Branching Out

canadian magazine for women Volume V Number 2 1978 $1.25

Special Issue on Women and Art

Does Art Have a Sex? • Feminist Art in Winnipeg • Film Animators at the NFB • Writers Marian Engel and Aritha van Herk • The Diary as a Feminine Art Form • Joyce Marshall on Left Hand, Right Hand •

plus **How Our Immigration Laws Criminalize the Innocent • Notes on the Rathwell Case Fiction • Poetry • Reviews**

Branching Out

Columns

2 **letters**

21 **film**
Innovators in Animation — *Barbara Halpern Martineau*

32 **law**
The Criminalization of the Innocent — *Joan Anne Gordon*
Rathwell: No Landmark — *Connie Hunt*
Book Reviews — *Pat Wright and Helen Melnyk*

41 **books**
Remembering Ancestors — *Joyce Marshall*
A Thin Documentary — *Maureen Hynes*
The Music of the Animal — *Rebecca Smith*
Dialogue at Last — *Sandy Pentland*
Economics and Day Care — *Leslie Bella*
And More Books

Features: Women in Arts

4 Does Art Have A Sex? — *Cathy Hobart*
7 Women in Exhibition: The Politics of Pioneering Art Feminism on the Prairies — *Sharon Corne*
10 Women in Exhibition: A Review — *Marilyn Baker*
12 Marian Engel: Beyond Kitchen Sink Realism — *Aritha van Herk and Diana Palting*
18 Arabesque — *Diane Carriere and Danielle Bouchard*
26 Aritha van Herk: Her Time and Place — *Sharon Batt*
30 Diary Keeping as a Feminine Art Form — *Claudia Christopherson*

Fiction and Poetry

14 The Ring — *Cathy Ford*
17 Winter Song — *Eileen Kernaghan*
20 Nothing Will Ever Shatter Me — *Mary Anne Erickson*
39 Tenebrae — *Joy Stephenson*

cover: "4 Maidens Happy" by June Drutz
acrylic and tempera, 48" x 36"
from *Women's Work*, see page 4

Board of Directors
Dallas Cullen, Halyna Freeland, Kris Purdy, Cherie Westmoreland, Sharon Batt, Elaine Butler, Annette Henderson, Mary Lee Morton

Editor
Sharon Batt

Business Manager
Elaine Butler

Subscription Manager
Diane Walton

Editorial Assistant
Sharon K. Smith

Contributing Editors
Elaine Butler, Jill McIvor, Mary Lee Morton

Editorial Departments
Books: Aritha van Herk
Fiction: Anne O'Grady, Heather Pringle, Helen Rosta, Joanne Ellison, Marion Thom
Film: Margaret Cooper
Law: Linda Duncan
Photography: Diana Palting, Lauren Dale, Cherie Westmoreland

Design
Barbara Hartmann, Irene Klar, Diana Palting

Other Staff This Issue
Sharon Domier, Joanne Hatton

©Copyright 1978 by the New Women's Magazine Society, Edmonton, Alberta. All rights reserved. Unless used in a review, the reproduction of this work in any form, by any means, including photocopying, recording, information storage and retrieval systems, et cetera, is forbidden without the express permission of the publisher.

Branching Out is published every two months by the New Women's Magazine Society, a Canadian Charitable Organization. Editorial office located at 8631 - 109 Street, Edmonton, Alberta. Phone (403) 433-4021.

Published with assistance from Alberta Culture, the Alberta Law Foundation and Canada Council.

Send all correspondence to Box 4098, Edmonton, Alberta, T6E 4S8. Submissions should be typed, double-spaced and accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. We review unsolicited manuscripts from Canadian women only. Subscription rates in Canada, $6.00 per year, $11.00 for two years for individuals; $10.00 per year, $20.00 for two years for institutions. Add $1.00 per year for U.S. rates, $2.00 per year for overseas rates. Advertising rates available on request.
Back issues of *Branching Out* are available on microfilm from Micromedia Ltd., Box 34, Station S, Toronto M5M 4L6. The magazine is on file with the International Women's History Archive housed at the Special Collection Library, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL 60201.
Branching Out is a member of the Canadian Periodical Publishers' Association. The magazine is indexed in the *Canadian Periodical Index*.

Typesetting by Superior Typesetting Ltd.

Printed by Alpine Press, Edmonton.

Second Class Mail Registration Number 3517, Volume V, Number 2, 1978.
ISSN 0382 - 5264

letters

Theory for the Grass Roots

As a *Branching Out* addict, I read with great interest your article on women's studies in Volume V, Number 1, but I would like to correct the impression some readers may have received from van Daele's article that the *Canadian Newsletter* is dead. Far from it! The rumours of funding cuts were, alas, only too true; however, at the eleventh hour (literally) the Newsletter's funding was renewed by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Since that time we have been the delighted recipients of funding from two governmental groups. These funds, combined, will allow us to continue publishing for at least another year and to add a new editor, Carol Zavitz.

For those committed to the maintenance of a strong and active feminist presence in our universities, the latest rounds of funding allocations still present some serious problems. The Wollstoncraft research group at OISE has documented the dangers to women teachers in the school system of Ontario. Budget cuts, declining enrollments, economic unrest, disproportionately affect women at all levels of the educational system. For those who were funded, or those whose jobs are saved, the problem remains: how does one plan a programme which lacks even the semblance of stability? How much energy can we expend fighting cutbacks? (The *CNRW* case cost a small group of dedicated women and men nearly two months of fulltime work and it took five months to secure the funding for one year.) This has severely hampered our efforts to do good research and set back the special publication series by many months.

The programme of women's studies at OISE, an exciting effort which deserves to be better known, did not emerge unscathed; many of the early decisions were reversed or modified, often several times in fact, but at least two major projects did not survive. The funding for G.R.O.W. (Group for Research on Women) which had an international audience for its working papers on women's studies was terminated. The Women's Kit was axed.

Sheila Luck

On a more positive note, OISE has retained a variety of women's projects in history, psychology, and sociology which are active in the community as well as in the ivory tower. My experience at OISE suggests that it is dangerous to dichotomize "grass roots" feminism and academic feminism. A close look at the Toronto scene would suggest that the two are far more interwined than van Daele's article suggests. And with the indisputable presence of an intelligentsia in our society, I sleep better nights knowing that some of them are women speaking as women and for women.

Although the prognosis for women's studies in the universities wouldn't send anyone rushing to their stockbroker, the prospects for feminism are bright. In spite of the lack of support, access to women's courses from high school to graduate school has improved and the community colleges across Canada are taking an active role in this development. Centennial College will soon produce the first issue of *Canadian Women's Studies* under the editorship of Shelagh Wilkinson. Toronto has been the scene of movement activities at least monthly since last November when feminists united to protest the showing of Snuff in downtown Toronto. WAVAW, the group which coalesced during this period, has actively engaged the attention of the community in issues of violence against women. Women's Day was a huge success and Toronto has experienced a new wave of feminist speakers, famous and not-so-famous. At the nearby University of Waterloo a standing-room-only conference on women and potency drew community women from throughout Southern Ontario, and it was organized entirely by undergraduates!

Women in the universities have moved toward the development of analyses which can inform and ignite a wider women's movement — one which does not ignore the elderly, the housewife, the clerical worker, the adolescent. A "grass roots revival" will find a far more powerful theory than was available in the late sixties.

Jennifer L. Newton
Co-Editor, *CNRW*, Toronto

NOTE: For *Branching Out* readers who are unfamiliar with the *Canadian Newsletter*, we are an international, interdisciplinary journal of research on women.

For more information about our work write us c/o Department of Sociology, OISE, 252 Bloor Street W., Toronto M5S 1V6. ($7.00 per annum, institutions $15.00).

Writer Maligned?

I don't think writer Audrey Thomas got fair treatment from your reviewer, Karen Lawrence, in Volume V, Number 1.

It seems to me that sentences which dismiss an author's work in a few lines (badly-written, facile lines like "I have the feeling that Audrey Thomas saves up freaky images"; or "she asks a lot of 'whys' and doesn't come up with answers . . . many of the endings are simplistic or simply shabby") don't belong in a serious review unless they are substantiated, or balanced by some more-than-merely-ordinary insight into the work as a whole. This insight (some would call it "generosity") is missing in Lawrence's reviewing.

How is Lawrence able to write so blithely and self-indulgently about her own life (I recall the articles on *The Hite Report* and being a step-parent, last year), yet be uniformly unresponsive and disparaging toward other women's writing? How does this annoyingly obvious blind spot qualify her to be your featured reviewer again and again? (In the same issue, Diana S. Palting's review,

"Do We Need Avatars?" was much more engaging and thoughtful, but was tucked away under a miniscule ten-point headline).

You have some editorial responsibility to make sure that your reviewers are reasonably fair, to authors as well as readers. What, after all, are Lawrence's credentials — apart from apparent membership in the Canadian literary Mafia? Has she demonstrated some remarkable gift which sets her apart from thousands of people scribbling away in rooms across the country? I haven't seen any signs of it.

I have heard other women writers complain about Lawrence's cavalier hatchet work. I'm not advocating a cheerleading approach to women's writing — there's been enough of that already. But the critic should learn some elementary self-criticism.

Josephine Edgar, Ottawa

Book editor's note: We publish book reviews which we feel are perceptive and readable. Lawrence's review is balanced and critically acute; it points out Thomas' strengths as well as some of the technical problems in her writing.

Agony in the Schools

I was touched by Diana Palting's editorial in the last issue on the education of our children. I am a single mother and my own ineffective personal struggle with the schools is almost ended as my youngsters are 18 and 16. My attempts to find solutions to the concerns raised in your article were unsuccessful, partly because my efforts were too isolated. Recently I have discovered a possible answer in the Waldorf school system instituted in the early part of the century by Rudolf Steiner. These schools have increased in number throughout the world in the last decade. The rapid increase is, I believe, indicative of the need for a "true alternative".

About Lauren Dale's article on high schools: I think she was fooled by the trappings, confusing change with improvement. She states, "high school is mercifully less agonizing than it was." I suggest that she is able to make the statement simply because she is no longer oppressed by the schools. I imagine that she does not have any loved ones trapped by that particular oppressiveness either. Too often those who have escaped oppressive institutions publicly state that, after all, "this generation doesn't have it so bad." I think Lauren Dale, so glad to be a "survivor" and out of the system, was sadly duped.

Marlyn, J. Wall, Edmonton

A Lonely Fight

As you may know, as the only woman on the Justice and Legal Affairs Committee, I fought the exceptions in section 11 (on equal pay) and, as I recall, in section 16 (on pensions) [of the federal human rights bill; see *Branching Out*, July/August 1977.] Any discretionary power gives employers further power to discriminate. There are always rationalizations, as I learned in many years of trying to survive in a man's world, in one of the most chauvinist of professions, journalism. It was argued, however, that women's groups were satisfied with the Bill. I disagreed with that.

By the way, a man, White Anglo-Saxon Protestant, was chosen as Chairman of the Human Rights Commission. Also it is worth noting that most of the top jobs in Canada are still going to men. The 1.9 per cent of the management jobs held by women in government agencies, commissions and crown corporations is small progress. We seem not to be moving as quickly and as visibly as the women in the United States, who are so strong on affirmative action.

It is remarkable how often I have tried to get changes for women. (eg. Interpretation Act which refers to the male gender in all statutes, including crown management and directorship requirement.) Not one woman's group has moved to support me, help me, or lobby in this. Iona Campagnolo and I have discussed the fact that we have found ourselves very much alone in the fight in this world women have sought to share — policy making.

When I was on the Finance, Trade and Industry Committee, I asked those business leaders who appeared before us as an all male group of executives, how many women they had in management jobs. They responded with the excuse that there were no women available for the job. When the bankers' statement to this effect was published, I received mail from women who were qualified. However, I received not one piece of mail from a woman's group, saying: "We will join and help you in this fight".

As an observer for the Canadian government at Belgrade, the follow-up conference on the Helsinki Accord, I noted only one delegate (Holland's) out of more than 200 from 35 nations, was a woman. It was an appalling thing to have Iron Curtain countries argue for equality for women while they themselves did not have a single woman on the delegation. Every ambassador who was the leader of the delegation was male. We have not come a long way and unless women support those who have broken into the exclusive male policy-making areas, help those who should be elected to these crucial "clubs" — rather than being so absorbed in their own empires — we will slow up to a stop in some areas of our quest for dignity and equality.

Simma Holt, M.P.,
Vancouver-Kingsway

Magazine Found Wanting

I am a retired laboratory technologist now enjoying mothering two small girls, Christine (almost three) and Lora Jean (ten months). I found the transition from working wife to mother very difficult. This transition to motherhood has been termed matrescence by Dana Raphael in her wonderful book "The Tender Gift: Breastfeeding". Dana Raphael suggests that to ensure successful matrescence mothers need "doulas" or helpers to offer practical help and emotional support. This womanly caring for each other is a tender gift. In Canada today we find very few doulas and in particular your magazine gave me no help or support at all. You are not alone. I recently subscribed to *Chatelaine* and find it sadly lacking also. Luckily (for my children) I did find a group of mothers who are very happy and helpful, and am learning the secrets of satisfying motherhood.

I agree with you that women today need to be liberated. As I understand it most are seeking financial independence, but personally I seek to find my true biological identity separate from my cultural identity. The latter is a brief and changing thing tied closely to our industrial age. Behavior scientist Niles Newton, Ph.D., has done interesting research on women.

Good mothering requires much caring and total giving. Women who undertake this noble task must receive positive input and support. The grand results may liberate us all.

Lois Zadler, Edmonton, Alberta

ERROR

In our last issue we praised the Toronto YMCA as an agency attempting to serve all women (see *Back to Frills*, page 15). This was a mistake. Says author of the article, Janet Willis, "The YMCA does nothing in particular for women that I can determine. The YWCA on the other hand is absolutely first rate in the range and quality of its offerings."

DOES ART HAVE A SEX?

by
Cathy Hobart

Some art critics and historians contend that it is irrelevant to consider women's art as a legitimate genre because art has no sex. The sex of an artist probably is irrelevant in aesthetic evaluation. Good art is good regardless of the artist's sex, and artists of both sexes are equally capable of producing good art. This, however, does not exclude the possibility that artists of one sex are producing a different type of work. Art produced by women will be essentially identical to that of men only if there are no differences between the two sexes. Women are not the same as men: there are basic differences in social background and outlook which have a direct bearing on the type of art they produce. The recognition of this type is significant regardless of the overall quality of the work, and noting a distinction of type does not imply an evaluation.

In 1975, with the help of four others, I researched and documented the work of Canadian women artists from 1800 to the present. The material in Women's Work was collected in four ways. We wrote to over eight hundred women whose names were obtained from galleries, magazines and other artists, asking for slides and biographical material. We gathered information from files, clippings and questionaires in libraries and the National Public Archives. We visited women's shows at galleries, and taped interviews with several Ontario women artists. Lack of funds eventually brought the research to an end, but after one year the Women's Work material consisted of five hundred slides of work by women artists, the taped interviews, and notes on over two hundred artists who had not personally contributed slides. My observations about women's art are based on this body of information.

The collection shows that there is a type of work produced by women currently working in Canada that is different from men's art and is identifiable by three main characteristics: women's art deals with confines, women's art portrays specific human relationships, and women's art is narrative.

I do not maintain that all women artists do work that fits these characteristics all the time, or that a male artist never produces a work that exhibits similar characteristics. But the overwhelming amount of work by the majority of artists represented in the collection displays these three characteristics.

28 Maidens Happy by June Drutz

Is it "feminist art"? I would define feminist art as work that is designed primarily to educate the viewer about women's issues and to promote feminist causes. In the United States, particularly in California, there has been a trend towards feminist art. In 1970 Judy Chicago conducted the Feminist Art Program in Fresno, California. It was designed to assist women students in making art that explored their role as women in our society, and particularly in the women's movement. One year later in

Los Angeles Miriam Schapiro and Judy Chicago with the assistance of 25 women students rented and renovated a house and called it *Womanhouse*. The entire building was turned into an artwork which contained still more separate artworks including a *Crocheted Room, Menstruation Bathroom, Nurturant Kitchen* and more. One of the basic functions of *Womanhouse* was to make viewers sensitive to and aware of women's issues.

Certainly there are some works by Canadian women artists which could be described as feminist, but the majority of works produced are not designed primarily with the intention of producing political impact or educational value. Artists who are acknowledged feminists do not always produce feminist art. Maryon Kantaroff, a very vocal feminist for example said in a lecture at the Ontario College of Art, that her work underwent a radical change when she became involved in the women's movement. Like many women she had been afraid to make art that could be described as feminine. She avoided using curved lines, and produced only hard edged "strong" work. It is unfortunate that in order to be recognized women have usually had to make art that was imitative of men's art. Once the greatest compliment a woman artist could receive was "You paint like a man",-but this statement now seems insensitive and insulting to many women. The change in Kantaroff's work after her discovery of the women's movement is obvious. Her work now employs soft rounded lined and shapes, and represents a celebration rather than a denial of her womanhood, but its primary function is not educational.

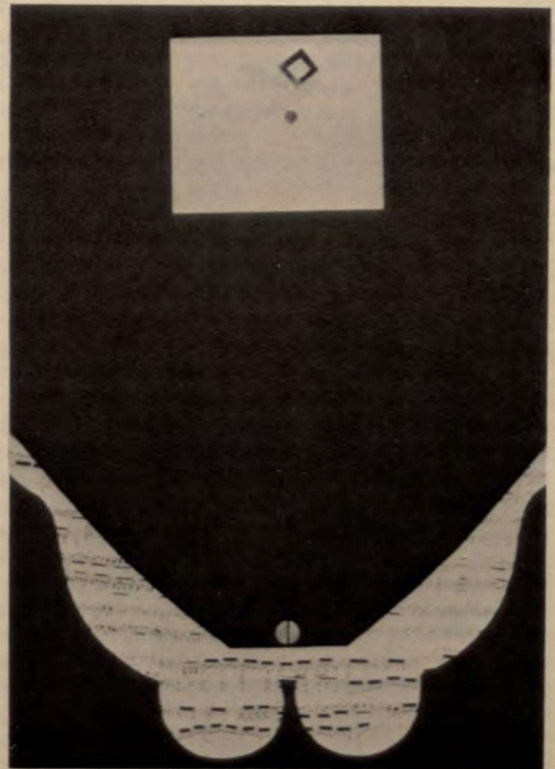
Combing by Mary Rawlyk

Although most of the work by Canadian women artists is not feminist art, it does dwell on subjects of particular concern to women. Artists make art about what interests them, and because women as a group are treated differently than men as a group, it is not surprising that women artists as a group produce work that represents their interests both in subject matter and approach and, given their position in society, that these are different from the concerns found in men's art.

The first of the recurring themes in women's art is confinement. Financial and family considerations force many women artists to work in the home, and the restrictions that this situation imposes on them is reflected in their choice of subject matter. Household imagery and body art are prevalent in women's work. Mary Rawlyk's prints of combs, irons, and pots, and Mary Pratt's photo realist paintings of food are typical. In looking at the work of both women the viewer is aware that domestic chores like ironing and cooking are not only time consuming, they occupy the artists' thoughts to such an extent that they become the subjects of their artworks.

In a great number of works depicting household scenes there is a window. The window; always seen from inside, elicits from the viewer associations of the distinction between the place "in here" and the world "out there". In Christiane Pflug's *Esther at the Kitchen Door* the viewer shares the point of view of the artist in a stark kitchen. Beyond the door is a beautiful summer day, and Esther, the artist's daughter is seated between the two worlds.

Everyone is in some way confined by her/his body, but women, who experience discrimination simply because of the sex of their bodies, are doubly confined. Women's body art most frequently deals with an exploration or assertion of identity. One performance piece by Suzy Lake consists of the artist painting her face white, and then drawing on a new one according to the instructions in a drawing manual. After a performance of this piece (January 1976) I spoke with Lake about themes in her work. She said that identity, as explored in the above mentioned piece, and confinement were among her particular concerns. The confinement theme was very evident in her show at the Art Gallery of Ontario (January 1978) which included a series of photographs of the artist bound and bagged.



Chevron D'Amour by Florence Vale

The second characteristic of women's art is that it frequently depicts specific human relationships. Portraits, families, romance, and sexuality are the subjects represented most often in theWomen's Work slides. Abstract approaches and subjects such as colourfield painting and minimal art

represented less than five per cent. Jane Martin's eerie group portraits, June Drutz' "Maidens", and Helen Lucas' *Relatives* explore the ties between mother and child, sisters, lovers and friends. Similar concerns are found in the works of Sylvia Murzyn, Judith Moser, Sarah Jackson, Francesca Vivenza, Susan Rivait and others.

Sexual relations were prevalent as a theme in many artists' work, such as Badana Zack's sensual, humorous sculptures of genetalia, and Florence Vale's erotic collages. Women have for so long been taught to hide their sexuality that the new freedom allowed by changing attitudes is now being joyously explored in women's art.

The third and most obvious characteristic of women's art I found in the material I collected is its narrative quality. A storytelling element, a progression or passing of time is present in much of women's art. Women have been allowed to be more vocal in recent years, and emerging from the years of silence they have a lot to say. Their strong desire to tell stories is evident through the large number of serial works, autobiographical works, and pictures of people in action.

