independence.

Edna O'Brien, in her novel *Night*, interweaves with rich, colourful language the thoughts, memories and reveries of the middle-aged Mary Hooligan. During one long night, a stream of images flow through Mary's mind: she remembers Lil and Boss, her parents; her ex-husband Doctor Flagglar; her son; her lovers and friends; her romantic dreams.

Mary is in her fifties, long divorced. Her son is grown up, sending her letters from his North African summer tour. She is poor, living now in England. She left her home in rural Ireland when she was young. Her jobs have been unrewarding -- selling cosmetics and stationery; waiting on fat people at a health farm; promoting Ireland on a tourist campaign in the U.S.A.

On the night of this free-flowing reverie, Mary is lying alone in a house which she is looking after for the owners who are on vacation. Her memories are prompted by her loneliness, and by her fear that the owners will return soon and she must start all over again somewhere else.

Mary is a romantic, full of contradictions. All her life she has searched for her "one true love" whom she has never found. However, this hope sustains her no matter how many disappointments she suffers. From a first sordid experience with a musician at a local dance, to her cold domineering husband, to a recent pick-up in the park, her sexuality draws men near. But there is no real closeness, no understanding of each other. After destructive sex with the man she met in the park, Mary says bitterly, "*I'd simply participated the way he wanted.*"

Songs My Mother Taught Me Audrey Thomas Talonbooks

Night Edna O'Brien, Weidenfeld & Nicolson

The Summer Before the Dark Doris Lessing Alfred Knopf & Sons

She gives a good summary of her life with these words: "I am still snooping around, on the lookout for pals, pen pals, pub pals, cronies of any kind, provided they know their place, keep at a distance, stay on the leash, leave me my soul's crust, and my winding dirging effluvia."

Mary had an old friend, Madge, with whom she once lived. Sometime, not too long before the night of dipping into her memories, she had visited Madge. Both had been abandoned by their lovers. Perhaps, Mary thought, they could have lived together, saved each other from loneliness. "That's what I craved, to stay with someone,...to have chats and unions in the evening."

But this relationship is "kyboshed" like all the others. Whether she is not able to understand Madge's feelings and says the wrong thing or whether her own drive for separateness leads her to deliberately antagonize Madge, the result is the same. She is on her own again.

Mary, through her life, has developed a survival technique. She is not an intellectual who can analyse her experiences and modify her behaviour. Loneliness and aging frighten her so that she avoids looking at her future too closely. Looking instead at the bright side of each present moment, she has the strength to live. Unchanging, she cocks her head at the moving lights and concentrates on the raptures that "make up for everything, even the doldrums."

Night is a moving portrait of a woman who skirts the edge of the abyss but will not look straight at it.

Doris Lessing, creator of many female characters who haven't hesitated to stare deep into the destructive element, has written another powerful novel, *The Summer Before the Dark*, in which the central character, Kate Brown, an Englishwoman, at the age of 45, looks carefully at her past in order to make her bid for independence.

For the first time since her marriage, Kate finds herself alone. Her husband, a successful doctor, is in the U.S.A. on an exchange program; her two children are grown up; the house is rented. Very reluctantly, and as a favour, she takes a job as

a translator with a United Nations type of food agency and is soon promoted to conference organizer.

With time on her hands, she starts to look at herself, an exploration she has not wanted to begin. Her reluctance stems from an intuition that the truth is not going to be pleasant.

She faces the fact that after twenty-five years of preoccupation with her family, she is no longer needed. On the job, she realizes that her role with the privileged diplomats is the same role she played in the family. On the conference scene, Kate is the *tribal mother* exuding an *atmosphere of loving sympathy* as she pays attention to the hundreds of trivial details that enable the diplomats to meet without irritation. It is not a role exclusive to women. Her superior, Charlie Cooper, plays the role too: "What he was good at was to be the supplier of some kind of invisible fluid, or emanation, like a queen termite, whose spirit (or some such word - electricity) filled the nest, making a whole of individuals who could have no other connection."

Her reaction to this view of herself is anger. For twenty-five years, in order to make a comfortable life for her family, Kate has kept hidden and never allowed to develop a more complicated, unpredictable self. She and her family have had an image of the ideal, efficient suburban super mother. All Kate's behaviour has conformed to this image.

In a larger context, her behaviour has been rigidly moulded. She is humiliated to think of a lifetime spent preening herself to play the role of the sexually attractive, eternally young female.

"For the whole of her life, or since she was sixteen - yes, the girl making love to her own face had been that age - she had looked into the mirrors and seen what other people would judge her by."

This experience is one which Isobel Cleary is just beginning, the experience that Mary Hooligan is still caught up in.

After forcing herself to think about her experience, Kate concludes that she need not confine herself to one role, to one expression. She experiments.

"...there were hundreds she had never thought of using! She had been limiting herself to a frightfully small range, most of them, of course, creditable to her, and pleasing, or non-abrasive to others."

With Kate's knowledge comes a freedom to experiment. She is, also, liberating herself from dependence on the approval and recognition of others. She can be alone *if she chooses*. But she achieves this serenity only after great pain. During this summer she has travelled a great deal, has lived in Spain as the older woman with a young lover, has been ill and has shared a flat in London with a young woman who is torn between her desire to marry one of her lovers and her determination not to repeat Kate's experience.

With her new strength, Kate is able to accept that she is growing old. For most of us, being old in a society whose members are on a desperate quest for eternal youth is frightening. Lessing depicts, in strong terms, the callous way in which old people are made to feel invisible. Kate experiences this invisibility in cafes, on the street. Initially, she cries and is broken by not being seen. Her strength to overcome the loneliness comes from the sense of self-worth, she gains from knowing just what shallow behaviour earns recognition. If she poses as the mate-seeking female, she will be seen. If she plays coy games, she will receive the much vaunted accolade. But Kate, knowing this, can no longer be blackmailed into conforming to society's image of the "Second Debut" female.

In *King Lear* the Fool tells the King he should have become wise before he became old. Lessing gives the same point to her tale. Kate is wise before she is old. She knows who she is when she is not trying to please everyone. And Kate has a sign, a symbol of her independent self. "Her experience of the last months, her discoveries, her self-definition, what she hoped were now strengths, were concentrated here - that she would walk into her home with her hair undressed, with her hair tied straight back for utility, rough and streaky, and the widening gray band showing like a statement of intent."

by Maureen Scobie

flying free



Illustration by Ann Powell
from *Mandy and the Flying Map*

A woman on a fishing expedition *extraordinaire* and a little girl flying through the air on a map are the central characters in two new children's books from the Canadian Women's Educational Press.

Mandy and the Flying Map transforms the old flying carpet story, introducing in place of the helpless princess of the Arabian Nights Tale, a lively, intelligent girl whose absorbing interest in maps leads to her adventures. Flying over her town, Mandy refuses politely all offers from the townspeople to rescue her. Soaring high in the air, she sings, "I'm flying and I'm safe and I'm free!" A welcome change from the passive, timid "always in need of rescue" girl of many children's books.

Fresh Fish ... and Chips tells in rhyme the story of a strong, resourceful woman who goes on a fishing trip to provide food for her hungry children while the father stays at home peeling the potatoes for chips. Illustrations of the woman driving her car and hauling in an incredible variety of sea creatures are delightful. The lively sea creatures themselves almost dominate this "fish story" in which the worms smile as they coil around the hook and the octopus reads in the bathtub.

Fresh Fish ... and Chips and *Mandy and the Flying Map* have been published in response to young children's need for books which present, in text and illustrations, alternatives to traditional sex stereotyped characters. The picture of an aproned, broom-holding woman standing mostly in the background of the action is no longer an adequate picture of women's activities. The unconscious princess waiting to be kissed into life is not enough for little girls who, like Mandy, are eager to try their own wings.