Joyce Wieland's *Sailboat Tragedy* is a painting that reads much like a film. The boat moves from frame to frame, sometimes just passing momentarily out of view, but eventually sinks below the waterline. June Drutz' "Maiden" series also has a strong story element. In an interview for the Women's Work project she described her *Twenty-eight Maidens Happy* "because they each have their own apartment", *Four Maidens Sewing* "a wedding dress", and *Eight Maidens Waiting* "to be married".

constitutes a women's art, nor any factor which unites women artists". She is overlooking the obvious. The thing that unites women artists is that they are all women. It is from the differences between the sexes, including the different treatment they receive that women's art grows, and the material in Women's Work shows that such a type exists today.

Women's Work also provides evidence of the existence of a women's art in the past. In fact nearly half of the women who responded to the survey were over forty, and had been pursuing artistic careers for twenty years or more. Invisibility and lack of recognition have not prevented them from continuing to produce art. Since three quarters of the artists contacted by Women's Work responded by sending slides, letters and suggestions it is obvious that they are not content with obscurity and exclusion from the established art community. Lack of interest does not account for the absence of women artists in commercial and public galleries. Further public pressure will help end sexual discrimination in this area.

At the beginning of this article I sidestepped the problem of evaluating the artistic quality of women's art in order to first establish that there is such an art to be evaluated. On the basis of craftsmanship, design, success in communicating a concept, and social relevance, qualitatively women's art spans the same spectrum as men's. The overall body of work we collected is certainly of exhibitable quality.

As a type, the art produced by women in this era of considerable change and growth is of particular sociological importance. Women's art as it reflects women's current interests and concerns, stands as documentation of the women's

The Narrative Characteristic:
Emerging from years of silence, women have a lot to say!

An excellent example of narrative autobiography in women's art can be found in a series of prints by Elizabeth Forrest. The prints document stages of the artist's life from birth through love-struck teenage years, confusion and see her emerge as a confident capable adult. These works again are an exploration of the artist's identity as a woman and her position in society.

Seriality was a dominant characteristic of the work in the National Gallery of Canada's *Some Canadian Women Artists* exhibition in 1975. Mayo Graham, who organized and selected works for the show, indicates in the exhibition catalogue that she found this characteristic to be one of the most significant in her cross country survey of women's work.

Women have very real needs, and the women's movement has taken the direction that it has because it works to satisfy these needs. Directly or indirectly the movement has affected all of our lives, and its influence shows in our art.

Very few of the artists contacted called themselves "feminists" nevertheless there was a unity to the work which comes from the fact that all of the artists were women. The overall body of work presents a very strong, positive female view.

Joan Murray, director of the Robert McLaughlin Gallery in Oshawa, Ontario argues against the existence of a women's art (Globe and Mail, January 7, 1978). Ms. Murray states: "The fact is, there does not seem to be a body of work that

movement, and the study of the genre is important regardless of the quality of the work. Because the body of work that constitutes women's art meets the established standards of artistic excellence it will also represent an important art movement. There is no question that the type does exist, and history will establish women's art as a legitimate genre.

Cathy Hobart is a printmaker living in Toronto. She is engaged in discussions with the Toronto Public Library about donating the Women's Work material to their collection.

Women in Exhibition

The Politics of Pioneering Art Feminism on the Prairies

Winnipeg Committee for Women Artists Inc.
per Sharon Corne, president

During February 1975, a trip to the library of the public art gallery catapulted me from a previously sheltered existence into a series of public confrontations and a commitment to feminism which would drastically alter the course of my life. Reading the gallery newsletter I came across the following announcement by the women's auxiliary of the gallery of their project for International Women's Year:

> "In December, 1975, we will hang an exhibition demonstrating the Changing Role of Women Through Art . . . Through the paintings and prints and sculpture of 19C and 20C Canada, we will explore the ways women have been portrayed and perceived. While many galleries outside our province are participating in IWY by planning exhibitions of work of women artists, we feel our treatment, including the work of both female and male artists, is both original and stimulating."

As I read it, my excitement turned first to discomfort and then to anger. The gallery was going to use a $10,000 grant from the meagre coffers of IWY to celebrate men's stereotyped images of women. As almost no women artists were recognized before 1960, this would be a predominately male exhibition. The visual arts field is well documented as a male bastion where women's art has always been trivialized and rejected. Studies show that psychological and economic barriers still keep women artists from participating significantly in the art world. Any exhibit which would focus on men's work *about* women rather than on work *by* women would only reinforce the status quo.

I had avoided risks and confrontations all my life but now I felt compelled to do something. Group organization, political maneuvers or attempts at changing society were quite beyond my experience. My energies had been devoted to child care and housekeeping, then to completing a Fine Arts degree. It seemed obvious, however, that a support group should be recruited to meet with the gallery and correct the negative approach of their exhibition.

The response of women artists — from whom I anticipated unanimous support — was the beginning of my turbulent education. Refusals to support this "obvious" cause varied from, "I'm for people's liberation because men have a difficult time too", to, "Because the gallery may be including me in an exhibition soon, it would be impolite to criticize them." Eight women were interested enough to appear at my studio for a meeting in March. They were professional artists, university art teachers and people involved in the visual arts field. Naively, I assumed that once I had a group behind me, the gallery would hear our criticisms and gratefully reply, "Thank you for telling us. We will mend our ways." The group too, underestimated the complexity of the problem and the depth of the gallery's resistance to change.

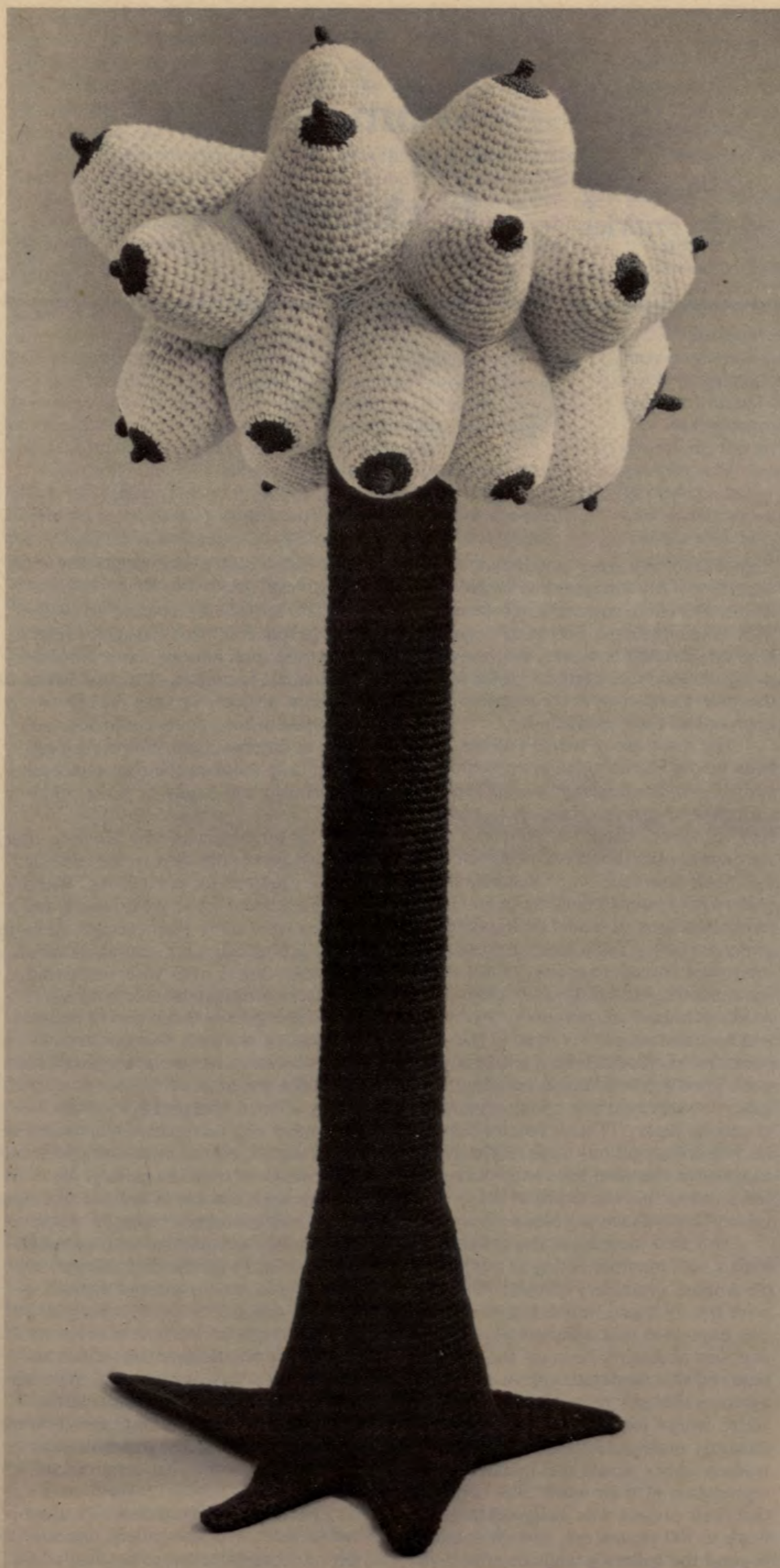
Our first meeting at the gallery was with a staff member acting as adviser for the women's auxiliary project. Our ideas were barely heard, much less welcomed. She explained that a historical perspective was necessary because the public required this moderate approach. While agreeing that any retrospect of 19thC and 20thC works would constitute a predominantly male exhibition she felt that women artists would feel insulted by the segregation of their work. She boasted that their project was designed to give work to 100 volunteers, as well as extend beyond the gallery's walls to affect women who would not normally come to the gallery.

The implication seemed to be that only people from this illustrious institution could really know about art or for that matter, feminism. She prodded us to join their project. To take part in an exhibition whose goals conflicted with those of International Women's Year would only validate their misconception. We refused and began to make other plans.

Our number was now down to four. Few women could devote the time or energy required for our efforts. The responsibilities of jobs, studio work and families were more than enough. Also, to publicly contradict an institution which has such control over your recognition and success demands enormous sacrifice. The gallery wondered about our diminishing numbers but, in view of these obstacles, we were surprised we still had a group at all.

It seemed that perhaps the endorsement of a recognized women's group would add status to our side in our confrontations with the gallery. My naivete again led me to believe that upon contact these women's groups would immediately sympathize with our plight and rush in. From the first delegate we hoped for at least a letter of support — this was refused. A call to a second group brought an indifferent reaction. Eventually we did find individuals and groups to endorse our protest. Whether or not they affected our status in the gallery's eyes became immaterial. What was important was the psychological effect on our somewhat demoralized group.

Feeling more confident, we attempted to meet with the gallery director. He felt our complaints were not really his



responsibility but that of the women's auxiliary, so we met the executive of that group in the gallery's board room, complete with chandeliers and luxurious carpets. Our suggestion of an exhibition of women's work was again rejected. We were challenged to organize our own exhibition in a small gallery or shopping mall. We explained that a lesser setting would immediately give us an unequal footing. "Why don't you ask the gallery for space here?" they suggested. The idea seemed bizarre but, at this time everything did. We went to see the gallery director. He agreed!

Then came the if's. A large gallery space would be available to us in late November if we could assume complete responsibility for co-ordinating, curating, financing, and publicizing the events. The 100 volunteers on the other project had the use of a paid adviser, office assistance and other valuable aids from the gallery, and we hoped to share these resources. However, our request for assistance was refused by the gallery because "this could best be handled by your group. This is really a matter of time rather than potential expense to your group". Our "group" foolhardily agreed to all these stipulations, which put so little value on our time.

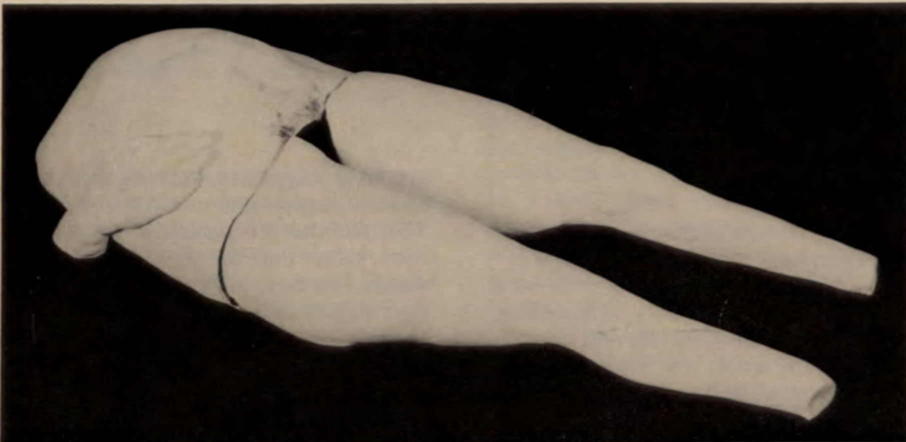
We thought the worst was over, but new issues continued to arise. The gallery director wished to exercise controls. A letter from him stated that "the two concerns I have are that the material be of suitable quality and that it be deemed acceptable within general social standards". He insisted on having veto power on the jurors or the works. He went on to insist that at least one juror be a "prominent community personality". One of his suggestions was the Minister of Public Works.

We were able to find a prominent community personality who had enough faith in our discretion to contribute his name to the jury, while allowing us a free hand.

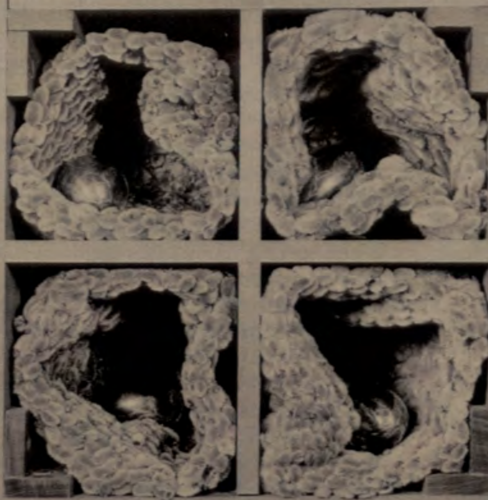
The first step on our agenda was an application for a federal grant. We decided on a juried exhibition in order to provide the opportunity to as many women as possible to exhibit in a prestigious public gallery. Our title was "Woman as Viewer", based on John Berger's book "Ways of Seeing". We wished to celebrate women's view of herself and her world, an aspect of life which has been constantly overlooked in mainstream art. Our two major criteria were quality and feminist content. The latter was an important but elusive objective as little information was available on contemporary women's art,

The Boob Tree by Phyllis Green, Vancouver.

Can-Can by Gemma Forliano, Montreal



Nude Lady No. 1 by Margaret Keelan, Saskatoon



Modular Nest by Lylian Klimek, Edmonton

Green Pepper by Nan Rowley, Ottawa

let alone feminist work. Our submission was sent off by the May 15th deadline to await a July 1st decision from Ottawa.

By the first week in August we had heard nothing. In mid-August, when all hope had been abandoned, a cheque arrived for $9500. We had lost 6 weeks on an already tight schedule, had a deficit of $8500, and were down to a staff of three. The other project with its 100 volunteers had begun organizing approximately 6 months earlier, with more than ample funds. With trepidation we decided to proceed.

My commitment to the feminist show was an enormous personal breakthrough for me. I had always succumbed to society's dictum that women's energies should be channeled into domesticity. Not only was I now undertaking a public risk, it was one which could easily fail.

Desperate for more funds, two of us made a brief foray into the corporate world. This brought some enlightening experiences, but no rewards. We then looked to the civic and provincial governments, suspecting that they had not contributed to IWY. We were right. Even though our schedule was running late, we continued to write more briefs and attend more meetings to procure funds.

At one finance meeting, we sat around a conference table attempting to describe our aims to an intimidating and unsympathetic group of men. The first question we were asked was what our profits would be. Fortunately, we had already learned what an invaluable help personal contacts are and had armed ourselves with two skilled advisers who knew this committee well. We finished our submission and retreated to the hallway to await their verdict. We were soon informed that we had been awarded $1000. We were thrilled. But the Grey Cup football float had received $11,000. Upon hearing this, our adviser became enraged. She charged back into the committee room and came back with $2500.

It was not until October that we received enough money to reasonably fund our project. Given the obstacles, some gallery personnel felt we could never complete the show. However, we found the basic organization of the exhibition was simple and pleasurable compared to years of housework. Our lack of experience in large galleries often gave us an advantage. We had, instead, experience in managing a home and children while attending classes which had taught us to juggle many taxing jobs. We brought a creativity to our approach which years of gallery experience can dull.

The group which we expected to

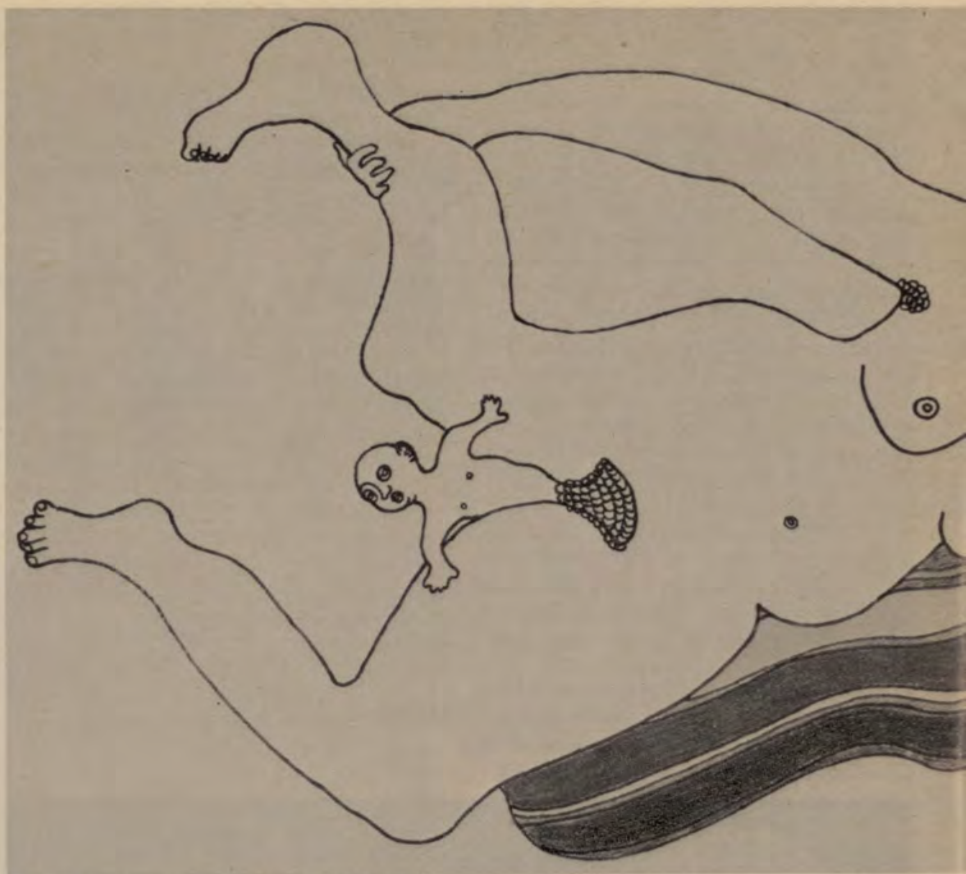
most appreciate our efforts was the artist community. About three weeks before the show opened, I received a call from a representative of a national artists' association, reprimanding us for not paying rental fees to our artists. We did not disagree with this new concept; nor did we have the required $2500. It seems they had not adequately communicated their policies to the artist community and most artists in our province did not belong to the group or fully understand these policies. We attempted to meet with the women in the Association to clarify some of the misunderstandings but they refused. One wrote me a scathing letter from her studio, accusing me of exploiting women artists. Ironically, at this point I was working 16 hours a day, 7 days a week and had long abandoned all my studio work. This association with its all male executive proceeded to mount a national attack on us, including denouncements on CBC radio, and the promise of boycotts and pickets to close the show. The attack was curtailed by the intervention of a sympathetic government agency which covered the rental fees.

Miraculously we would be ready for opening night. Our catalogue delivery was more precarious. At the last minute, the original printer refused it when he realized it included a male nude. Luckily we found another printer who was able to meet our deadline.

Opening night brought an enormous turnout, in spite of a mail strike. We had received good media coverage prior to the opening; response after the opening was overwhelming. The public did not seem to want a moderate approach after all. The show appealed to more people and a wider spectrum than we had ever anticipated. The Winnipeg Free Press gave it a full page. One of its critics, Katie Fitzrandolph wrote:

> . . . the gallery through no fault of its own has a winner on its hands. "Woman as Viewer", the protest show occupying two of its galleries is funny, witty, topical, and provocative. The gallery must be acutely embarrassed that its first real hit since moving . . . was organized by an ad hoc outside committee with no previous experience.
>
> The exhibition it was organized to protest, "Images of Women" is pale and sometimes vulgar by comparison with "Viewer". "Viewer" has proven that Winnipeg will visit the gallery in large numbers if offered a challenging and stimulating show. The gallery should swallow its pride and give thanks that such a show has arrived.

Since organizing the show "Woman as Viewer" Sharon Corne has written a report on discrimination against women artists in Manitoba. She attended a workshop at the Feminist Art Program in Los Angeles and paints in her studio.