Maureen Scobie

Branching Out

Mandy and the Flying Map

by Beverley Allinson Illustrated by Ann Powell

Fresh Fish ... and Chips

by Jan Andrews Illustrated by Linda Donnelly

\$1.50 paper, \$3.25 hardcover

Canadian Women's Educational Press
Suite 305, 280 Bloor Street West
Toronto, Ontario

Natrass

thrill for me."

I wondered if she would ever use her gun for anything except exploding clay birds. She replied that it is very important to learn how to control oneself, but could imagine a few situations in which she would feel justified in using her ability as a sharp-shooter.

"If someone is in my house, has broken into *my* house they'll pay the consequences..."

"If someone tries to rape me, if someone's about to come and attack me, and if I had a gun, I would shoot him...[although] I couldn't shoot someone dead."

I pointed out that if I were in that position, I might *try* not to kill an intruder, but there was a good chance that I would do so, accidentally.

"That's why people should learn to shoot guns," she replied. "I would aim at their feet, and I would stop them."

I asked Sue if she had ever felt discriminated against because she was female.

"[There are] a few things I would have had. I'm annoyed right now. The team going to the world championships - I'm the senior member on that team, I've had the most international experience...[but] they chose a guy that's only been to one international competition as the team captain because they didn't want a girl leading a lot of men....I was ticked off!"

We began to discuss the women's movement in general. Sue said she felt women should have equal pay for equal jobs, equal opportunities to get jobs, and also to compete for them, but that she wasn't really a 'woman's libber.'

"I enjoy being asked out. I don't particularly want to get to the stage where I have to ask out guys. I enjoy having my door opened for me, and being spoiled. I like that."

But what about the other, negative side of being spoiled - didn't she ever feel she had had problems because she was female?

Not really, she replied, but commented that that may be because of her particular personality.

"I'm not pushed around very easily - whether it's by men or women. No woman has ever pushed me around! I

normally get what I want...by sheer determination! I think a lot of women give up too easily... and this is what frustrates men...If a problem faces a woman, she'll break. Women have got to learn to use their potential. Nowadays, a woman can do what she wants. Women's Lib is good in a way."

Sue Natrass has many other interests besides trapshooting. Too many people tend to limit themselves to one area, one group of friends, she feels. Her own interests are as wide as training, studying, and her job at the University of Alberta allow. Her academic achievements are almost as outstanding as her trapshooting scores. She loves skiing, camping and most other sports. In particular, she enjoys meeting a wide variety of people. Vivacious, attractive, friendly, she has a large group of friends. She describes herself as ambitious and competitive, "but only in certain areas - when I'm competing against myself. In other areas, marks, for instance, I'll try to help out others."

Asked what she wants most, she replied, "I want to be happy...(I want) freedom to do things, to come and go...to do what I want - if I want to study, study; if I want to shoot, shoot...freedom to believe in what I want to believe in." For Sue Natrass, trapshooting is one way of doing what she wants most to do - compete against herself, getting better and better all the time.

by Susan McMaster

Woman: the peg on which the wit hangs his jest, the preacher his text, the cynic his grouch and the sinner his justification.
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7

The rain no longer stung his face, he heard the swishing of leaves. He could escape her. In the woods he could escape her. She could not find her way into the woods.

The rough bark scraped his skin. He tried to push past. Hand over hand he edged along the trunk. Then he opened his eyes. Alone.

He screamed -- and he tried to stifle it with his hands. Somewhere behind him, she would hear, she would come.

Sobbing, he beat his fists against the wall -- tree trunks, branches and knee-high roots, woven close, intertwined, alive and impenetrable.

He heard her breathing behind him, felt her arms twining around him as he stood recoiling, helpless against the twisting roots.

8

Her red skirt wrapped around him. Clay was suffocating.