Birth is Ennui by Sherri Lee, Winnipeg

by
Marilyn Baker

The *Women in Exhibition* show at the Janet Ian Cameron Gallery in Winnipeg coincided with an important event this year at the University of Manitoba: the annual Festival of Life and Learning. Many of the artists who were exhibited in the show as well as Trudi Heiman, the organizer, consider themselves feminists and the show reflected that orientation.

In contrast to the formalism of much contemporary art, feminist artists have asserted the importance of work derived from personal feelings, conflicts and desires. The written word on the surface of a work of art, though not confined to the feminist art movement, has become an important tool of much feminist expression today. In this exhibition, it was illustrated by the work of Sherri Lee. *Sitting in the House,* one of her ceramic pieces, has "Walking to my window and looking out my door wishing my good man would come home once more" written on the sides of the house, which contrasts with "Who needs em" written around the frame of one of the windows.

In this exhibition no distinctions were made between artists working with traditional craft materials and those using graphic techniques. There is good reason for this. Many feminists reject attitudes that have relegated traditional areas of women's expression to a lowly position. They feel that it is hierarchical distinctions, rather than the quality of the works, that have led historians to assume that women are insignificant contributors to the artistic record. Feminist artists and art historians have taken particular pride in the arts that women have excelled in in the past. They have asserted with considerable glee, for example, the superiority of anonymous quilt art, with its great complexities and subtleties, over recent abstract developments in North American art.

Though none of the women exhibited in this show work specifically in the traditional quilt techniques, Marsha Wineman's *Zipless Luck* of denim, zippers, lace and glove, and *Stuffed Shirt* of denim, hops and cotton, utilized materials and sewing techniques traditionally available to women as an artistic medium. Marilyn Foubert in *Bound Clit, Fibre Scape* and *Coarse Lips* used weaving materials to portray a subject matter that stretches the bounds of tradition as it comes to grips with feminist preoccupations. Diane Laluk uses clay as her medium for her life cast masks which, after modifications, she boldly decorates with feathers.

Many of the artists in this exhibition

a Review

Women in Exhibition

have no qualms about working in more than one medium. Sherri Lee's drawings were given equal prominence with her ceramic pieces. Ann Smith, though here she only exhibited her lovely and fanciful watercolors of animals, circus performers and trapeze artists, finds expression possible through a variety of media. She gets ideas for prints and drawings from the images which emerge from working in clay.

Sharon Corne has certainly been the most politically active feminist of the group in the show. Not only did she organize the protest show *Women as Viewer* at the Winnipeg Art Gallery, but she has been active in confronting the policy-makers of galleries and local granting agencies through her reports for the Provincial Council of Women. Sharon explores androgeny in her delicate line drawings and by so doing declares her interest in a theme that is of particular concern to feminists. As she explains it, her series in this exhibition grew out of an unconscious process in which she found herself trying to reconcile male and female qualities by using body images as symbols of the psychological extremes.

Pat Courtnage, a ceramic sculptor, feels that her experience in art school turned her towards feminism. Any illusions she may have had about her own delicacy and fragility had been quickly demolished when she found herself lugging hundred pound bags of clay about or defending her work in class reviews. *Untitled*, a clay head submerged in pebbles is a compelling image, first exhibited as part of an autobiographical show which included parts of her body in addition to the self portrait image which was exhibited here.

There are many who feel that in general women's art tends to be more introspective, autobiographical and personal than work done by men. Certainly in this exhibition there was some support for the notion. According to Nancy Edell much of her work is the result of personal introspection. Within the framework of a domestic environment, Nancy's characters often act out their terrible fantasies which, without the distortions of form and color, may still be terrible but not that unconventional after all. In one, a book worm type, male, whose body terminates in something other than a conventional head, reads avidly while viciously attacking the day's cleaning with a vacuum cleaner. To the left a female figure practices her yoga, possibly oblivious to the mad action going on around her.

Many of Sherri Lee's works are also set in a domestic environment where she deals with relationships: specifically her relationship with her sister, with her mother, and how women relate to their mirror, to each other and to men. For a long time she tried very hard to follow current abstract modes, she relates, yet in her heart she knew that all she ever wanted to do was "tell stories". Her first drawing that reflected the story telling interest was one called *Childbirth is Ennui* and was exhibited first in the *Woman as Viewer* show at the Winnipeg Art Gallery. It was her personal response to the title of a book called *Childbirth is Ecstasy* and the experience of watching a mother cat give birth to her kittens. The drawings in this show continued in the same vein. "They are more literal than imaginary" according to Sherri, but great liberties are taken with the material of her initial experience.

Working in ink and colored pencil *My Reflection in You* shows a male figure sleeping and a female figure resting on her arm while holding a mirror. Woman and her mirror is a traditional theme in art which was often used to illustrate the Vanitas theme. Feminists feel that within the framework of the contemporary female experience this theme has particular symbolic force. One of Nancy Edell's fantastic female creatures peers ambiguously in the mirror while Sherri Lee's *Lindy's First Unfinished Drawing* is but another variation on the theme. "The mirror in Lindy's hand is empty because the reflection is never good enough" writes Sherri Lee on the surface of this work. For many feminists the woman and her mirror stand for the tyranny of appearance that has so enslaved women throughout the centuries. It is a powerful image given force by its connections with the Vanitas theme and its traditional connotations of death and the passage of time. In Lee's work it is a visual exploration of the theme of female insecurity.

An exuberant monoprint by Lorraine Zeyha titled *Trees* includes figures of men and women luxuriating in a natural landscape. A large piece, 51" x 84½", it provided a focal point around which were grouped the works of the other women in the show.

Most of the artists in the *Women in Exhibition* show consider themselves feminists or are sympathetic to the movement. That they were comfortable within the context of an all-women show affirms the validity of such an exhibition. Since one of the major problems confronting contemporary women artists is the difficulty of obtaining exhibition opportunities, this show was an appropriate response to the feminist theme of this year's Festival. It provided space for artists who do not have extensive exhibition records, but whose work, by virtue of its obvious quality, deserves exposure. Both artists and organizers are to be congratulated.

Marilyn Baker teaches Art History at the School of Art, University of Manitoba and is currently chairperson of the Art History area. For the last three years she has taught a seminar on women artists.

Marian Engel
Beyond Kitchen Sink Realism

**Marion Engel interviewed
by Aritha van Herk and Diana Palting
photo by Diana Palting**

With her novel, *Bear*, Marian Engel pushes Canadian literature in a new direction. *Bear* shows us a world that is possible rather than probable, and that awareness of something beyond strict actuality must shake us out of the turgid realism that we so often see reflected in the Canadian novel. In *Bear*, rather than portraying a hostile environment, Engel forces us to look at life with a new eye and a new awareness of the possibilities inherent in our surroundings.

The main character's journey toward self-awareness is a journey for us all. Because she comes to an understanding of the magical quality of even common things, we are moved into a physical and emotional world that is fantastic, but plausible, a world that presents a definite alternative to our carefully structured and restrictive preconceptions.

In *Bear*, Marian Engel has created a masterpiece. She is now considered to be one of Canada's best writers.

Marian: What kind of an interview is this?

Aritha: *It's an interview about you as a woman and an artist/writer.*

Vicious personal stuff, right! Well, that's the best kind. But don't always expect me to tell the truth. I often lie to interviewers.

Of course. Isn't that part of being a fiction writer?

Yes. I have to protect myself just enough.

But as a woman and a writer, you feel vulnerable?

Oh yes, although you develop callouses after a while. But you're terribly vulnerable and exposed, even when people think you have a turtle's shell. It's a part of the risk you have to be willing to take.

How do you feel about reviews of your work – do you take them seriously?

It depends on what kind of press you get how you feel about it. You can be really gracious, regardless of what they say, as Margaret Laurence manages to be. I take what I want out of reviews. I love the good ones, and don't re-read the bad ones. You have to remember that reviews are first impressions.

"Women's problem's can be very saleable. You create a woman, put her in a female dilemma and that's two months rent."

How do you feel about being a woman and an artist now?

Well, generally this is a very good time for women writers. People are becoming interested in what women have to say and how they say it. Women are exploring and doing innovative things, especially in fiction. There have always been "lady" novelists — but from the fifties, serious women writers have emerged. Women are allowed a wider range of subjects. It is exciting to have that kind of competition. The range of subject matter is so much broader. How far can you go with chronicles of women's lives? My biggest complaint is that I often feel that my work is not taken seriously by the critics.

If you feel you're not taken seriously, it must be more difficult to be a writer.

It is, but in another sense, one is lucky to be a writer, because there's a particular tradition of women being writers that goes a long way back. For instance, it's easier than becoming a recognized composer now.

Do you enjoy being a writer?

That question has two sides. First of all, when my work goes badly, it's awful. But when it goes well — yes, I do enjoy it. The other aspect of it is that it is an isolated life — a writer works alone. Then, too, there is a certain kind of myth built up about writers. People say that writers are a bit strange, or that they're drinkers. That's a myth. We do make forays into the world — occasionally.

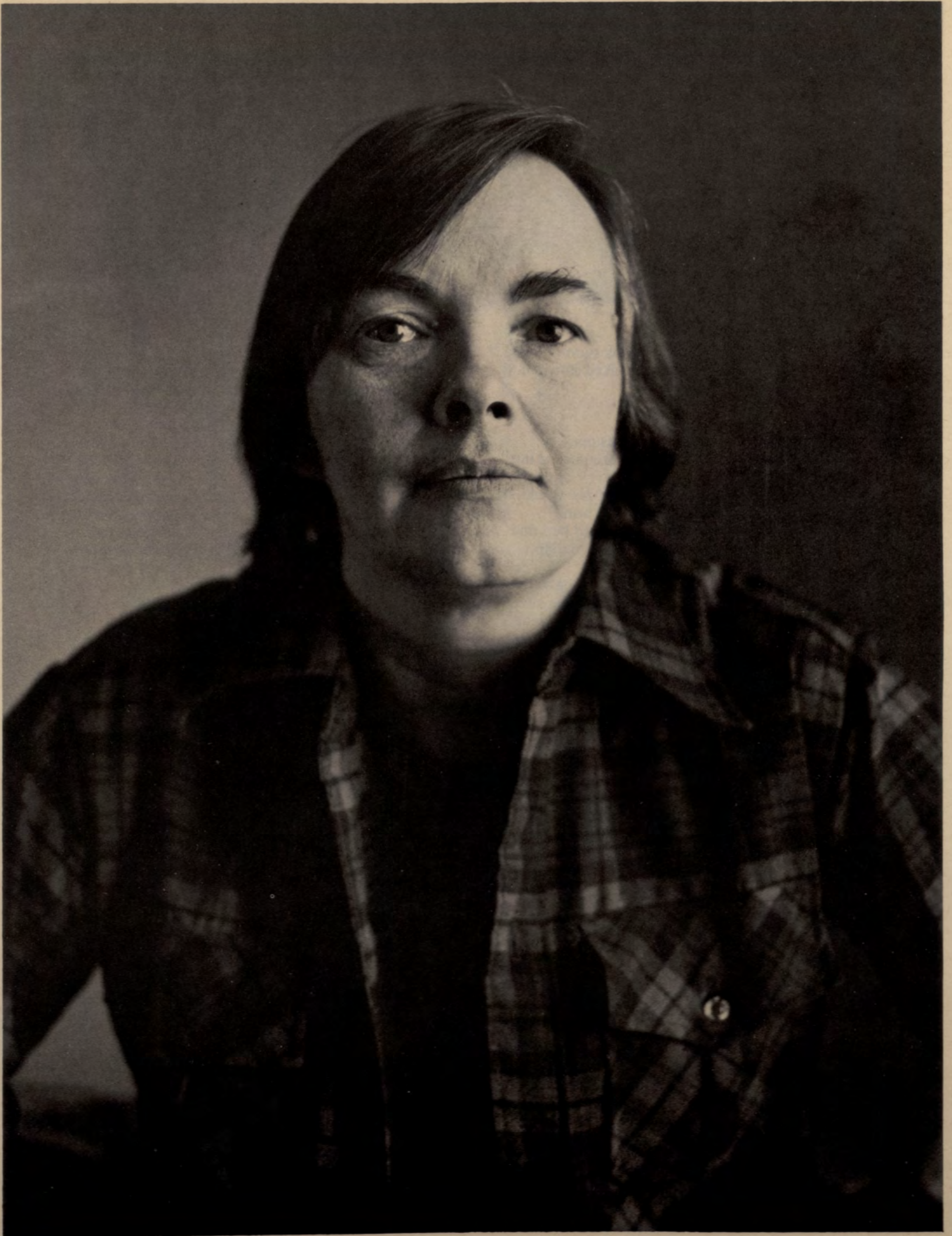
What made you become a writer?

I don't know really. I suspect it was because my mother owned a typewriter. Later, I wanted to drop academia and go out and be a journalist. Maybe I was trying to cut loose from the Victorian thing that dominated my childhood. A more interesting question is what causes some people to keep on writing and others to quit. What is the difference? The answer is probably background and training. Some people who quit simply want other things as well.

Do you want other things?

Not really. I'm too much of a monomaniac. Maybe if I could draw.

continued on page 40



The Ring

fiction by Cathy Ford
excerpt from "Moon in my Belly"
illustration by Irene Klar

After breakfast, Nana said, "Come into my room, Magda."

She took Grandmother's arm and they walked slowly into the old woman's bedroom.

"Do I lean too heavy."

"No."

The blinds were down, but one window was open, supported by a yellow flower vase. A light breeze pushed into the room.

"Another spring and half the summer past," Nana said. "I want to sit at my writing desk. You can let go my arm."

Nana pulled the slender frame oak chair toward her, and reached to the edge of the desk as if for balance. She didn't touch the desk, but sat down.

She watched Nana's movements without speaking or offering to help. On Grandmother's left hand were three silver rings. The backs, Magda knew, were worn thin against Nana's palm. All silver rings. All red stones, all cut in different shapes, a diamond, a square-cut, a heart. It was a hot day already. The wind lifted the blind, the sunlight dancing across the ruby of the old rings. Grandmother opened the velvet-lined box.

Red stone, red velvet lining, woman's body and blood. A thing accustomed, a childhood ancient and full. Now.

No. It was panic in the night, the pain or fear or blood. Is that what they waited for, those two tight women, too corset tight, month to month, year to year, waited, woman for woman. Watched for Magda jealously and smug. And once Magda had it, unannounced, unasked, she knew, in part, why they watched her. Watched, but did not tell, inform, teach. Taught obedience, acquiescence, not the knowing. Never taught what she needed to know. She was afraid, but Nana didn't tell, promised never to, to crying deep in the night, blood on the nightgown. Red red, darker and lighter, and warm hands over the smooth skin. A promise kept, a secret let go.

"Nana, Nana," whispering, running, that ache there. "What is it? Am I going to die?"

"Blood, child, only blood," the old woman said. Tears in her eyes.

Never white again. It could happen anywhere. The pain she couldn't stand against came after, once begun. Only the first time did she bleed easily, in her sleep, unnoticed. After that she knew what was coming by the pain. But she was always sure, it would happen again, like the first time. A fear, loathing, that intoxicated like one glass, burgundy, at Christmas. Only wear dark colors, black or red, blood red, or what can hide it. Never the stain again on sheets, white sheets and the gown, ruined, lace.

"Wash it out," Nana said. "No one will know. Quick. It's cold."

The red in it, late in the night. The old woman and the young, close, out of breath.

"I'll tell you what it means."

The lace collared gown hung over the end of her bed. Dried stiff, and not quite clean. She buried it in the bottom drawer. Under tissue-covered, hand-tinted photographs, and crayoned scrapbooks. The sheets she slept with, humiliated, three days folded hard at the base of the bed, red darkness hidden in the center. Then carried three down, a clean one, white and the same, over the others. Threw the worst of the stained, proof, in the wood kitchen furnace blaze, hell against her face. Slammed the stove shut, leaned against the dining room door until she was positive, then ran the two remaining sheets to the wash-house. The one soiled slightly, top, changed once in two weeks, soaked in the usual Magda skin scent and dust, bloodstained by implication only. She put it in the bottom of the basket. No one mentioned it, it looked no different than the rest.

She never allowed her body again to embarrass, murder her sleep. What she was helpless against, she kept to herself, pretended to the outside that nothing had occurred. No one knew, except Nana. Magda grew a little stronger. The sheet wasn't missed.

She dyed all her underclothes. Red, or the darkest, richest purple tinting, and some black, sure. She worried still, the rest of life, for that body wet paranoia to strike, despite all patterns or calendars. It came, it came, it came. She thought she was alone. She knew she couldn't be. She began to have nightmares worse than ever, now she was always pursued, never pursuing. And never admitted.

The train pulled out slowly hissing steam and shouting well wishers she was walking carefully hands out to balance down the aisle looking for her seat it was still there was no one in the car but her she clutched the canvas bag to her chest and prayed fervently for sleep real sleep for safe obnoxious middle aged women she turned at the sound of them

no sound

entering the three men entering dark eyes and she knew she turned around fast too fast for the window there they were facing her yes four reflections no she reacted so slowly perhaps not at all she was reflected too in the glass one and three perhaps not at all weak and certain they three tore off her clothes those six large thick veined hands rough and sometimes over the mouth

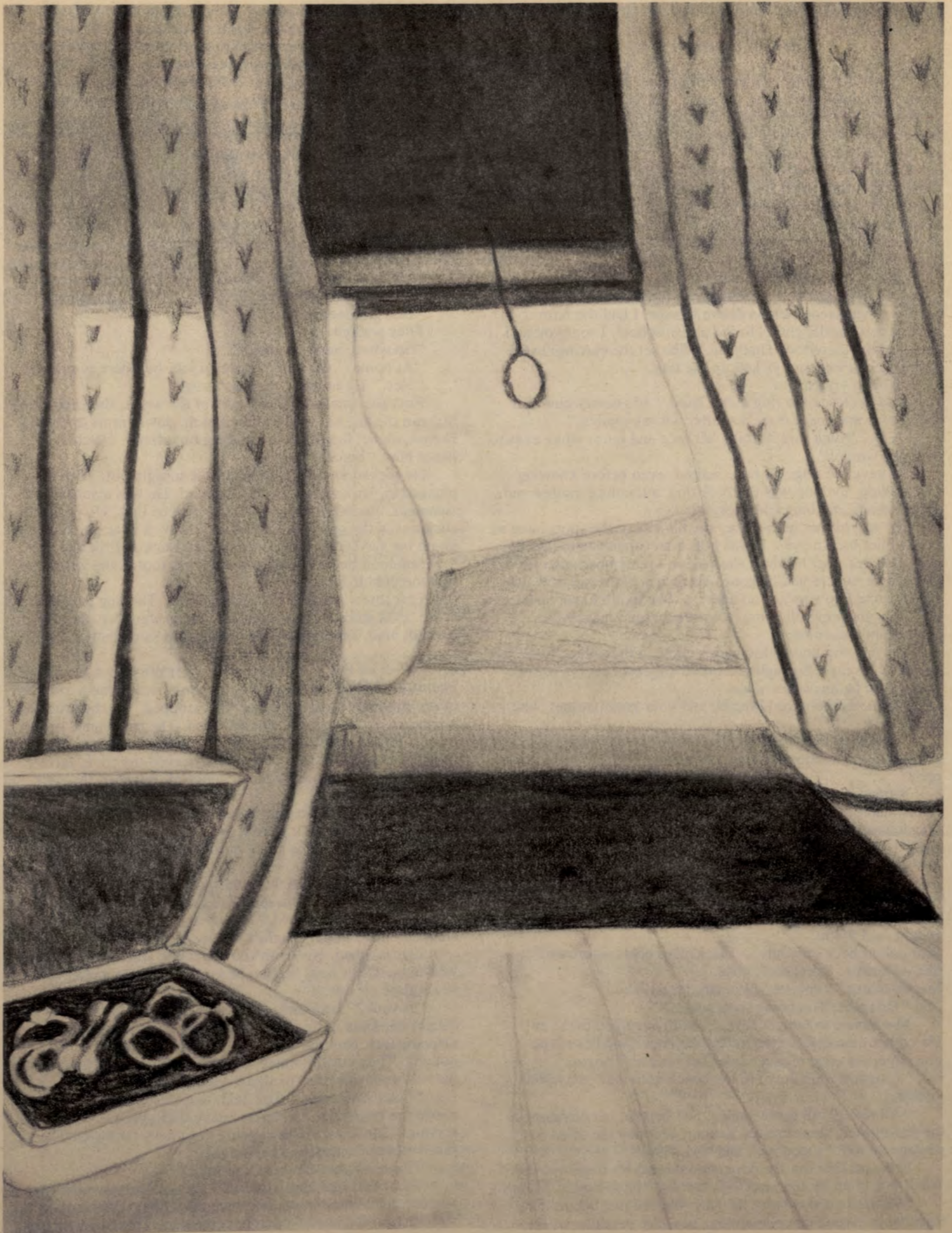
they ripped the sleeves

off the thin dress laughing

why she

dreamt it again

she learned early to throw herself out of bed, the ability to stop a dream she could not separate from dreaming, every month, or the other ones. How many there could be. She knew them, claustrophobic shadows, closing, woke herself so



hopeful, that it couldn't be true. Wake up, they'll go away, and still the fear.

* * *

"I don't like gold," Grandmother said. The velvet smooth inside, the blood stone ring, the star. "And I find diamonds so chilling." She picked up a pair of diamond earrings, grown dull in the velvet box, the gold turned dirty bronze. The diamonds set off cold fire, dazzling.

"This box has always been for things I have acquired, things that aren't really mine, at least I don't feel they are," Nana said. "I was just widowed when the priest then in the village gave me these. He thought he'd marry me. He thought diamonds were a nice beginning," a faint smile smoothed her lips.

"Have you ever worn them?"

"No. You know, I've been alone for years — I already had been — in that sense a man doesn't know. I had the farm. I have. I sent my daughters to the parish school. I sent you and your brother there too. That's all." She set the earrings in the bottom of the box and picked up the ring.

"This is yours."

Magda closed the ring in her hand, "It's nearly nine. I'll walk down and see if there's a letter. Or my grades."

"Yes," Nana said, turning her face and burnt white eyes to the open window.

To have the ring. To have waited, even before knowing was waiting, the ring was there. A ring, a touch of mother and father, nearly, nothing and everything.

The sun hit her in the face, she blinked at the spots hung in front of her brown eyes. It was hot, hotter than yesterday. She walked faster. Her brother, she couldn't remember what he looked like, where had he gone. She had written and said she would come. He was just an address. She didn't expect a letter back, but she was still going, somewhere, and maybe the application had come.

She'd never known the man's name in the village store, but she liked his face, his high and broad cheekbones, his warm voice. And he knew her name.

"Something for you Magda, and your grandmother," he smiled.

She smiled back, but her hand shook as she took the heavy brown envelope. Stop shaking all the time. "Could I use your pen?"

Ripped open the envelope — it came — and filled in the forms, name, surname. She inked it in blackly, then Magda. Magdalena.
Age.
Address.
Date of birth — March 7.
Place of birth. In mother, from Mother, of Mother.
Citizenship.
Height — 5 ft 4 in.
Hair color check one only — black. Eye color — brown.
Sex — female. Eyes, ears, nose.
Marital status — spinster. Woman, virgin, child.

"Passport. You going somewhere?"

She turned to look at Erik. "I didn't see you come in." Hated her discomfort. She folded the paper and licked the envelope, the edge of glue under her tongue. Tongue.

"Can you walk down to the beach with me?" he asked, smiled.

"All right." All those smiles. She handed her envelope to the postmaster, store master, keeper, dropped the coins for postage on top. "Goodbye" she said.

Erik was first out the door, he snapped his fingers at the black dog lying by the step. "Come on," he tossed at Magda,

She warmed slowly by the sun. Walked just behind Erik, their hands swung complimentary, separate pendulums. He was, she thought, everywhere tugged gently forward by his penis. Male. Marital status. She had never seen her brother naked. Gertrude had changed him and bathed him when her mother couldn't, when he was sick that time. And Gertrude made sure Magda wasn't allowed in the room. Curious. She blushed. Encyclopedia, medical. His eyes on her brown legs as he turned and paused.

Books read. Words in her head that never connected, some that always did. The only defense, she loved to read. The hero and the heroine. The heroine and the hero.

"I take my dog to the ocean every day," Erik said.

She answered nothing. She felt the hot sun, clay dust of the road over her light shoes. Her hands perspired. Grandmother's letter safe in the pocket of her skirt, pressed out a square line above her hip bone.

He looked at her. She looked away. The dog bounced, loose jointed, between them. She said, "What's its name?"

"Doesn't need a name."

They walked.

"So where have you been?"

"At home," she said. "I need a job, but there is nothing."

"Yes." He nodded, an afterthought.

First she smelled the cold wet of the water, then she saw it. She ran the last hill to the rocky beach, down, arms open wide. Forgot, alone, forgotten. To come more often. "Fetch," she heard him, "Fetch!"

He picked up a stick and threw it straight out. The dog plunged in, barking and swimming hard. He was a strong swimmer, circled in and raced the beach to Erik. He pulled the stick out of the great black jaws and threw it in again. The dog swam out farther, back in, dropped the stick at Erik's feet.

She took one shoe off and stuck her foot in the water. It was too cold to swim.

Erik threw another stick into the sea. The dog panted to shore. Erik jerked the stick back over his shoulder, the dog barked, mad, and flew into the surf in the same motion as the toss.

She dried her foot on the hem of her dress, put her shoe on. She wandered up the shore, but couldn't escape the harsh bark of the shivering black retriever. She stopped, watched the dog return, swim out, return. She felt tired. The sun leaned on her eyes, a glass paperweight.

The dog wouldn't give up. Erik heaved the stick, farther. The dog barked, yelped protest, coughed, returned the stick. Again.

She counted the barks. When the dog reached shore, stick clamped in its mouth, it gave a shake, sprayed water all over Erik. He teased the dog twice more with its well-earned prize before Magda acted.

"It'll be nine if you throw it," she shouted. "Or ten. I'll stand on this rock and screech like a madwoman if you send that dog in again. It's cold." She clenched her teeth, growled, stepped onto a large, beached log, faced the sea, pawing the air.

Erik laughed. His teeth showed white and even. His face well-tanned. His hair, black, she knew, but spun amber in the sun's glare.

"A walk?" he asked, voice socially polite, offered his arm, caught her hand in his. She said nothing. The black dog, dripping wet, panting, trotted at Erik's side. Magda said nothing. They left the water shimmering brocade behind them, the salt waves crashed to shore again and again.

"I like your eyes," Erik said, and kissed her. They moved above the beach into the trees, heavy with green leaves, leavings. She knew she was going to go very far away. The throb of the waves faded behind them.

"Take off your clothes," he said.

Then, that moment. Unafraid. Please. Her newness. She wanted, him, she, the sea he swam into. She, a tide motion movement. The introduction to ceremony. Touched with the

fingers, the palm, tongue, teeth. Mouths, open into. Anticipated, created the full, final waiting, the sea, the body, the harbour. Waited, later, for those warm red lifeboats between her thighs. She kept watch even now, exchange for a morning. Not afraid.

She stepped out of her shoes. She unbuttoned the soft green dress to the waist, then pulled it over her head.

"Off" he whispered.

She dropped satin on the cotton dress. The lace of her slip shone clear yellow in the minnow flickering sunlight. The wind from the water sang into the branches overhead. She looked at him with steady eyes.

Easy. Must be, will be. The tide on the beach from the ocean men sometimes call she. The hope his sea walls weren't made of broken stone, cut or jagged. Open.

"I'll shut my eyes," she said. She heard his clothes fall, opened, his hand cool on her shoulder.

The black dog whined, deep in its throat.

"Quiet," Erik said.

Cathy Ford has had three books of poetry published and her work has appeared in small magazines in Canada and the U.S. She edited the Canadian Short Fiction Anthology, 1976 *published by Intermedia Press. The above piece is excerpted from her first novel,* Moon In My Belly *which she completed last November. She lives on Mayne Island, B.C.*

Irene Klar is an Edmonton artist.

WINTER SONG

Friend of my winter bed
in these grey hours
your flesh grows so gently
into my flesh
that we are like two trees
locked fast together
branch and root.
We are those two grey thorns upon the hill
skeletons of trees under the gaunt stars
the sun's cold eye.
Not for us the hard itch of the seed
beneath the skin
the soft fruit that is eaten
by the white wind.
We endure, we two.
Though we offer no sacraments to the spring
in the heartwood, in the marrow of the bone
the slow stubborn pulse goes on.

Eileen Kernaghan

Eileen Kernaghan's poetry has appeared in Northern Journey, Room of One's Own *and* Canadian Review. *She has had a science fiction novelette published in* Galaxy *magazine and she co-authored a writer's guide for the Northwest published in 1975. She lives in Burnaby, B.C.*

Arabesque

choreography and dance by Diane Carriere
photography by Danielle Bouchard

Arabesque is an example of the "visual poetry" created by Diane Carriere and Danielle Bouchard of Montreal. In their work, the two women strive to create photographic sequences that show the various faces and turns of evolving feelings.

Diane creates the scenario, rehearses or directs the movement phases and designs the presentation format. Danielle selects films, sets up lighting and does film processing. They often work with a dance group "Amarelle" based at the University of Montreal. Presentation of the photographs — in fans, puzzles, mobiles, card games and other special arrangements — invites interaction with the viewer.

Nothing Will Ever Shatter Me
(for Joan Walls)

Braids coiled above ruddy cheeks
you talk of London in wartime.
We travel with you
to a Strand Palace black velvet ball
and the first bomb.
We spend that stunned night with you, eyes wide,
stretched beside three others
across a single bed.
Two children alone
woke when another bomb fell
near where you lived by the sea.
It skittered through their house,
exploded outside,
left them breathing, terrified, alive.
We laugh with you
at Davy's comment "I heard the bugger coming
and pulled the sheet over my head."
We see you and other women
driving dark winding Lake Country roads
delivering transport lorries to encamped soldiers.
One woman lurched
over the side of a mountain road;
she kept going to maintain schedule.
No lights, driving through snow,
tire chains beating patterns,
rhythms inside your head,
you drove to the sea.
Awake all night, wearing rough khaki pants
women kept lorries supplied.
Coventry rage engulfs us now
in this room years and miles away.
"Nothing will ever shatter me," you say.
The calm of the Dunkirk sea fills your face.

Mary Anne Erickson

Mary Anne Erickson is part of the Everywomans Books collective which operates a feminist bookstore in Victoria, B.C. She also works in a large bookstore in downtown Victoria. This is her first published poem.

films

Innovators in Animation

by Barbara Halpern Martineau

> A significant difference in our animation staff in recent times has been in the number of excellent women animators now working with us . . . The colleges have fostered a wider range of animation techniques because the problems of cel animation production often seem overwhelming and mechanical to college students who generally want a more immediate and direct approach to the animation camera. Women have picked up on this and we are benefiting . . .
>
> —Derek Lamb, head of English-language Animation, NFB, Montreal, quoted in *Millimeter*, May, 1977.

Women have not been widely eminent in cel animation, which produces what we know as cartoons — neither has it been a strong point of Canadian film production. But experimental animation, a field of pride for Canadians, has from the start attracted the talents and energy of creative women. When I was approached to do an article for an American anthology on cartoon animation, from my perspective as a feminist film critic in Canada, it soon became clear that the National Film Board in Montreal was the place to go, and that the first question to explore would be: why do women animators in Canada choose to work primarily in experimental rather than cel animation?*

I interviewed five women working in English-language animation at the NFB: Ellen Besen, Joyce Borenstein, Caroline Leaf, Lynn Smith, and Veronika Soul. All but Caroline Leaf, who is on staff, are free-lancers; Ellen Besen is a cartoonist and the other four are experimental animators. Because these women work in such close proximity, are influenced by each other, and mention each other in speaking about their work, I constructed from their responses a conversation which never actually happened, but might have.

* The consensus among the women I spoke to was that experimental animation means working directly under the camera or on the celluloid film itself, while cartoon animation involves work which is prepared ahead of time for the camera, drawings on acetate or paper cels which are then shot according to a prepared plan. The actual shooting may be done by someone other than the original animator.

Ellen Besen is working now on a film called *Sea Dream*, about the fantasy of a little girl, with music by Beverley Glenn-Copeland and Sharon Smith, based on a poem by Debbie Bojman.

Ellen Besen:

> It's a fairly controlled method of film making — I find my most creative stage is when I'm doing the storyboard and from then on . . . it's more than mechanical, but the most fluid time of the film is at the very beginning and after that it becomes progressively more set. The storyboard is like a blueprint for the visuals, while the timing is determined by the soundtrack . . . I prefer cartoon animation — dealing with multiple drawings — to working directly under the camera.

Caroline Leaf's film *The Street* (1976), made by painting with tempera colors on glass, was nominated for an Academy Award.

above: sketch of Ellen Bessen by Lynn Smith
below: storyboard for film Traveller's Palm *by Joyce Borenstein, poem by P.K. Page. Produced by the National Film Board.*

Caroline Leaf:

The reason I always work under the camera is that it seems most directly connected to film. My images are immediately recorded on film so the motion created in the sequence of drawings becomes film motion without any intermediate stages. Traditional cel animation technique is confusing to me. There are sheets of paper to draw on and keep track of, images are broken into parts according to how and when they move, and sequences are constructed in layers; they are copied onto transparent acetates and in a later stage colored in — it gets too far away from film and the camera.

Joyce Borenstein is now working on her fifth film at the NFB. Her films, which have won many awards, use drawings, photographs, and clay animation.

Joyce Borenstein:

My approach to animation has always been as an individual working alone or in small groups. Although I create an elaborate storyboard in planning a film, I let the film evolve as it is worked on, so there is an element of chance, of discovery, both in the making of the film and in the viewing. But with cartoon animation I find this unpredicatability lacking. Everything must be determined to the last detail before production begins because of the large crew involved and the huge budget. The whimsicality of the medium is at its greatest when one animates directly under the camera — my last film *Traveller's Palm* (1975) was done with this method, animating bas-relief sculptures under the camera.

Lynn Smith is working on a sponsored film about museums, a fantasy in which a night watchman is escorted by a matter-of-fact Muse around a museum and introduced to the life behind the objects. For this she is using an entirely new technique which combines pastel drawings on sandpaper with color Xeroxes of museum objects.

Lynn Smith:

I prefer to work directly under the camera, which is how I'm working now — this time in pastels. I'm drawing and erasing essentially on the same sheet of paper, filming the changes (sometimes the erasures as well as the newly drawn positions). I use a durable paper which looks like sandpaper and works well with chalk, also a lighter weight charcoal paper which happily goes through the color Xerox machine. Color Xerox allows me to record recognizable images from museums. So a type of collage technique has evolved in which real known museum objects appear with pastel drawings. I'm able to draw or build an image over the xeroxed areas and continue to animate, or I can draw in pastel and erase down to a concealed color Xerox; or animate in pastel while glimpses of Xerox show through. Working directly in this way doesn't permit much checking, whereas in cel animation you can check at different points, by flipping your drawings, by shooting a black-and-white line test before coloring in; and you can make corrections without having to go back to the beginning.

above: sketches of Caroline Leaf and Joyce Borenstein by Lynn Smith; sketch of Lynn Smith by Caroline Leaf.
below: Sea Dream *(in progress) by Ellen Besen. Scenes from* The Street *and* The Owl Who Married the Goose *by Caroline Leaf.*

So why work directly under the camera at all? Maybe because during the actual animating process the experience is more intense. What you are doing right there and then — decisions about color, placement, expressions, design — is what's going to be on film. And I feel the final result often has a special, more lively energy than animation done in stages.

Veronika Soul, of all the women interviewed, is most clearly an experimental animator well outside the bounds of cartoon animation. I asked her what materials she uses.

above: sketch of Veronika Soul by Lynn Smith

Veronika Soul:
Everything. I'm inspired by garbage, leftovers, by being incapacitated, by not having equipment, by not knowing what it is that I do, by not understanding light . . . All that I know roughly is how very simple equipment works, the less complicated it is the better. In other words I like to work as a deprived person. I like to work without an animation stand, without, what do you call them, registration bars. I like to move things very loosely or to hold them by hand. If I need to anchor anything I use scotch tape and pinholes. I love to make mistakes and I like to take advantage of mistakes and lack of control. Once you plot out a move and it's all charted, the work becomes incredibly static. But I think if you work at a real low garbage level, there's wonderful energy and spontaneity in the film that can't be gotten in any other way.

Right now I'm interested in using paper as slides, coloring paper and using Xerox and shooting light through it. I'm interested in combining all film forms, like live material, slides, still photographs, negatives, making my own slides, working with animating areas of dark and light, animating with colored light, using all these things combined and also working under an animation stand, but very minimally, as a basis to be used with other things.

Joyce Borenstein:
Although I vary my techniques according to the demands of each film, I enjoy working with clay most of all. Strong chiaroscuro effects can be created more easily than with drawn animation, simply by changing the angle and/or intensity of the lighting.

Lynn Smith:
I'm making motion with imagery which requires a certain way of thinking in order to make them move. The cartoonists have another way of drawing things, the way they do their curves and their feelings for circular, three-dimensional objects is not exactly the way I see things.

Veronika Soul:
Cartoon animation doesn't excite me. It is visually flat and boring. There is nothing in it that's real to me . . . so immediately there's a separation between what's happening on the screen and real life. Cartoon life treats real life with a low-brow attitude. There's no finesse, intellect, passion, mystery. Cartoon animation is the one film form which cannot touch me . . . All the fantastic cartoons are the early ones when people were just discovering what you could do with drawing in motion.

You said before that it's insulting to women especially.

Veronika Soul:
Yes, because when I think of cartoon animation the only thing I think of is stereotypes. Every character is a stereotype, and every situation is a stereotyped situation. I can't relate to that kind of thing. It's insulting not just to women but to everyone.

What do you see yourself generally doing in your films?

Caroline Leaf:
I'm interested in telling a story and in developing characters. If there aren't people with emotions and feelings that I can sympathize with and live with them I'm not very interested.

Have you felt, as Veronika said she does, that cartoons present people in stereotypes?

Caroline Leaf:
Yes, there is a limited range of ways of showing women and men in traditional cartoon animation. But in another sense, the concept of stereotypes is interesting. Animation can concentrate a lot of visual information in very little time, things happen quickly. Therefore to be clear and legible you need to simplify, to economize perhaps by exaggeration. The characters in *The Street* are stereotypes because you recognize them as types. I use what you already know of those kinds of people to save time, so that there is a lot that I don't need to draw and say. Yet you can feel that they are unique humans too, because within the broad recognizable outline I pick out details of individual feeling and gesture.

The problem that I have with cartoon animation, and I haven't seen much of it — it bores me — is that it doesn't use emotions. It will make people laugh with a story or idea joke — that might be the whole point of the film. I also like to make people laugh, but I don't tell jokes. My humor is in some human gesture or intonation somewhere along the way.

below: Scenes from Teacher, Lester Bit Me *by Lynn Smith*

Lynn Smith:

In my films, in general, I tell stories. But since most of my films have been sponsored, the stories' formats are not always as crazy as I'd like them to be. I still stand by these sponsored works, I guess, because I feel I've been able to include other messages besides "Don't smoke" or "Use the metric system." There's a nice story that I like to tell about working for a sponsor — it's from the Bible. Remember Joseph, who was asked to interpret the dreams of the Pharoah? You're sort of in that position, or sometimes you're in another position, where the sponsors don't even know the dream they had, and you can tell them that. The challenge of sponsored work is to tell their message in my human terms, and I won't try to tell it, or even accept the job, if I can't be left alone to do it my way.

It's my hope that I will be able to do my own film next — it's been cooking for a number of years, and it's not sponsored.

Joyce Borenstein:

I've been particularly interested in the musical and visual aspects of animation because of my background in music and painting. Lately I've realized the potential of animation as a vehicle for character portraiture and story-telling. I would hope to be able to make "total" animated films — films that are complete on all levels — literary, musical, visual, so that my audience experiences the film as an intellectual, emotional, visual, auditory event.

Ellen Besen:

I like to tell stories; I'm interested in the ability to bring across some kind of story or content line. I'm interested in mythology, but I'd like to do it in a way that will bring across its mystical, magical qualities, not just mock it or make a shallow version.

What myths are you interested in?

Ellen Besen:

Both traditional and contemporary ones. For instance, the Mary Poppins books which create their own mythology. I know Disney has done a film based on Mary Poppins but he hasn't done anything with that aspect of it. It's like a child's view of the creation of the world, with the governess at the centre — it's a very cohesive mythology and it works beautifully.

You are working with women primarily — the musicians you've chosen for this film are Beverly Glenn-Copeland and Sharon Smith — is there any particular reason for that?

Ellen Besen:

It wasn't totally intentional, although the author of the poem the film is based on is also a woman, Debbie Bojman. On the productions I did before this one I was working with a lot of men, and I found it frustrating because I would let their ideas take control over mine — it was always a battleground as to what was going to happen. I heard the poem and I liked it and I asked Debbie if I could do a storyboard to do a film with Beverley's music, because since I met Beverley three years ago I've been looking for the right vehicle to do that. I'm really pleased that it happened this way. Emotionally and creatively it's been one of the most satisfying things that I've worked on as a group project. It's been the most fluid. There's been a nice kind of back and forthness. There hasn't been the same fighting for control — this has been a much healthier situation.

What are the main influences on your work?

Ellen Besen:

It's been a combination, because I like Hollywood animation, and I like the Film Board work — that's my favorite animation, like *The Wind*, and Caroline Leaf's work, Lynn Smith's work . . .

Caroline Leaf:

My friends influence me a lot. Lynn Smith is an influence on me, for style. Veronika is too, maybe not so much in my films as in the drawings that I do now, but they'll work together some time in the future.

Lynn Smith:

I love the work of Caroline Leaf . . . I greatly admire what she's done, and I'm glad that we've come this way together. And just talking to Veronika is a trip and a half. Her work has her lively spirit. But I'd like it to be very clear that without the support of men in the field I'd not be in animation. Derek Lamb, my teacher and mentor, and Wolf Koenig, who invited me to work at the NFB in 1973. There are also men animators in the field who've been a great inspiration . . . I don't see the world breaking down into men animators and women animators. The emphasis in animation, especially at the Film Board, is on what a human can do.

Joyce Borenstein:

Influences on my work have been primarily musical. Studying Bach and Debussy taught me the essence of structure in art and the ability to translate feelings into this structure. I am indebted to Norman McLaren and Ryan Larkin whose films were the initial inspiration for my trying animation.

What are your thoughts about being women working in animation?

Caroline Leaf:

I think if I were a woman film maker making a live-action film with a whole crew of people I would have other problems as a woman director than I do being a director just of myself.