He fought for his breath against the red sun mouth pressing closer, closer.

He reeled against the black glistening sea pits of her eyes, falling -- weightless into an impenetrable well.

He reached out to grasp at the rough sides, but could touch nothing -- everything remained at the same distance from his hands. He flailed his arms, his legs, but could move neither up nor down. He was falling, and the bottom was falling with him.

He gazed at the receding waters of her face, alive with the flames of sunlight, from her mouth. He heard the crackle of her petticoats, beneath her red skirt, he felt the flames enclosing him, tightening around him, hotter, hotter.

The tongue of a cat flicked out of the closing ring of fire.

White streaks caught at his throat.
The glistening teeth.
He dodged. Too late. He had not moved.

His hands reached up. Grabbed nothing. Pushed away nothing.

The teeth at his throat, his blood hissed against the closing flames. He reached out his hands and touched the softness of her body, smooth and sun-warm over him.



9

He listened to the absences of her breath, ten seconds, fifteen seconds, the hand on his watch moved round and round.

The tide was washing against his toes.

He lifted his feet from the water, knelt beside her, lifted the sandy beach towel from her naked body. With his fingertips he gently traced the symmetry of her body. Then with the corner of the towel he wiped the bead of saliva from the edge of her mouth.

Carefully he lifted her in his arms, and without waking her, carried her into the little yellow cabin. On the doorstep he caught the shadow of wings, and looking up beheld a gull flying in circles. Mewing in the warm air: wa-ake, a-wha-ake.

The sun shone hotly down on the white beach.
The sea rolled on, winking and rippling in the sunlight.



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ELSTON

vested in a plow and an ox; then the family could begin to farm in earnest. Within a year or two, they might have as much as two hundred acres under crop, and from ten to a hundred head of livestock to show for the collective family effort. In winter, the man of the house would fill his home-made box sleigh with grain and set out for the nearest market, no matter how far away it might be. To save even the modest amount charged by stopping places on the trail, he would wrap himself in a blanket and sleep in the snow beside his sleigh. The journey to and back from Edmonton - the nearest market - took anywhere from ten days to two weeks. But after enduring this sort of hardship for three or four years, the family was no longer poor.

By the time Miriam Elston first met them, things had changed around Wostock and Andrew. Most of the settlers had been there long enough to become established farmers. The villages had begun to take shape - houses systematically placed in two long rows, a broad avenue running between them. Each cottage standing on its own lot was sturdily built of logs chinked with whitewashed earth. The roof was still sod, but it was carefully and neatly packed. A raised ledge of earth

running along the foot of the cottage, under wide overhanging eaves, formed a sort of verandah, and all the windows were hand-painted red and green.

Miriam Elston told me that there was no distinction between rich and poor in the Ukrainian villages. Everyone considered himself rich - in hope and freedom at least - if not in worldly goods. The homes were all of a pattern. And when one was invited in for a meal the *food* was usually the same - bread, cut from the enormous rye loaves which were the specialty of these women, rich butter, wild berry preserves, and freshly-drawn milk. There was always singing. Everyone soon learned when a visitor was in town, and the choristers always came to welcome him with hymns and old-country songs.

For many years, these people from southern Europe cultivated an almost primitive simplicity of life, but the cultivation of their land was by no means primitive. They were quick to adopt all the most up-to-date methods as soon as they could afford them

The Galicians took a real pride in their dress. Their clothing, all home-made - often of homespun wool - was embellished with the exquisite embroidery for which the Ukraine has always been fam-

ous. Literally hundreds of hours went into the fashioning of every garment for every member of the family - men and women alike.

The Galicians were the first settlers in the prosperous towns and farms which we see today in east central Alberta. In many ways, they have adopted the customs of our country - but in others they have retained the ways of their homeland, and Canada is all the richer for these. Their children remember Miriam Elston with love. "She knew them when" as the saying goes - and they, too will be wishing her a happy birthday this spring.



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