The people you mentioned as friends who influence you are all women.

Caroline Leaf:

That's true. Well, their work feels closest to me. I feel the most empathy with them. When I have problems I go to someone who empathizes with me. There are men, too, whom I go to — Paul Driessen, Sheldon Cohen, Norman McLaren, Derek Lamb.

Lynn Smith:

In the last fifteen years there has been a trend for people to work on their own films entirely by themselves. I think this trend made it easier for women to enter animation.

below: Storyboard for film Sleeper *by Joyce Borenstein, poem by P.K. Page*

Ellen Besen:

I had problems when I was producing the metric film in Toronto: I think it's a combination of being a woman, and being very small, and looking like I was about twelve years old, having to step on people's feet to get attention . . . I think a man would have been more confident to plunge in and not worry about his mistakes . . . Being a woman and being small, people just automatically assume you are immature and don't understand, so you have to really fight for the recognition of your intelligence.

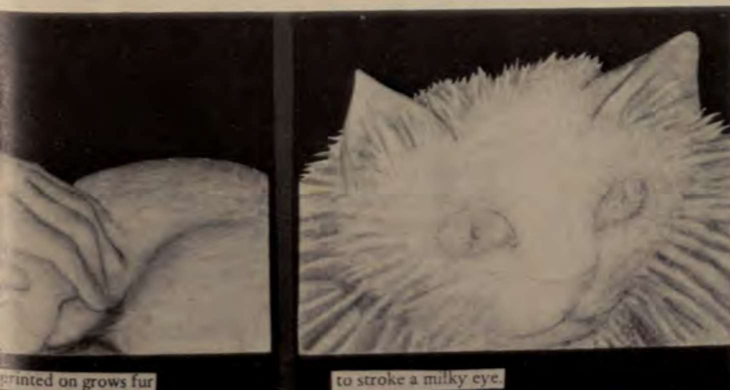
I don't think I'd go out looking for a woman and turn down a man I knew I could work with — I'm just finding that for me personally it might be better to work with women, that there is a better understanding and I am able to be more creative. Obviously I relate to material with women in it, and I don't if it's just men.

I think in many ways it's better here for women — I have a feeling the Hollywood system is production line. You come in, you do your one job, you have to work to someone else's schedule . . . My natural work pattern is to start in chaos, and gradually pull form out of it. It used to bother me, but some people at the Film Board have backed me up, saying it's a creative way to work, and there's no reason to feel bad about it. This is the first time I've had encouragement from someone I think of as professional to not mind working slowly and experimenting.

Veronika Soul:

I don't know why women don't work in cartoon animation. I can only tell you why I don't. It doesn't interest me. When a person draws a woman cartoon character, it has all the external earmarks of a woman, so nobody can make a mistake and say, ah, that's a sailboat! No, that's a woman! But the cartoon form doesn't move beyond that level for me. And I want a lot more out of film. I'm very interested in asexual films. That's what I wanted to do when I started this — to have voices such that you couldn't tell whether it was a man or a woman . . . and whether it was or wasn't didn't matter . . . the way that songs on the radio are extraordinarily moving while the voice could belong to anybody . . . male or female. I like ambiguity. That's what I want to do in films . . . to make images that are stunning, not because it's a man or a woman but because whoever the hell it is . . . is alive.

Some fairly clear impressions emerged from my Montreal interviews and subsequent research. There is a new generation of women animators who are very much aware of and influenced by each others' work. Many have made a clear choice to work directly under the camera, sometimes with minimal technology and maximum resourcefulness, because they feel that such work offers them greater satisfaction as artists. Whether their films should be discussed under the rubric of cartoon animation remains a question. They often use clear story lines and have recognizable characters — in that case the main distinction on the screen between their work and more conventional cartoons is that their work has greater fluidity.



At least one basic problem was presented to me in the interviews: while these women are clearly and consciously indebted to each other for support and direction in their work, and while each shows an independence and confidence in the validity of her own work which is a delight to see, they did not have a historical sense that this has not been true in the past for women struggling alone in a hostile industry. Nor is there any explicit recognition of how dependent a position at the NFB or in the industry in general might be on remaining "neutral," that is, on refusing to take a feminist position about the role of women in animation. This is a complex issue, not to be resolved by any simple slogans of solidarity.

None of the women interviewed has made films with explicit feminist content; neither has any of them produced offensive stereotypes of women or men. Veronika Soul's films, which are certainly not cartoons, are most interesting in terms of exploding stereotypes and conventional attitudes. In that light, more can be said about the crucial distinction made, in one way or another, by all the women interviewed, that they prefer working alone or in very small groups. The concept of creativity expressed here, linked to the preference for working directly under the camera, is an individualist concept, and it's interesting that it's seen as particularly suited to women. Perhaps, rather than assuming it is female nature to work alone and with little technology, it could be said that group work, and work involving complex technology, is set up by the industry in such a way that it is alienating, although it need not be so; and that the socialization of women has made it especially difficult for them to respond creatively to alienating conditions. To make a virtue of political necessity is not a bad thing, and many Third World film makers have demonstrated the power of an aesthetic of poverty: "poor films" which are rich in meaning and impact. But it is essential that the limitation be seen in terms of its context, as a conscious refusal of the structures of an alienating system, not as a "natural" tendency of women to work alone or with small resources. It hasn't been demonstrated that cel animation as a technique is innately unsuited to women, or to creativity. What has been strongly suggested is that the system of production surrounding that technique has not been encouraging for women or men who have wanted, simply enough, control of the means of production.

Perhaps, when Ellen Besen makes her long dreamed-of version of Mary Poppins, it will be time for a revised history of cartoon animation. Meanwhile, there is a need for analysis of the way women and men have been presented in cartoons, for related studies of production conditions in animation studios, for more extended comparisons of cel animation and experimental animation, and for speculation about directions for the future.

Barbara Halpern Martineau is a feminist writer, filmmaker, and teacher living in Toronto and presently in the Film Department at Queen's University.

An expanded version of this article will appear in a critical anthology currently in preparation by Gerald Peary.

Filmography

ELLEN BESEN: *Metric-Metrique* (1976); one-minute commercial on new consumer laws (1976); JOYCE BORENSTEIN: *Opus 1* (1972); *The Unexpected Answer: Homage to Rene Magritte* (1973); *Revisited* (1974); *Traveller's Palm* (1973); *Tenement Symphony* (in progress); CAROLINE LEAF: *Orfeo* (1970); *How Beaver Stole Fire* (1971); *The Owl Who Married the Goose* (1974); *The Street* (1976); *The Metamorphosis of Mr. Samsa* (1977); LYNN SMITH: *Office Party* (1966); *The Shout It Out Alphabet Film* (1966); *Genesis* (1970); *Mr. Roger's Neighborhood* (1971); 3 1-minute pro-metric spots (1972); *Teacher, Lester Bit Me* (1974); 3 1-minute anti-smoking clips for children (1974); VERONIKA SOUL: *How the Hell Are You?* (1972); *Tales from the Vienna Woods* (1973-74); *Tax: The Outcome of Income* (1975); *A Said Poem* (1974-75).

Aritha van Herk

Her Time and Place

interview with Aritha van Herk
by Sharon Batt
photos by Diana Palting

In April, Aritha van Herk was awarded the Seal Book First Novel Award for her novel, Judith. *The first person to receive the award, she was presented with a $50,000 cheque mounted on a billboard in Montreal. The book will be published in the fall by McClelland and Stewart in Canada, Little-Brown in the U.S. and Andre Deutsch in Great Britain.*

The novel was written as part of Aritha's M.A. requirements at the University of Alberta where she has been a student for the past six years. It is a novel about the self-discovery of a young woman and is set on an Alberta pig farm.

Aritha has been book review editor for Branching Out *since September. Sharon Batt interviewed her ten days after she received the award.*

I want to talk first about the contest. The size of the prize is extraordinary in Canada and even world-wide. Do you think this indicates a new era for writers in Canada?

I hope it indicates an new era for writers in Canada, I don't know if it does. The one thing I think it does do is give a lot of publicity to writing, to literature and to publishing and it seems to me that is very important because we don't treat books and writers seriously enough in this country. If we give a little bit of publicity to what's happening, that's one way of calling attention to the fact that we have a Canadian literature that's very strong.

When you won I thought it was ironic because I remembered you saying that your parents felt you were wasting your education, that you'd never be able to make a living as a writer.

Yes, they kept saying to me, "Your writing is a very good hobby but when are you going to start working?" Needless to say they've stopped saying that.

Are you optimistic about being able to make a living as a writer?

Well now I am, but when I decided to be a writer I was not optimistic. I have never looked at being a writer as something that was going to make me a good living, mainly because it's something that just doesn't pay well. Some of the best writers in Canada can't make a living with what they earn by writing. The publishing industry now seems to be moving towards mass paperback distribution so at least now the possibility does exist.

Does winning the prize at this point have any drawbacks for you?

Yes, there are a number of drawbacks. People expect me to be ecstatic, to leap up and down and say, "I've made it! I don't have to worry any more." What they don't understand is that winning a prize like that is almost a frightening thing for a new writer. There's the saying that you begin with a bang and end with a whimper. I don't intend to do that, but it's still very scary. I catch myself saying, "What are you going to do now?" The other thing about winning a large prize like this is that it has plummeted me right into the public eye very quickly and there's a lot of hard work to that.

You're having to learn how to promote yourself and the book?

I'm having to learn how to deal with myself when reporters ask me questions, some of which are irrelevant and some of which are personal questions that I'm not interested in answering. It's almost like culture shock after working assiduously by myself for seven years with very little public response. This sudden attention is fun in some ways but in others it's been hard for me to cope with.

"People don't realize that winning a prize like this is a frightening thing for a new writer."

When you described your book to me before, you called it a feminist novel and I'd like to know what you meant by that.

It's hard to put the book in a category. I've described it as a feminist novel but I would qualify that and say it's not a radically feminist novel because I don't think it offers a lot of solutions to the situation of women now. It only explores a particular situation through a particular character who, though she's not really a feminist, is a very strong woman. There's very little political rhetoric in the book. I don't believe one writes to sermonize, one writes for the sake of art, but at the same time — because I'm a woman and because I'm a feminist — I'm interested in the female consciousness. I know more about women, and so I'm going to write about a woman before I'm going to write about a man.

Is Judith a young woman?

She's in her middle twenties. She comes to terms with her life in a particular way which I think ends the book on a very hopeful note. One interviewer said to me, "I'm so tired of these feminist novels that portray everything in shades of grey and black. Is there no hope? Can there be no relationship between men and women?" The optimism in the book is important to me because I think there is a lot of hope.

Do you think the term "feminist" in writing refers to subject matter, or can it also refer to technique or style?

I don't think it can refer to technique or style. I have been hesitant about calling Judith a feminist novel because it almost puts the book in a box. I say it's a book about a woman and that ought to be enough for people to understand. I think subject matter is where one's true feminism will come in. If you can explore a woman with a reasonable amount of intelligence, sensitivity and realism and if you're offering an alternative, I think you are writing a feminist novel. Ideally a feminist novel should teach us more about ourselves, and that's what every good novel does, it recreates reality in another way so that we see our lives in a new light.

Right now novels by and about women seem to be very popular. Why do you think this is so?

I think it's because they're good. A lot of very good writers now are women and I think it's because we have a fight on our hands. Very often people who are oppressed or who have a cause begin to work very hard at their art and whatever it is they use to represent themselves. It's the same with regions, and I'm a regionalist. A region isn't defined until it's written about and then people suddenly become aware of it, they see it, they understand it. It has a time, a definite sense and an individuality. So when women begin to write about women, all the strength that we've been carrying around all these years is going to come out in our art.

You say you are a regionalist. I would say you are also, in a sense, a very combative person. I'm thinking, for example, of the resistance you have toward the publishing industry being Toronto-based. It's almost an antagonism.

I think westerners are somewhat prickly about it because we feel the west has been ignored. I have discovered, though, that the east is not nearly as bad as we think. When I went down there to receive the award no one made sarcastic comments to me about being an Albertan. What they are interested in is good writing and it really doesn't matter where it comes from in Canada. I am a westerner. I don't intend to become an easterner and I think that is a strength in my writing because it's important for a writer to write about what they know, to write about their own time and place. It seems to me that if you look at some of the best writers in the world, the South American writers for example, they're writing about their own place. Great writers like William Faulkner and Flannery O'Connor wrote about their own postage stamp of native soil. That's the thing I insist on; I would not go to New York to 'make it'. I will stay here and I will write here.

As for being combative, that's part of my personality. I'm very temperamental as my friends have discovered. To their great generosity, they're usually very understanding and very gentle with me. They put up with my bad moods as well as my good ones. I've found that the support of friends means a great deal to me as a source of energy for my writing. People like my friends, my husband, and Rudy Wiebe who said, "we believe in you, you can do it," I can never thank enough. I argue a great deal with Rudy Wiebe but he pushes me, he supports me, and that sort of encouragement does something to a writer's mind.

It's unusual for someone your age to have completed a novel. What made you decided to start a novel when you did?

This is going to seem terribly mundane. There are actually two reasons. The first one and the mundane one is that I decided to get an M.A. here and, because I had an opportunity to do so, I decided to write a novel instead of a critical thesis. The second reason is that if you're a writer, you know you've got to write a novel sometime and you know that you can't go on until you do it. In some ways it's the hardest thing to write and in some ways it's the easiest, but you know, at a certain point, you have to do it or you just cannot take the next step, you cannot be a particular kind of writer. I couldn't be writing the kinds of short stories I'm writing now if I

hadn't written this novel.

What's your vision of the novel?

I'm strongly influenced by, here I go again, the South Americans and William Faulkner. I think in Canada today Marian Engel and Rudy Wiebe are writing some extremely interesting things. What I'm critical of in the Canadian novel is the extreme and dedicated realism. I would like to move beyond that realism in my writing because I think it locks us into a particular pattern.

Would you say your novel is realistic?

I've tried very hard to go beyond realism but because it's a first novel I'm not really sure if I succeeded all that well. I think I did with the animals in the novel. I don't think I did with the woman, she's very actual and in some ways very ordinary. With the animals I tried to push the Circe myth to its furthest limit: instead of having them as being enchanted by an enchantress, they become the enchanters, they become the powerful, they become mysterious and mystical. They thus become the catalyst for the woman's development. I don't do this overtly but I think that within the novel they work in that sense. At the same time I think one has to present the physical situation as realistically as possible to make it plausible. It's very tricky to maintain that balance. I think I succeeded with the animals but I'm sure I'll push it further with my next writing.

Is Judith *comic in any way?*

I have a couple of comic scenes. One of them, a bar fight, is tremendously comic. I once read an article by Robert Kroetsch in which he said, "The beer parlours of the prairies are sacred places; they organize the landscape as the cathedrals organize Europe." When I read that I thought, there's no way that beer parlours organize the landscape for one thing and, secondly, beer parlours in the prairies as far as I'm concerned are easier to compare with lavatories. In the bar scene I create a "tall tale" — much as Kroetsch does in his writing — and I turn the tables so that the tall tale that comes out of the bar scene is a reversal of that sense of the tavern as a warm lovely place where men can drink beer and talk with their friends. It becomes very hostile and there's a fight.

The way you describe that scene arising is interesting because again it was a kind of combative reaction.

Well I wrote the scene before I read the article by Kroetsch but I was so furious with his statement I reworked the scene. I wondered if he had ever seen that incredible steeple rising at Salisbury, the highest steeple in England. You can see that steeple for miles, the finger pointing to heaven. There's no comparison between an architectural marvel like that and a tavern! I like Kroetsch's writing very much but the analogy is ridiculous, of course it is.

Who do you think will read Judith?

I think it's a book for everyone. Certainly, although it's set in central Alberta, the setting is a very basic, simple one that could be anywhere. Although it's about a young woman I really hope that older women will read it too.

"*Judith* may frighten men a bit but, the more frightened people are, the better the novel actually is."

Judith has a best friend in the novel who is an older woman and who I think is a tremendous character. Although I keep saying the novel is universal, I think it will frighten men a little bit, but the more frightened people are the better the novel actually is. It's not an anti-male novel.

There are male characters in it?

There are many good male characters in it. Judith has a very good relationship with her father, indeed it is her father who influences her more than anyone else in her life. She has a good relationship with a young man she meets on her farm. She has a bad relationship with another lover, but it seems to me that I've balanced them pretty fairly.

What makes the novel frightening?

Judith's trip towards self-discovery is perhaps frightening because self-discovery can be extremely violent and she seems to reject everything before she comes to terms with herself and her situation, her relationships.

You talked about some of the influences on you. What about the problem of breaking away from those influences to the point where you develop your own style – how do you do that?

That's sometimes a very great problem, especially with writers that you read and read. Every time I re-read a Faulkner novel, I'm seduced again and I start writing like Faulkner for the next four days. Of course I can't get away with it because I'm not as good as he was but, essentially, you only learn good things from good influences. When I first wrote this novel it was as Faulkneresque as you could imagine but now, when I go back through it, I would never recognize that influence aside from the fact that I sometimes load my sentences too heavily. Somehow one gets past the influences by rewriting. One's own voice will come through because each of us has a voice, it's just a matter of expressing it clearly enough.

I think the thing that will be more difficult for me is breaking away from the teaching influences that I've had. I've been working with Rudy Wiebe for about five years and he has influenced me, not in what I write or how I write, but through encouragement, by the psychological pressure to produce and to produce good stuff. I sometimes wonder whether I can write as well on my own but he says to me, "I have never written a word for you, of course you can." So perhaps I should just ignore that fear and struggle along.

"I've always wanted to be a writer and when I received recognition maybe deep down somewhere I was not all that surprised."

In the fall you'll be doing promotion for Judith. *Are you worried about that?*

I'm not as worried about promoting *Judith* as I was about going down to Montreal and being The Winner of the fifty thousand dollars. When I'm promoting *Judith* they're not going to make me climb billboards. I hope the book will speak for itself. I would like to be able to do some readings because it seems to me that's one of the most rewarding ways to let people know about what you write. You have an audience and an audience response.

You commented that people were surprised at how confident you were when you went to accept the prize. Do you think this self-assurance is necessary for a writer?

Self-defense, self-defense. People said all kinds of strange things to me like, "If I were you I would have been crying" or, "If I were you I would have been hysterical." Those kinds of comments surprise me because if you put all the psychic energy into a book that writing requires it seems to me you can face the press, face the people. It's true that a certain kind of confidence is a defense mechanism because then you present yourself as whole and you'll get a good reaction.

The other thing I try to be is honest. I'm not trying to be super-cool about this whole business. I am very excited and I am very pleased, but I'm very definite about what I'm doing too, dammit. This is what I've worked towards my whole life. Ever since I was a child I've wanted to be a writer. At different times I've wanted to be a poet, but it's all been in the same vein, and when I finally had recognition maybe deep down somewhere I was not all that surprised. I can handle it.

Sharon Batt is editor of Branching Out.

Diana Palting teaches photojournalism at Grant MacEwan Community College and is a photography editor for Branching Out.

Diary Keeping as a Feminine Art Form
by Claudia Christopherson.

October 3, 1977.

It seems clear that there is in North America an increasing audience for the journal form, a form which, for the past hundred years at least, has been left mainly to women. Why should this be so? Why are diaries and journals written in disproportionate numbers by women? This hasn't always been the case. After all, the most famous diary in literary history is still Samuel Pepys'. The habit of keeping diaries and commonplace books was by no means restricted, in previous centuries, to women. In America, journals were kept by Bryant, Irving, Byrd, John Woolman, Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, to say nothing of the travel journals kept by such people as Crevecoeur, Lewis and Clark, Zebulon Pike. Why did the practice die out among men? In our century, the only outstanding exception I can think of is Andre Gide. Perhaps the habit of diary-keeping faded away when men acquired secretaries to keep their lives straight for them?

There are obviously more important reasons than that for the lack of male diaries. The form itself, for reasons which are obscure to me, came to be despised (not that it was ever granted much public recognition as a legitimate art form.) Self-examination through diary-keeping was a legitimate and widespread activity in the 18th century, but by our time it fell under the taboo against narcissism, or self-indulgence. This is partly a legacy of the Puritan heritage, partly perhaps a legacy of Freud (narcissism, after all, is his word). Then diaries came to be equated with effeminacy, and thus fell prey to the homosexual taboo.

Samuel Pepys

Who, in this century, would give a diary to a male child for a birthday present (except a few feminists)? A visit to any gift shop displaying diaries underscores the sex stereotype: they are printed on scented paper, with gilt edges, the pages sprinkled with pictures of violets and roses, frequently accompanied by sentimental quotations from Kahlil Gibran. The volumes themselves are usually placed next to the greeting cards.

So only little girls are encouraged to keep diaries, a process which must have begun in Victorian times, and because it came to be a form of writing indulged in almost exclusively by women and girls, the form acquired the general disrepute of being "feminine" — meaning inferior, of little worth, a genre on a plane with mother's day cards.

Now there is an obviously increasing audience for the diary, if one can judge by the number of published women's journals one sees in bookstores, as well as the surprising amount of fiction which is cast partly or wholly in the journal form. Still, in its raw, unfictionalized version, the diary is even now thought of as possessing primarily cultural or sociological value; it has not yet been granted the status of art. I find it curious how many male criticis of Anais Nin's diaries, Richard Centing and Daniel Stern, for example, feel that the highest praise they can give them is to call them novels in disguise, as if they believe that by calling her work a "novel of her life" they are saying something more significant, and flattering, than a "journal of her life." By calling it a novel they are saying that it is "art." If it's only a diary, apparently, it isn't. What nonsense is this?

Art is *opposed* to Nature, not an imitation of it, classicists cry, clearly preferring that which is shaped by Mind to that shaped by impulse or time. The rejection of organic form, of which the diary is the most extreme example — does this not represent a male bias for what is produced by Logos rather than by the mysterious womb? The denial that organic form *is* form, the denial that art can be shaped by something other than the deliberative (male) consciousness — is this anything more than another version of the old masculine protest?

Legitimate or not by classical definitions, there is a form, a tradition, in the writing of diaries, to which each diarist gives her own unique imprint. As is true in any genre, there will be those who use the form well and those who use it badly. There is one aesthetic pronouncement of James that I find appealing — that the quality of a work of art will always be the quality of the mind of its creator. Aesthetic judgements of journals are obviously possible. Like any other written genre, they will finally be judged by the authenticity, or lack of it; by the voice that is concealed/revealed in the choice, placement and rhythms of the language; by the quality of the intelligence and sensibility behind it, by the richness or poverty of the inner life it conveys.

The primary impulse behind keeping journals is the quest for identity. Perhaps women have a greater need for this than men because they are engaged, for the most part, in low-status occupations. If so, the need for reification through the journal — the need for self-stroking, if you will — would be

Dorothy Wordsworth

correspondingly more pressing. We need to think of ourselves as being something more than "just a mother, just a housewife." The threat of identity loss is probably also greater for women because of the multiplicity of roles we are asked to play, and the contradictions between them.

Beyond that, of course, the diary is still the best antidote against loneliness, whether it be the married loneliness of Anna Tolstoy or the spinster solitude of Dorothy Wordsworth.

November 24.

I am still worrying over the idea of women's journals. I would like to edit a book of them, put together a composite picture of the contemporary Canadian woman in any one year, 1976, say.

Surely I am not wrong in thinking women would want to read it. It's not possible that I am the only busy-body in town. Increasingly, I suspect, we crave a direct experience of the subjectivity of other women. As our consciousness is turned upside down by disintegrating role definitions and by the turmoil in human relationships they cause and the speed of technological change, there is a greater need both to read and to write journals. Being direct, rather than indirect, mirrors of women's consciousness, they are a resource for self-understanding (to say nothing of sociological understanding) even richer than the novel.

Moreover, as the pace of change increases, so too does the growth of stress-related neurosis. This is another reason why I want to help legitimize the journal form in the eyes of the public. By reading journals, more women will be encouraged to write them themselves. The question of "art" be damned: the journal as a technique of self-therapy is invaluable.

That, surely, is the key to the enormous success of Anais Nin's diaries. She offered, through the journal form, a key to the struggle against neurosis, as well as a heroic example of personal success in that struggle. It is the chief reason that her work was such a revelation for me.

November 29.

The diary form is suspect because it involves talking to yourself. There is an enormous taboo in white society against doing this. Why? Why are not people encouraged, rather than discouraged, to elaborate dialogues with themselves? It is understandable that the practice should be condemned when others are around — the room would get awfully noisy — but why is it forbidden when one is alone? Somewhere lurks a fear that if we talk to ourselves too much, we will lose contact with reality, become wholly self-absorbed. The habit has the taint of insanity about it. Moreover, talking to oneself violates the myth that the self is unitary. We fear hearing ourselves engaged in dialogue because it would shatter the fiction that the self is not multiple. Perhaps, for most purposes, this is a necessary myth, but surely it is also unnecessarily tyrannical.

The taboo against writing to oneself in a diary is not as weighty as that against talking to oneself. Diary-keeping is not *overtly* anti-social. But the activity shares in the same aura of disapproval. Every diarist, every artist, is forced to question her narcissism and attempt to justify it. Because the diary is an unacceptable form in the academic literary marketplace, most diarists cannot justify their activity by the expectation of publication. They are thus left to confront their guilt over self-indulgence by themselves.

For men the diary taboo connects to a homosexual taboo; in both sexes, to a masturbatory one. Moreover, according to Freud narcissism is the earliest phase of libidinal development; therefore, indulgence in it is a sign of childishness and immaturity. Childish, feminine, unworthy of serious attention.

What nonsense. Why is the Narcissus myth in such disrepute anyway? Self-love must precede and accompany love of others, else it is mere dependence. To say that the diary is a product of self-love, or an act of self-love, is to my mind to say something praiseworthy.

Of course, there must be balance. I am not suggesting renouncing the outer world for the inner. But one has to make a case for introversion in a culture so hopelessly skewed in favor of its opposite. Introverts are about the only remaining persecuted minority who have not bonded together to fight for their rights. Shall we form a union?

December 3.

Even when men keep journals, they tend to be more extroverted than their female counterparts, more descriptive of people and places than of inner states. Does women's fondness for journals reflect their relative immobility in space, so their restricted ability to travel in the external world is compensated by travelling inward?

The diary is also a form which reflects women's different experience of time. It is the form ideally suited to one whose time is fragmented. It can be taken up and put down like needlepoint.

It is also the perfect form for those who prefer the "butterfly mode," for those who like to skim and touch rather than settle and delve, who prefer the intuitive flash to the laborious intellect.

December 16.

In all these scribblings about why women keep journals, I have not answered the question personally. It would be simpler to explore why I compulsively indulge the habit. There is a plethora of reasons.

To maintain a sense of the continuity of the self, to keep in touch with the voice that remains constant beneath the persona, the role-mask. Mother, teacher, writer, mistress — without the journal, I would get lost.

As an exercise in honesty. Role-playing always involves some degree of lying. In the journal the lies can be peeled away, one by one.

To think things through, to hammer out what I believe, to test my actions against my principles.

To give harmless vent to hostilities and other neurotic dislocations without damaging the people on whom they would otherwise be projected.

To wrestle with the demon neurosis and make sure it is at least an equal contest.

To explore madness itself, if need be, in a controlled form.

To encounter, confront, and come to terms with the shadow.

To capture experience in language, thus partly forestalling the erosion of time. To record epiphanies, moments of heightened awareness, thereby increasing the ability to *see*.

To obey the Socratic maxim: "An unexamined life is not worth living."

To have something to entertain me in my old age, when I am sure my memory will be even worse than it is now.

To provide raw material for fiction.

So that my children will have a record of their mother's subjective consciousness, to match their own objective one.

To dance and whirl, exult and tease, bitch and whine in my own private chamber, alone, companioned only by the music.

To experience directly my freedom, to have a "room of one's own," an utterly private space, inside one's head.

To play with observing myself from different perspectives — psychoanalytic, Marxist, religious (Zen). To be able to judge how far I have strayed from grace, however that is defined, and to discover the quickest shortcut back to it.

As an exercise, yes, in unabashed narcissism. "I dote on myself, there is all that lot of me, and all so luscious."

To learn how to let go. It is a liberating form, the journal, where one can experiment wildly, having no heavier burden to bear than the paragraph.

Why should anyone read them?

They shouldn't, if they find them boring.

January 8 '78.

I re-read *Winter of Artifice* this afternoon. To my surprise, I was unsympathetic. Perhaps the first time I read it, years ago, I had not yet worked out my own father theme. But the novel seemed disembodied, lacking substance, not a novel at all, really, but a fictionalized essay. Or a fictionalized diary, which of course is what it basically is. I resented the artifice of the story form — and even if Anais did this intentionally, which I doubt, it doesn't work. It alienates, prevents identification with the characters rather than increasing it. It is too thin, abstract. She leaves you too little to hold on to, and in retrospect little remains but vapor.

Anais Nin

I went back to the diaries, picking up Volume IV at random. There I found greater substance, greater nourishment. I cannot believe in the heroine of *Winter of Artifice* because she is so one-dimensional, her being defined by a single theme. She is not a character at all, but a consciousness of her father. In the journal, in contrast, is the complex, fascinating woman named Anais whose keen observations of the world around her are a delight to read. There she is not disembodied (though she carefully omits her own sexuality) but clearly living through her senses, her fingertips, her eyes.

It is curious that the first two volumes of the journal are richer, more sensuous than the later ones. Was this a result of the benign influence of Miller, or Paris? The New York journal is depressed, the people she knows there less interesting — although after such characters as Miller and Gonzalo, those who followed would be bound to seem flat. Also her anxiety about her success as a writer is disquieting. But even the later journals are rich in insight. There are buried nuggets on every other page, like the insight in Volume VI when she realizes that her compulsive search for intimacy with people throughout her life arose from a never-satisfied need for intimacy with her father. The search for intimacy found its purest satisfaction in the journal.

Is that it, then? That the quest for intimacy, embodied in the journal form, is at root a sublimation of the need to hold and rock ourselves, to achieve the intimacy we all had once in infancy and lost? Is it fanciful to say that through the journal, the mother of forms, we give birth to ourselves, complete the process our physical mothers began? To Otto Rank this desire was the central driving fantasy of the artist, the acting out of which was one pathway to salvation from neurosis: the fantasy/paradox of the self-created self, delivered by the mid-wife, art. By its most directly personal form, the humble, unassuming diary.

Fantasy or no, the process is life-quickening. May the tribe of Anais increase.

Dr. Claudia Morrison teaches at CEGEP John Abbott College. She is collecting diary material by women and would like to hear from readers who keep journals. For more information write to her at CEGEP John Abbott College, C.P. 2000, Ste. Anne de Bellevue, Quebec, H9X 3L9.

law

The Criminalization of the Innocent

by Joan Anne Gordon

I recently discovered some old journals, dating back to the turn of the century, in a house in Montreal that had once served as a refuge for immigrant women. A reading of these diaries revealed that a large number of the women who had come to the house seeking help were from Great Britain. They had come from poor homes and orphanages to work as servants or factory workers for the nouveau riche, a class of entrepreneurs who were reaping a golden harvest of wealth in the New World — the fruits of immigrant sweated labour. The women who come today seeking my help have the same painful histories recorded in these old journals. Their origins are geographically different, more often their skin is black or brown, but the problems are the same.

Of all the guest workers presently in Canada, the situation of the domestic worker is the most critical. Many of these women are economically exploited and often physically and emotionally exhausted by the demands of employment that is not protected by Provincial Labour Statutes (with the notable exceptions of Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland). No minimum wage, health or compensation insurance, or standard work hours have been legislated for guest workers. In addition many of these women have had to suffer sexual abuse from male employers. Recognition of their rights for protection as workers will not be easily won, given the tenuous position of the guest worker under the rigid enforcement procedures of the Immigration Act.

It is lamentable that Canadians should have been encouraged to engage in public debate on Immigration policy at a time of deepening economic recession. Economic crisis has engendered a crisis of individual confidence; most Canadians are confused and fearful of losing jobs and their share of limited social services. A climate of economic and, consequently, personal uncertainty forced the debate on immigration policy to focus on isolationist tendencies and to a view of the immigrant as, once again, the scapegoat for the failures of our society. The government response to the political pressures that were generated by that debate is the introduction of a long-awaited new Immigrant Act, an Act that, in essence, offers no vision of the positive inter-relationship of immigration and national development.

The citizens of Canada have, unthinkingly, given assent to legislation which invests a branch of the civil service with inordinate judicial power and then allies this branch with national, provincial and municipal police forces throughout the country in a formidable coalition of enforcement power. The arbitrary enforcement of this law will engender in the future, as it has in the past, a criminalization of the innocent. I use the term criminalization, in this sense, to portray the plight of those immigrants who desperately or inadvertently evade the law in order to ease the complications of their lives and who are then pursued and treated like criminals by the Immigration Department. They are often guilty of nothing more than trying to survive in a strange land.

What kind of policies have produced this level of desperation within immigrant communities? What kind of law has allowed the Immigration Department to pursue a tourist, student or guest worker with the same kind of force with which we would pursue a murderer? Let us look, briefly, at some of the policies that have shaped Bill C-24, our recently enacted immigration law.

Government control of immigration after the Second World War was a response to the world change in immigration patterns arising from the need to resettle the displaced persons and the homeless of Europe, and Canada's own objectives of population growth and economic development. The government, however, opposed large scale immigration from the Orient.

A necessary ingredient for economic expansion was a highly skilled labour force and a policy of selective immigration was devised to meet this need. A new government department of Citizenship and Immigration was established in 1950 in order to implement these policies. Canada was, by this policy, to become more hospitable to her former enemies than to her dark skinned Commonwealth cousins. In 1950, Germans were allowed admission on the same basis as other Europeans. In 1951, agreements with the governments of India, Pakistan and Ceylon allowed for the yearly admission of 150 Indians, 100 Pakistanis and 50 Ceylonese. These quotas remained in force until 1962. An Immigration Act, designed to provide a framework for policy, was introduced in 1952 and was proclaimed into law June 1st 1953. The Act, lacking a firm legal base, allowed the Minister and His Officials uncontrolled discretionary power. This large element of discretionary power rendered it the most arbitrary and unpredictable law in our statutes. The law imposed a strong component of control by laying down conditions for the arrest, detention and deportation of immigrants and prospective immigrants. The Immigration Branch became responsible for enforcement of its own law. Its officials became judge, jury and executioner, thereby violating a basic principle of natural justice in that no one should judge in his own cause. The Governor-in-Council was given wide power to prohibit the admission of persons by reason of nationality, citizenship, ethnic group, occupation, class or geographic area of origin, or to persons of peculiar customs, habits, modes of life or methods of holding property.

In 1967, Expo brought a large number of tourists to Canada and regulations were amended to permit these visitors to make application for residence while still in Canada. This amendment introduced a method of immigrant selection based on a system of points relating to age, skill, education and language ability. This system, which allowed the flood of visitors to apply for permanent residence and gave them the right to appeal deportation created an unmanageable backlog of cases before the Immigration Appeal Board. It became common practice for travel agents in the poorer countries of Europe and the Third World to exploit this regulation for large profit. People were encouraged to buy a round trip fare to Canada and were told that if they were in possession of a return

photo by Charlotte Rosshandler

ticket, they could apply for permanent residence. This marketing approach failed to mention the admission criteria that would be applied to requests for permanent residence. When many of the visitors failed to meet the requirements and were ordered deported, those who did not avail themselves of appeal procedures went underground thus helping to create a substrata of illegal immigrants in Canada.

On August 15, 1973, Parliament enacted Project 97, subtitled: "Make my Country your Country," giving persons illegally in Canada before June 23rd an opportunity to acquire landed immigrant status. The period of amnesty lasted two months — too short a time to encourage trust in the immigrant community in what was admittedly a humane and generous gesture. On October 15, 1973, the welcome mat was removed and the door closed. The right of appeal was then restricted to landed immigrants or to persons in possession of visas issued outside of Canada. The law was further tightened by imposing greater elements of control over immigrants. This control became increasingly repressive in the non-white ethnic communities. Immigration officers linked with the R.C.M.P. Passport Division and local police officers made middle-of-the-night searches in private homes, clubs, factories and restaurants, using writs of assistance warrants. The use of paid informants was common practice and one that led to increased incidences of criminal and emotional blackmail with devastating consequences for personal and community health.

Finally, in November, 1976, the Government introduced Bill C-24 in first reading of a new Immigration Act; civil libertarians reacted with shock to the stringency of the Bill. Bill C-24 widened the powers of arrest without warrant. It required visitors and permanent residents to submit to finger printing at the request of an immigration officer. The categories of deportable persons were broadened and the power to deport without stated reason was introduced. The concept of national security was frequently invoked, but nowhere was it defined. Only the Solicitor General needs to know what peril exists, or is believed to exist before the Minister has the power to invoke these security measures. The protest rang loudest from Quebec and it held a note of anguish. Memories of the War Measures Act, with its unlimited powers of search and seizure, are still painfully active in Quebec. Bill C-24's invocation of a shadowy national security as sufficient reason for arbitrary detention and deportation compelled many in Quebec to make a protest that they could not make in October 1970.

The protest failed. The Act was proclaimed into law in April 1978, with only minor changes.

The Immigration Act does have positive features. The anomalies of health conditions have been changed; epileptics are now admitted. The archaic language of the old law has been removed; it no longer refers to idiots, imbeciles and morons, or to moral turpitude. We have made semantic not moral progress.

Skilled manpower needs will still be met through immigration, but unskilled needs will be met largely through the issuance of work permits rather than landed immigrant status. Work permits will now have to be obtained outside of Canada, where previously applications could be made by the employer, or the non-immigrant from within the country. This regulation increases the Immigration Department's control over admissions and will, at the same time, increase the scope of action of private employment agents or agencies who contract with Canadian employers to provide foreign

labour. These agencies have, in the past, often been accused of acting as dignified fronts for a variety of criminal or exploitative activities ranging from prostitution to the black market of passports.

The protection of a loosely defined national security will allow control over the actions of immigrants and non-immigrants already within the country, by use of the discretionary power to detain and deport without stated reason. This provision of the law means that innocent immigrants could be penalized for the actions of a few if the Minister deems that national security — as he defines it, for the law does not — is being menaced. The heavy-handedness of this law casts all immigrants into a mould of criminality.

The criminalization of the non-immigrant is almost always an outgrowth of an encounter between an innocent student, tourist or worker with the rigid, zealously enforced Immigration Act and its regulations. Law is understood only when its effects upon people can be seen and measured; in an attempt to portray this human dimension, some case histories can be cited.

Glenda, aged nineteen, came from Trinidad to visit her sister, a landed immigrant living in Montreal. When she arrived at the airport, she passed through Customs without being referred to an Immigration officer and, consequently, without recieving information about her status as a visitor to Canada.

Glenda enjoyed being with her sister and young nephew and unintentionally prolonged her holiday for seven months without reporting this prolongation to the Immigration Department. One evening, as she was browsing through a store, Glenda picked up a chocolate bar and began to eat it. She was immediately apprehended by a store employee who called the police. After an examination of her passport, police officers decided to hold Glenda overnight in police cells and to charge her, the next day, with theft of a $0.25 chocolate bar.

The criminal charge against Glenda was dismissed but immigration officials, who were present in the court room, issued and served a warrant for her re-arrest on the grounds that she had violated the Immigration Act by remaining in Canada longer than three months without reporting to an Immigration officer. It was a Friday afternoon — too late for an Immigration inquiry to be convoked to hear the case. Glenda was transferred to Tanguay women's prison to await an inquiry, scheduled for the following Monday. At some point during the weekend, she was a victim of a physical attack by a group of inmates.

When Glenda was brought to the Immigration Department on Monday morning, she was weeping with fear and despair. After a perfunctory hearing, she was deported from Canada.

The guest worker of today resembles her counterpart of yesterday, the indentured labourer. A guest worker must sell her labour to an employer without the protection or benefits that a Canadian worker of similar skills enjoys. There is no right to medicare, national pension plans, job security arrangements, long term insurance coverage or promotion. Community services, social services and health care are also denied to guest workers. All that they can safely and legally claim is their wages and if, as is the custom for Canadian workers, these employment and social benefits are calculated as part of a total wage package, then guest workers are most surely being underpaid at any wage rate.

At the end of their proscribed period of labour, guest workers must return to their home country. With this seemingly simple regulatory device, the dual problems of manpower needs and admission control have been served — labour needs have been met without granting citizenship.

The increased use of the work permit as an element of admission control and the necessity of obtaining permits from outside of the country promise to increase the criminalization of non-immigrants, by forcing them into rigid situations of exploitation.

The statistics relating to work permits for the year 1976-1977, show that the largest number of permits in Quebec were issued to domestic workers. These workers are vulnerable to the same criminalizing enforcement procedures that are applied to erring visitors if they change jobs without authoriziation from the Immigration Department. Again, let us examine a personal history.

Elena came from a poverty-stricken Jamaican family. A brother, living in Montreal, obtained a job offer for her in the city and forwarded money for plane

photograph by Virginia Liberatore

fare for the trip from Jamaica to Montreal. She began work as a live-in maid for a well-known and highly respected Montreal family. The hours were long, the work hard, and the food provided minimal. Elena earned only $40.00 a week. When she asked for a raise her request was refused and her employer threatened to contact friends within the Immigration Department and demand Elena's deportation if she tried to quit and look for another job. Elena was too frightened to test the validity of this threat by contacting the Immigration Department herself. She decided to take a chance by leaving the untenable situation with this family and eventually found another job without obtaining a new work visa.

One evening, while visiting a friend, she was arrested and detained by Immigration authorities. After a hearing the following day, Elena was ordered deported. We met her in the detention centre of the Immigration Department and were able to record her statement of her working life and the desperation that led her to change her job. She was tired and hungry, unable to buy any lunch because she had not been allowed to gather her possessions or contact her friends after her arrest. Elena did not have to face the prospect of incarceration at Tanguay women's prison. Fortunately, there was a seat available on a flight to Jamaica and she was deported that evening. She did not have an opportunity to collect her pay or to say goodbye to friends.

The stories of Glenda and Elena serve as examples of the way in which a law, based upon the theory that control is paramount, can criminalize ordinary people and force them to submit to punishment which bears no relation to the crime.

It is interesting to note that the language of Bill C-24 changed significantly from it's first reading to the third reading in the House of Commons. The frightening language of the first reading was tempered by the courageous protest against the Bill after it's introduction and many of the harsher words and phrases were deleted from the final Act. Yet, despite these semantic refinements, the intent of the Bill remained unchanged. Enforcement of this Act will be defined by the intent of the law and not by it's specific language. Most immigration cases are judged by the Immigration Department itself and there is little opportunity for recourse to the Civil Courts, where a more liberal interpretation might be possible.

This article has been an excursion through the darker side of Canadian Immigration Law, the side of the Law that criminalizes immigrants and creates fear and trembling within immigrant communities. It is painful, though necessary, to confront these laws, for they reflect the darker side of our national character.

Joan Anne Gordon is a community organizer in Montreal. She is a founder of the Women's Committee for Rights of Immigrants and helped set up the Quebec Liaison Committee Against Racism. She immigrated to Canada from England as a war bride.

photo by Charlotte Rosshandler

WOMEN'S STUDIES SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 3, 1978 to AUGUST 19, 1978

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

CREDIT COURSES

WOMEN IN CANADA: 1920 TO PRESENT

DOROTHY LIVESAY, poet and author of Collected Poems: The Two Seasons, A Winnipeg Childhood, Ice Age, The Woman I Am, and Right Hand Left Hand

BARBARA TODD, historian and co-author of Never Done

WOMEN AND THE VISUAL ARTS

MARIA TIPPETT, ar historian and co-author of From Desolation to Splendor: Changing Perceptions of the British Columbia Landscape and Emily Carr: A Biography (forthcoming)

ISSUES IN WOMEN'S HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

ABBY SCHWARZ, biologist and co-author of Our Bodies Our Selves

NON-CREDIT WORKSHOPS:

Women and Power, July 21, 22
Women as Artists, July 28, 29

PLUS:

"Varieties of Feminism" as six-evening discussion series
An exhibit of women artists
Public Lecures

for more information contact:
Margaret Benston or Meredith Kimball
Women's Studies Summer Institute
Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies
Simon Fraser University
Burnaby, B.C.
V5A 1S6

Credit courses open to auditors at reduced fees. Deadline for admission for transfer credit May 15.

RATHWELL: NO LANDMARK

by Connie Hunt

In January 1978, the Supreme Court of Canada handed down a decision which has been described as a "land-mark case" for married women's prop-erty rights. In *Rathwell* v. *Rathwell*, it was held that a Saskatchewan farm wife was entitled to a declaration that she owned one-half of the land and personal property acquired by her husband and herself during their marriage.

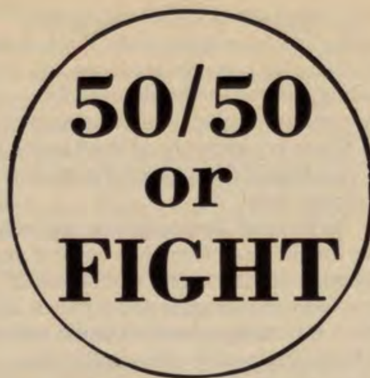
At first blush, the *Rathwell* case would seem to overturn the *Murdoch* case, in which the Supreme Court of Canada denied the ownership claim of a Turner Valley women to ranch property on which she had labored for many years alongside her husband.

A close look at the *Rathwell* decision reveals that it is less of a precedent-setter than one might have originally hoped. For while three of the nine judges seem prepared to vary the law as set out in *Murdoch*, the others were able to distinguish the *Murdoch* case on its facts. The result is that the majority of the Supreme Court of Canada still adheres to the legal principle laid out in *Murdoch:* where property is registered in the husband's name, the wife must have made a financial contribution before she will be declared an owner.

Lloyd and Helen Rathwell married in 1944. After the war they opened a joint bank account into which each deposited savings of $700. In 1946, 1947 and 1958 land purchases were made. In all three instances intitial payments were made with money from the joint account. In the first two cases, the balance was paid by crop share payments which were funnelled through the joint account. The balance on the third acquisition was satisfied by farm work which Mr. Rathwell carried out for the vendor. Title to all three parcels was registered in Mr. Rathwell's name.

Between 1944 and 1967 when the Rathwell's separated, Mrs. Rathwell worked very hard. Mr. Justice Dickson of the Supreme Court described her contribution in this way:

> Mrs. Rathwell did the chores when her husband was busy on the land; she looked after the garden and canned the produce; she milked cows and sold the cream; she drove machinery, bailed hay, provided meals and transportation for hired help and kept the books and records of the farming operation. Often, while Mr. Rathwell worked the fields, she fulfilled his obligation under a contract to drive a school bus. She raised and educated four children . . . to grain-belt farmers, the kitchen was just as much an integral part of the farming operation as the feed lot, or the machine shed.



At the trial of the *Rathwell* case, before the Saskatchewan Court of Queen's Bench, it was held that Mrs. Rathwell was not entitled to any ownership of the property in her husband's name. Two judges of the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal declared that she was the half-owner of all the land and personal property at issue. The third Appeal Court judge was of the view that her contribution was not equal to that of her husband's; he would only have awarded her one-half of the first two land purchases.

All nine judges of the Supreme Court of Canada heard the *Rathwell* appeal. Five of the nine held that Mrs. Rathwell was half-owner of all the property acquired during the marriage. The other four agreed with the one Court of Appeal judge that her contribution had not equaled that of her husband, and that she was only entitled to share in the first two land acquisitions.

As a result, Mrs. Rathwell suc-ceeded. But, in order to understand the effect that her case might have on future decisions, one must examine the reasons of the Supreme Court of Canada.

Three of the five majority judges based her rights upon two separate principles. The first, called *a resulting trust*, operates in the following way. The Court will look to see whether the parties shared a common intention that property registered in the name of one should be shared by both. Where both parties have made a direct financial contribution, a presumption arises that they intended each to be an owner. Where there is no financial contribution, the Court must look at other factors to ascertain whether the common intention existed. In the *Murdoch* case there was no financial contribution by the wife, and the Court was unable to find other indicators of a common intention. In *Rathwell*, the fact that the land had been paid for through the joint bank account was considered sufficient to establish *a resulting trust* in favor of Mrs. Rathwell.

These three judges, however, went further. They also held that Mrs. Rathwell was entitled to succeed on the basis of a second principle, the *construc-tive trust*. Even if she had not made a direct financial contribution, she would have been entitled to succeed because it would be unjust, in all circumstances of the case, for Mr. Rathwell to retain the benefits of the wife's labour.

It is the second principle which is of greatest significance, since it would permit courts to consider factors other than financial contribution (such as work as a homemaker) in dividing matrimonial property, and thus redress the injustice of *Murdoch*. The three judges were able to distinguish *Murdoch* because there had been no financial contribution in that case. They also pointed out that the *constructive trust* doctrine had not been considered in *Murdoch*. And, in addi-tion, they specifically stated that to the extent that *Murdoch* means that a wife's labour cannot be viewed as a contribu-tion, they would not be prepared to follow it.

The latter statement in the case has attracted a great deal of attention. However, it must be viewed in its proper perspective. It was made by only three of nine judges. Indeed, the other six judges either explicitly or by implication took a contrary view. The other two judges who found in Mrs. Rathwell's favor did so on the *resulting trust* ground, only because of her direct financial contribution. They declined to discuss the *constructive trust* notion. The four dissenting judges would have awarded Mrs. Rathwell half of the first two land acquistions on the basis of her financial contribution and denied her ownership of the third parcel because her contribution was less than her hus-band's. They explicitly denied the power of the Court to invoke the *constructive trust* in matrimonial property disputes.

Thus, while five of the nine judges granted a declaration of her entitlement to half the property, their only agreement was that her rights arose because of her financial contribution. This means that *Rathwell* can be distinguished from *Murdoch* because of the joint bank account, and that the *Murdoch* case is still alive and well in Canada.

The *Rathwell* case underscores, once again, the need for legislative action in the matrimonial property area. For we can be no more certain, after *Rathwell* than before, that the Courts are prepared to take a non-monetary contribution into account in dividing matrimonial proper-ty.

Connie Hunt Teaches in the faculty of law at the University of Calgary.

50/50 or Fight buttons available from the Alberta Status of Women Action Com-mittee, P.O. Box 1573, Edmonton T5J 2N7, $1.00 each.

OUR LEGAL ROOTS

Women in Canadian Life: Law, by Linda Silver Dranoff. Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1977. $4.95 paper.

review by Pat Wright

Toronto lawyer Linda Dranoff presents an historical survey of the legal status of Canadian women. Her book covers changes in laws respecting the single woman and woman as wife, mother and citizen. It also deals with property, separation, divorce and women in the economy. It is factual in its citation of statutes and court decisions. What emerges is a raw and brutal landscape of the legal disabilities women have suffered. Dranoff's patient recital of facts had the effect on me of water torture. She makes no accusing or bitter editorial comments and does not philosophise about the immorality of discriminatory laws.

I recommend the book as an educational resource. I used it to prepare for a women's rights seminar for high school students and it was clear from many faces in the classroom that I had made my point as never before. Speaking of the struggle Canadian women went through to get equal rights to custody of their children, I told them that Canadian law first gave the father right to guardianship unless the mother could prove that the father was unfit. It was not until 1855 in Upper Canada that any Canadian women could get visiting rights to her own children if the father chose to deny them to her. In Alberta it was not until 1913 that a mother was given priority to be guardian of her children upon their father's death. British Columbia was the first province to recognize parents' equal rights to guardianship and custody. That was in 1917. Cold fact can be more powerful than philosophical generalization when speaking to the unconverted and I know I shall refer to Dranoff's book often in preparing talks.

The book is more than a litany of facts. There are numerous photographs including one of the Canadian women who have spoken out to change the laws and of judges who have made significant decisions on the legal status of women. There are margin notes which are excerpts from early writings of Canadian women. Facts, illustrations and personal accounts are combined in an attractive layout.

At the end of each chapter there are questions and comments "for consideration", suggestions "for action" and "for reading". A weakness of the book is that the points for consideration are not very exciting, suiting the book more for academic study then consciousness raising. There is a glossary of legal terms but the vocabulary throughout the book is university level.

As Dranoff demonstrates, women have fought since Canada's earliest years to change our laws. Her discussion of those women strengthened my own ambitions for change. I wish I could transfer the book's impact to others, like the lawyer who told me recently "the leaders of this so-called women's movement are demeaning themselves."

Pat Wright is a student in the Faculty of Law at the University of Alberta.

Right: illustration from Women in Canadian Life: Law. *Women could not be citizens in the early British colonies.*

THE VIOLENT HOME

Scream Quietly or the Neighbors Will Hear, by Erin Pizzey. Penguin, $1.95 paper.

review by Helen Melnyk

The title says it all.

This book on wife-battering doesn't make for comfortable reading. It deals with one of those subjects people would rather not hear about because it's ugly, socially unacceptable and too close to too many homes. Yet it's one of the most common of crimes.

In 1971, the author Erin Pizzey founded the Chiswick Women's Aid in London as a drop-in centre for women feeling isolated at home with their children. The doors were hardly open, however, before a stream of women fleeing with their children from abusive husbands began to pour in. The centre became on of the first refuges in the world for battered wives who previously had to suffer their terror in silence and solitude because they had nowhere to go and no one to talk to.

The publication of this book, first in Britain and then in North America last year, has brought one of the most pressing social problems out of the closet into the light. Pizzey documents the battle with indifferent social workers, doctors, politicians and police as the women sought protection and remedies to marital violence. She also documents the chronicles of desperation told by women who turned up on the centre's doorstep each day and in their letters flooding in from across the country.

In one letter a terrified woman begs: "Please can you help me? My husband ill-treats me and I can no longer stand it. I have no one to turn to. I am alone except for my one-year-old son. My husband is given to violent tempers and my arms at times have been black and blue through his punches. He butted me on the nose two weeks ago and I had a terrible nose-bleed. Then in bed one night he started to strangle me and it was not until I passed out that he realized what he had done. For days it was hard for me to swallow. Up to now I have been too ashamed to go anywhere for help . . ."

Such sorry stories are even more shocking when you consider they could be told by Canadian women today. Statistics show that a woman is safer walking the streets alone at night than sitting behind locked doors of her home. Edmonton city police estimate that 75 per cent of the 3,554 assaults reported in 1977 were cases of domestic violence. They also report a "reasonable" number

of homicides occur during domestic disputes although no specific figures are available.

Legal Aid which in Edmonton deals with about one case each day, calls the problem a crisis situation. Battered women have shown up in the office with crying children and paper bags filled with personal belongings. Some have been so badly beaten, counsellors have had to visit them in hospital for the initial interview.

Most major centres across Canada offer battered wives and their children shelter, although Edmonton has none — a shameful reflection of our indifference. Women who are daily victimized by violent husbands and who don't want to jeopardize the lives of their relatives and friends, have no escape. After their broken bones are mended and the gashes stitched up, they have nowhere to go but back home to endure further terror and violence. Most don't bother to press charges because they fear further beatings. When violent husbands are taken to court, chances are they will get off with a light sentence as in the case of an Edmonton woman who laid charges against her former husband for attempted murder after he tried to strangle her. The charge was reduced to common assault with the judge handing down a $50 fine.

Current laws afford the battered wife meagre protection. Restraining orders are not issued until a woman initiates divorce proceedings, a time-consuming process, according to legal aid. Peace bonds issued by civil courts have little teeth but as one counsellor points out, there's still no reason why they shouldn't be enforced.

In the violent home, the stereotyped roles of men and women are acted out to the extreme. The violence breeds more violence as hurt children grow into hurtful adults.

The economic dependence on the man who abuses her also keeps the battered wife in her place. Even the many women who work outside the home are acutely aware of the fact that their earnings are often not enough to support themselves and their children.

The greatest obstacle facing the victim of marital violence, however, is society's attitude towards her. Our attitudes towards the battered wife and rape victim are strikingly similar: both are somehow to blame for the assault and deserve what they got. Wife beating has a long tradition from the days a woman and her children were regarded as man's personal property. A spaniel, a woman and a walnut tree, the more they're beaten the better they be," says an old English proverb. Unfortunately, many of us still think that way today.

In the violent home, the stereotyped roles of men and women are acted out to the extreme. The violence breeds more violence as hurt children grow into hurtful adults. Sons who watched their fathers beat Mother become abusive husbands and daughters grow into wives who are accustomed to a clout on the head and a boot in the ribs as part of marital life.

In her book, Pizzey sensitively examines the whole problem and traces the patterns in the experiences of the different women. She studies why battering occurs and what hope there is for change. This book is a must on every thinking woman's (and man's) reading list. Hopefully, enough people will not only read it but put the book down determined to do something about the problem in their own community.

Helen Melnyk is on the staff of the Edmonton Journal.

TENEBRAE

A lone cardinal in an umber tree,
Mobile within a stone-still world.

Scarlet flick,
Scarlet flash . . . .

Skeletal branches within an umbral world.

Joy Stephenson

Joy Stephenson is a member of Gallery Chimera, a cooperative artists' gallery in Salem, Ontario. She is completing an honours degree in English at the University of Waterloo.

MARIAN ENGEL
continued from page 12

When you say you are a monomaniac about writing, does that mean that you can compartmentalize your life, can separate your writing from everything?

No, I can't. That's one good thing about being a parent. You have to stay with your kids. They change and grow and you have to work around them. They help to keep everything in perspective, although at times they're killing. I sometimes think they're too hard to deal with after 40.

Are your relationships with other people affected by your role as a writer?

With good people, no. With others, sometimes it's very difficult because they are interested in me, not as an individual, but as Marian Engel, the writer. Then too, writers look at the world in a particular way and that sometimes frightens people.

Do you feel that the fact that you are a woman affects your writing in some way?

Oh, yes, it affects the way that I perceive the world very much. It affects my writing because a part of my particular regionalism, if you can call it that, is my gender.

What do you mean exactly by gender as a region?

Well, my gender is important in determining what I write about. Women's experiences are a different place. Although probably the whole genre of women and women's problems, and women as problems is getting milked dry. We will have to go in another direction. We will probably have to pretend to be normal, or we'll lose our readers.

If our sex delineates us this way, where do you think women are going from here?

It seems to me that we have to deal with the problems of modern society. I feel that marriage is an outmoded institution. At the same time, I think that women have strong instincts towards childbearing. We ought to consider it as a privilege, and not a trap.

You mentioned dealing with the problems of modern society?

Yes, we need to learn about power structures and how they function, and not continue to write solely about women's problems. Although that can be a very saleable topic. You create a woman, put her in a female dilemma — and that's two month's rent. That sometimes bothers me.

One thing that nobody mentions about me is that for three years I was a library trustee in Toronto. I found this to be an extremely demanding, unpaid job. But it taught me a very great deal about the workings of power structures and how social change is brought about. For example, we made changes in the libraries' operations, not at the best time for the system, but when we had a majority of trustees to vote the changes in. That's power.

How did you and the others get into these boardroom positions?

Those are appointments. I don't know how other people got in. I was approached by one city group, and I simply asked all the aldermen I knew if I could have that seat on the board. I knew a lot of aldermen because my friends were going into city politics at that time. A whole bunch of us just decided to move in on the city.

Was that the first time that you had been involved in city politics?

The first time for that kind of involvement. But I had been chairman of the writer's union — with authors' compensation being one big issue there. Publishing is slower, though, and harder to change. City organizations are amazing. They really are grass roots.

Your last book was a children's book, My Name is not Odessa Yarker, *you are writer-in-residence this year at the University, and next year you will be teaching. Where do you go from here with your writing?*

My next novel is about alternate lifestyles, about Mary and Martha, about whether to be contemplative. Sometimes I'm afraid it's a feminist tract of the nastiest kind. But I want to go beyond kitchen sink realism. I want to write a mad surrealist novel. (I hope it will provide a new perspective for women.)

After two years, after all the publicity, after the success, how do you look at Bear *now?*

It's a strange book and I still think it's a good one. It's a novella about loneliness and sexuality. I'm only surprised at what a small, neat book it is.

Aritha van Herk recently won the McClelland and Stewart first novelist award of $50,000 for her book, Judith, *to be published in the fall.*

books

Remembering Ancestors

review by Joyce Marshall

Right Hand Left Hand, Dorothy Livesay. Press Porcepic Ltd., 1977. $15.00 cloth, $6.95 paper.

Before discussing *Right Hand Left Hand,* it is useful to settle what it is not. It is not, strictly, autobiography though it does record or at least sketch Dorothy Livesay's life and development as woman and artist during the 1930s. It is too personal and partial to provide a broad social picture of the period between the onset of the Depression and the outbreak of World War II. You might call it a memory grab-bag, the sort of thing you'd get if you went again and again into your head and came back with what you found — sights, impressions, assorted scraps and fragments, all contributing something to the sense of a time and a place.

To broaden and deepen this sense. Livesay has gone into other heads as well as her own. Mingled with examples of her writing of the time — poems, articles, letters, stories — there are drawings, photographs, newspaper clippings, play-bills, letters and occasional comments from friends. Speaking as herself in the present, Livesay has added a few notes and some biographical data. It has been argued that the book would have benefited from a stronger present voice — to sift, judge when required, at least set the material firmly in context. Perhaps, but then we'd have not only a tidier but a much tamer book. The poems and stories would have lost much of their head. And they are hot, quick with the life of their time. The times themselves were hot and the best, like Dorothy Livesay, who was twenty years old in 1929 and already a poet, were politically active. She clearly feels no need to judge or justify her past. I respect her for this. Nothing is sadder than the sight of someone trying to explain (which usually means explain away) an earlier self.

I lived through those years and, for me, reading *Right Hand Left Hand* was a journey back to a country I once knew very well. The Depression and the war it bred stopped being just a sentence or two well back in memory and became what they were at the time — traps closing on me and my friends, slowly, inexorably, day after day after day.

I also recommend the book to younger readers who may not be too sure of where we were as women then. It may surprise some that Livesay was to a considerable extent a feminist. The war shoved us back, shoved us right back into the 1950s with much to begin anew. But during the Depression, and this not only in leftist circles, many women were able to find outside marriage — even within it — freedom, comradeship, sharing. (On the intellectual and emotional level, it's true. Sharing stopped short at the housework.)

Because Livesay has edited neither her past nor her writing in that past, some of the vocabulary may put off younger readers. Even I wished at times that the tone of the early letters weren't so gushing and girlish, even when they dealt with economic conditions and sexual freedom, or that she didn't describe everything she liked as "swell." And then there's the reiteration of such phrases as "the common man" and "the masses." This is not as snobbish as it sounds. Naive certainly. Sentimental. But we did honestly believe in the existence of

from the cover by Catherine Wilson

someone called the Common Man (who in those days of unconcern about sexist vocabulary also included the Common Woman) though I never met anyone, woman or man, who admitted to Commonness. It was he/she who suffered most bitterly from the Depression and it was on her/his behalf that Livesay fought — as a social worker and an active member of a Communist Party cell. It was also he/she that writers, if they were "progressive" (another of our catchwords), must try to reach. This led to some pretty dead condescending writing. Livesay did her best but she was already too much in possession of her own voice to make it all the way.

Although it's tempting to dwell on its political and feminist aspects, *Right Hand Left Hand* can be skimmed — and it's not a book for hard consecutive reading — solely for the many examples of Livesay's early poetry and prose. There are some magnificent poems here — "Day and Night," "Depression Suit,""Lorca," "Catelonia," in fact all the poems about the Spanish Civil War. (Livesay has rather skimped the Spanish section. I'd liked to have seen more space given to what was for many the Cause of their lives.) The stories are on the whole more dated — too simplistic, the "boss" too blatant a villain, Common Man/Woman too noble in suffering. These should be read as history though a few, such as "Case Supervisor," a story about social workers caught in "the system," still speak to us today. As the whole book does. It is wise to remember ancestors. Some of them, human and social alike, are here.

Joyce Marshall lives in Toronto. Her short stories have appeared in many literary journals and in her book A Private Place, *published in 1975. She has translated books by Gabrielle Roy and other French writers and in 1976 won the Canada Council Translation Prize.*

A THIN DOCUMENTARY ON IRISH POLITICS

review by Maureen Hynes

Richard Deutsch. *Mairead Corrigan, Betty Williams,* Woodbury, New York: Barron's, 1977. $8.95 cloth.

The book *Mairead Corrigan Betty Williams* documents the birth and growth of the Peace Movement which seemed to be spreading like a "prairie fire" all across Britain and Ireland in 1976 and 1977; the "single spark" which ignited the movement was an all-too-common event in Belfast: the tragic deaths in August, 1976 of three children during a shooting incident between the Provisional IRA and the British Army. Mairead Corrigan and Betty Williams are two Belfast women who were galvanized into action by a conviction that violent senseless deaths of this sort had to be ended. A little more than a year after the founding of their movement, the two women were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Richard Deutsch, the author of *Mairead Corrigan Betty Williams,* is a French journalist who has been living in Belfast for five years. It is clear that his sympathies are very close to the Peace Movement's, for the tone of his writing is almost reverent. This is, in fact, the weakness of the book: he has unfortunately chosen to present merely a documentary of the Peace Movement rather than an analysis. As well, Deutsch seems to have written basically a thin book that has been plumped out with lengthy interviews and detailed descriptions of marches, meetings and tours. The book, originally written in French, also gives the impression that it has been hastily translated. *Mairead Corrigan Betty Williams* does, however, include a couple of surprises for the North American reader.

One is that Corrigan and Williams were only two of the three co-founders of the "Peace People". The third is a man, Ciaran McKeown, a respected journalist, and also one of the most important political figures in Northern Ireland today. McKeown has chosen to remain out of the glare of publicity despite his great ideological influence on the Peace Movement. Deutsch mysteriously offers little explanation for this decision.

The other surprise is, that the movement is in no way a women's movement. Corrigan and Williams were distressed when the Peace People were presented as feminists by the media abroad, partly because of McKeown's role in its founding, and also because "we never had a feminist purpose . . . The fact is that the women of Northern Ireland are not liberated and are not about to be liberated" (Williams).

The "purpose" of the movement is, of course, peace — a term which is never really defined, either in the programme of the organization or in the book. The three leaders strictly shun the idea of the movement having any political nature, but they do recognize that many very political problems — civil rights, housing, unemployment — must be solved. McKeown states, ". . . if some members want to transform it into a political party, then, at that point, I would leave the movement immediately and found a real peace movement . . . However, I want a political solution for Ireland."

There are several contradictions in the ideology of the Peace Movement which Deutsch does not analyze, or perhaps does not perceive as contradictions. They all revolve around the central policy that the movement is *not political.* Yet its leaders have repeatedly stated the British Army security forces "are the only legitimate forces of the rule of law".

A further contradiction is that Corrigan, Williams and McKeown believe that the ultimate outcome of their current phase of activities — community organization, rather than the mass rallies which marked the initial phase — might bring about a level of community autonomy that could lead to independence. "Independence," states Deutsch, is a prospect that "Ciaran (McKeown) and the executive committee are not very enthusiastic about".

Deutsch also explains that the Peace People will not make a "Troops Out" demand — not because of the political nature of such a demand, or because they want the British Army to remain in Northern Ireland, but because the movement "cannot undertake this crusade without alienating many of its members".

Supporting the British troops as the rule of law, refusing to demand their removal, and not being enthusiastic about independence in Northern Ireland are all political stands which have political bases and consequences. Perhaps Deutsch's personal support for the Peace Movement has made him blind to these contradictions, but to overlook them is certainly to over-simplify.

The conflict in Northern Ireland is one of the oldest and most complex in the world today. Its very complexity, which has been heightened in the past nine years, demands a particular sensitivity to the Irish people and their history. It is disappointing to see that Richard Deutsch, who is capable of this sensitivity, has chosen to simplify these crucial issues rather than to analyze them.

Maureen Hynes teaches English to immigrants at George Brown College. She has been active in Irish politics in Toronto.

CANADIAN FICTION MAGAZINE #28

THE SPECIAL ISSUE

FEATURING MAVIS GALLANT

including new fiction, worksheets, photos, an exclusive interview at her home in Paris with editor GEOFF HANCOCK, art by JOE PLASKETT, bibliography, and further contributions by RONALD HATCH, PETER STEVENS, ROBERTSON DAVIES, and GEORGE WOODCOCK.

By subscription: 4 issues $9/year, $10/U.S.A. Single copy $3.75 (inc. postage) Available March 1978 from:

CANADIAN FICTION MAGAZINE
P.O. BOX 46422 STATION G
VANCOUVER, B.C., CANADA V6R 4G7

MUSIC OF THE ANIMAL

review by Rebecca Smith

Susan Musgrave, *Selected Strawberries and Other Poems.* Sono Nis Press, 1977. $4.95 paper, $10.00 cloth.

In the Preface to her latest book of poetry, *Selected Strawberries and Other Poems,* British Columbia poet Susan Musgrave explains, "While most poets eventually published a *Selected Poems* I would much prefer mine to be a *Selected Strawberries.*"

Strangely, the title fits this collection, which contains revisions of all poems from *Entrance of the Celebrant* (1972) and *Grave-Dirt and Selected Strawberries* (1973) that Musgrave wants to retain in her canon.

Musgraves poems will make persistant readers discover some truths that are already "in the body," known but not spoken.

The poetry in "Fire-Feast," "Kiskatinaw Songs," and "Witchery Way" — the first three sections in the book — require the care and intensity in reading that wild strawberries require in picking. They are not easy reading; they are highly crafted (in the best sense of that word). They remind one of some Imagist poems, with their common but precise word choices, with their reliance on image creation and evocation rather than description, and with their resultant concentration. If the poetry "works" for a reader, it creates an internal explosion of response and meaning (Remember how the first strawberry of the springtime seems to explode in your mouth?), but there are no external fireworks in Musgrave's poems. In "Witchery Way," one reads: People don't tell out/ about these things;/ they keep them/ down here in the body." Musgrave's poems do not "tell out" about life and death and love and hate, but they will make persistent readers discover some truths that are already "in the body," known but not spoken, felt, but not clarified.

Musgrave's poetic vocabulary is filled with bones, blood, witches, fish, trees, dogs, Shaman, toads, water — for all the poems indicate, 20th century technology does not exist. Even the clever nonsense of the last section of the collection, in which Musgrave mythologizes the strawberry in poems

Susan Musgrave *Sono Nis Press*

such as "Strawberry at Colonus," "Brave New Strawberry," or "Ash Strawberry," makes the reader focus her attention on objects and occurences in the natural world, rarely on those of the technological world.

The poetry in *Selected Strawberries and Other Poems* is a challenge without becoming a puzzle. I hope that Musgrave's skillful craftmanship and imaginative imagery will in poems to follow be even more imbued with whatever that special breadth and depth of human understanding that poets possess is called, creating poems that are even more internally explosive. Then the "music of the animal," which Susan Musgrave obviously values and wants others to become more responsive to, and of which she writes in "Entrance of the Celebrant," will sound even more resolutely:

If you could see me,
where I am and where
the forest grows thick and into me;
if you could reach
the darkest centre of myself
and still know the sign of the animal
where it lies apart inside your skin—

then I would say,
that kiss is *my* kiss;

where our lips have touched
were others, and mine are still.

No one forgets
the music of the animal.

Rebecca Smith teaches in the English department at the University of P.E.I.

DIALOGUE AT LAST

review by Sandy Pentland

Feminism and Marxism: a Place to Begin, A Way To Go, Dorothy E. Smith. New Star Books, 1977. $1.95 paper, $8.95 cloth.

In this concise and readable book, Dorothy Smith initiates the search for a 'place to stand' as a Marxist and a feminist. By means of a historical account of her own involvement in the women's movement, she attempts to place the discussion in a context which will facilitate this search. Beginning with an analysis of the importance of sisterhood as a basis for discovering the objectivity of women's oppression, the author raises some of the problematic implications of feminism as a political theory, particularly its failure to provide the means to understand the processes involved in women's oppression. Many years of experience in the women's movement have taught her that it is not feasible to blindly try to unite women politically *across* class lines.

You cannot realistically attempt to change the way things are, without a clear understanding of precisely how women are oppressed in capitalist society, which requires a historical analysis of how this oppression has developed and changed over time. Dorothy Smith explains how, as a feminist attempting to understand the origins of women's oppression, she came to recognize the utility of a Marxist analysis. This analysis has led the author to the conclusion that the oppression of women cannot be ended without a *fundamental* change in the economic and social relations of society, but that a fundamental change of this nature will not *necessarily* end the oppression of women.

Smith understands the concern of many Marxists about the divisiveness of feminism, but at the same time, rejects the idea that the unity necessary for the building of a successful revolutionary movement and party can be built on the oppression of women. Women must not wait expectantly for some post-revolutionary miracle to provide their liberation, but instead must struggle to overthrow their oppression within the revolutionary process. This is a very difficult task, as it means that both women and men must overcome years of socialization which runs counter to this thinking.

According to Smith "Marxists begin from the position of men in the society, just as do the political and economic ideologists of the bourgeoisie." This is a charge that Marxists must take seriously. If women are going to actively participate in the struggle for a new society, it cannot be a society which is built on the continued oppression of half the population. As true revolutionary people, we must work together to create a society characterized by the absence of all oppression.

A a woman who operates from a Marxist perspective I have always had very negative feelings about feminism. This book made me look at feminism in a new light.

Dorothy Smith has something important to say to both Marxists and feminists. As a woman who operates from a Marxist perspective, I have always had very negative feelings about feminism. This book has made me look at feminism in a new light and forced me to recognize that I had thrown out the potentialities of feminism along with its defects. Those of us, both men and women, who are serious about working for fundamental structural change in our society, have been issued a challenge by Dorothy Smith. She has provided us with 'a place to begin, a way to go', and now it is up to us.

Sandy Pentland has taught anthropology at the University of Alberta and worked until recently as an organizer for the People's Food Commission in Edmonton. She now lives in Montreal.

ECONOMICS AND DAY CARE

review by Leslie Bella

Day Care and Public Policy in Ontario, by Michael Krashinsky, Published for the Ontario Economic Council by University of Toronto Press, 1977. $6.50 paper.

Krashinsky is an economist concerned about the economic efficiency of day care. His major finding in this study is that subsidized day care is an inefficient way of redistributing income from the rich to the poor, and his conclusion is that day care subsidies should be replaced by total deductability of child care expenses for income tax purposes.

There are three prongs to his argument; first, that organized day care is, and must be, expensive; second, that informal family or neighborhood child care arrangements are available, suitable, and less expensive; and third, that a woman whose income from employment would be low should remain home with her small children, not induced into the work force by subsidized day care.

Krashinsky is right when he says organized day care has to be more expensive in the future. Staff salaries are a large part of day care costs, and staff numbers cannot be cut without reducing the standard of care. Salaries in this women's ghetto occupation have been notoriously low, and have to be increased, not reduced.

His second point, on the suitability of informal neighborhood arrangements, is more dubious. Krashinsky relies on surveys of parent opinion of the quality of day care their children receive, which showed that parents were overwhelmingly satisfied, even with informal neighborhood arrangements. From my own knowledge of the day care field in Alberta I know that private arrangements can be suitable, but they are often hazardous. There are occasional horror stories of abuse or neglect, and there are also problems when care is adequate (with a "trusted neighbor or friend" according to Krashinsky). The arrangements are not stable, and can break down unpredictably. The baby sitter's children become sick; she becomes ill, or pregnant, or decides to take on an outside job; her husband changes jobs, and they move out of town; her mother is sick, and she has to leave for a week. This "inexpensive" resource lacks the assurance of continuity, of care that is essential for the small children of mothers in full time employment. Another problem with these "inexpensive" arrangements is that they are exploitive of the women who babysit. They work for far less than the minimum wage, without compensation for the wear and tear on their homes, providing long periods of loving care and attention for very little reward.

Even Krashinsky is not unequivocal on his last point, the necessity to keep low income parents home with their children. He knows that in some situations a child's welfare may be better served if she is in day care, rather than at home with her parent. He would limit this, however, to child protection situations, where the child is threatened by some pathology or inadequacy in the family. This ignores the broadly preventive aspect of day care services, which recognizes that

mothers who would be happier working are better mothers when they are working — happier in themselves, and with their children.

Krashinsky recommends that day care subsidies be abolished, and that the total cost of day care be tax deductible for working mothers. He calculates that this would redistribute income to the poor, rather than to the day care institutions. Total deductibility, certainly, particularly if both parents' incomes are included, but not at the sacrifice of the few high standard day care facilities available to low income families. Other less prosperous nations have been more generous than us in providing for day care. A narrow economic model, based on economic efficiency, ignores our obligations to both children and their parents, and ignores the potential of expanded day care in Canada.

Leslie Bella teaches recreation administration at the University of Alberta. As a day care parent and student of public policy she is disgusted with Alberta's new day care legislation.

LONELY REALITIES

review by Donna Rae

It's Easy To Fall On The Ice, Ten Stories by Elizabeth Brewster. Oberon. 1977. $9.95 cloth, $4.95 paper.

That Elizabeth Brewster is a master of the "plain style" is as evident in these ten stories as it is in her poetry. With just one line, at the conclusion of what seems a rather tedious story of cautious people failing to connect, she lifts the whole into the realm of something quite wonderful: "are you really all that mad at me because I was lonely?" In another story a naive young woman in the process of becoming converted to Catholicism just misses a commonplace seduction. And why? "She found herself all at once spun round, placed on her back with her legs jerked wide apart." After a "solitary overwhelming convulsion" the boy is tranquil and sleeps while she is left trembling and trying to think of her conversion.

As the above suggests, Brewster's forte is gentle irony. In the title story, it is not only easy to fall on the ice no matter how careful one is, it is also easy and unimportant if one is resilient. One simply bounces back up. Sometimes however, her irony is not so gentle. It can be quite piercing. And here, I believe, Brewster's real strength lies. She is not only an astute observer, but possesses a fierce sense of integrity. On the one hand a young woman can be convinced that to be an "old maid" would be the final humiliation (as so many in the fifties did and still do if the truth were known) and on the other, wonder what is so terrible about a man having two wives. Western institutions are not perfect and neither is Western marriage.

Stating issues and quoting lines out of context distorts Brewster's art even more than most, however, because she is such a fine and careful craftsman. She has been criticized for this and accused of smothering her characters or the readers. I suspect the problem lies instead, in her penchant for cautious, train-sick, sea-sick heroines. It *is* difficult to be interested in a woman who yearns for bacon and eggs in Paris and who cannot or dare not order in French. I would agree with the reviewer who states that the stories lose impact in a collection and would fare better individually.

Nonetheless, read one at a time, these stories are exciting. It is not often in fiction one finds a dying middle-aged woman desirous of leaving her money to her daughter-in-law who is on the verge of separating, in order that the young woman will have the opportunity of escape if she wants it. Nor have Canadians and East Indians often been compared with such acuity. Do not be mislead by Brewster's seemingly limited scope. Her canvas is not trivial.

Donna Rae teaches in the English Department at Grant MacEwan Community College in Edmonton. She is completing a collection of short stories.

PRISM international will be twenty years old next year, and we are planning to make a few changes in celebration of the occasion. As a first step, we are devoting a series of special issues to poetry, prose, and possibly drama, written by Canadians under thirty years of age. Essays and statements by Canadian writers will also be included.

In the course of its career, *PRISM international* has published many of Canada's foremost writers when they were first appearing in print. Some of these were: Margaret Atwood, George Bowering, Michael Ondaatje, John Newlove, and Margaret Laurence. But this will be the first time we have set out to concentrate exclusively on a new generation of writers.

With this series, *PRISM* will continue to reflect and explore the changing scene of contemporary Canadian literature. You are invited to help us celebrate.

1 Year: $5.00 *2 Years: $9.00* *3 Years: $13.00*

PRISM

Department of Creative Writing
University of British Columbia
Vancouver, B.C.
V6T 1W5

AFTER ANGER, CHANGE?

review by Barbara Novak

The Country of Mapmakers, by Kim Maltman. Fiddlehead, 1977.
Landfall, by Roo Borson. Fiddlehead, 1977.
Time and Untime, by Kathleen Forsythe. Fiddlehead, 1977.

Thematically, these three books of poetry are startlingly similar. The poets have explored that critical point during a love relationship at which communication becomes strained, if not impossible. The fears, frustrations and ultimate futility of trying to be understood or to understand is expressed by each poet with varying degrees of anguish.

Maltman's "The Courtship Song" begins: "I would reach out/ but these hands/ might pass you through/ like x-rays/ and then what?" This can be compared to "The Lake", by Borson, which begins with a powerful image describing a similar experience: "Under the tongue:/ the lake of which nothing can be said."

Forsythe struggles with a dual fear of being/ not being understood (both conditions cause fear). Yet she, at least, has arrived at a definition of communication which implies acceptance of limitations and a sense of resolution: "Only that in you/ which is me/ can hear what I'm saying/ Only that in you/ which is me/ can you ever love". It is interesting that of the three poets, Forsythe is thematically the most diverse. Many of her poems, though highly personal, take the reader beyond the poet. Generally, they are less analytical and more mature. And some are neither didactic nor therapeutic, but simply revel in their own imagery, such as "Heron", a highly-polished haiku: "Heron is an old/ hunched grey man on stilts./ Still-eyed/ he stalks the sea's life."

The women in Maltman's poems are trapped creatures, struggling to escape — or at least to ignore their conditions. Walls, doors and windows feature prominently in the collection. The presence of the wind suggests the spirit, imagination and the promise of a fuller life. Fear gives way to a paralyzing apathy in Maltman's "Still Life", in which a profile of Anywoman emerges through a process of negative definition: "Her hands are neither empty/ nor especially delicate,/ her eyes are not dark." Even the moon reinforces the suggestion of a woman imprisoned: "The woman's skin is like the moonlight,/ which is like the wall."

Roo Borson favours the use of the first person to describe similar conditions. While in Maltman's poetry the sense of imprisonment is evoked by interior/exterior imagery. Borson expresses similar ideas through the use of dark/light contrasts. The title poem, for example, provides a strong metaphor for the limits of knowledge (knowledge of self, of life, or of other people):

Sunlight soothes;
Take it, this is all there is
The lawn tied
neatly on the underside
The further darkness
under skin.

The poets have explored that critical point during a love relationship at which communication becomes strained, if not impossible.

Like so many recent books of poetry by women, these three volumes are both depressing to read and deeply moving. They express frustration — even rage — at the lonely realities of the twentieth century. But for there to be anger there must first be awareness. It comes as little suprise, then, to find these themes recurring. After awareness, anger . . . after anger, perhaps change?

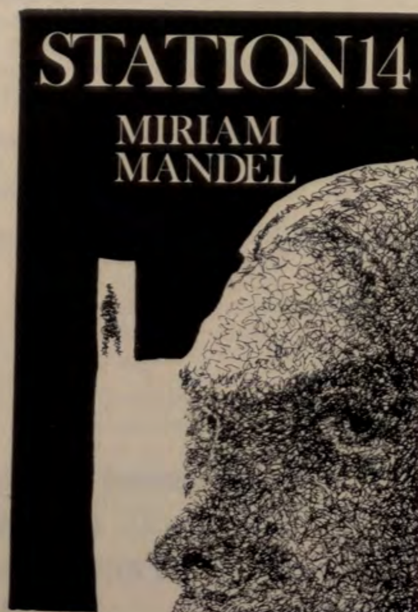
Barbara Novak is a freelance writer and editor in Toronto.

NeWest Press is pleased to announce the publication of

STATION 14
Poems by Miriam Mandel

Miriam Mandel won the Governor-General's award for poetry in 1973 for her book LIONS AT HER FACE. In this her second book , she explores the themes of madness and love, her Jewish heritage and the daily imprisonments we all experience. The text is illustrated by the well-known Edmonton artist Harry Savage and the cover drawing is by Norman Yates.

40 pages, illustrated
ISBN 0-920316-08-5 paper $4.95
Available now at your bookstore or direct from NeWest Press.



FACTS AND REASSURANCES

review by Judy-Diane Cooney, M.D.

The Lila Nachtigall Report, by Dr. Lila Nachtigall with Jean Heilman. Putnam, 1977. $9.50 cloth.

The Lila Nachtigall Report is basically a 234 page summary of menopause, complete with definitions, symptoms, explanations, treatments, and most important of all — reassurances. I found it to be solid easy reading and I am sure it would be understood and appreciated by all women, and many doctors too.

Dr. Nachtigall is an associate professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at New York University School of Medicine, and is Director of Gynecologic Endocrinology both at Bellevue Hospital and at Goldwater Memorial Hospital. She is an endocrinologist who has just completed a ten year study of estrogen replacement therapy (E.R.T.) in menopausal women.

In her book, Dr. Nachtigall begins by explaining a woman's basic body physiology from puberty to menopausal years. Her explanations are complete and accurate. She goes on to describe menopausal symptoms and, most importantly, the wide variation of these symptoms among women. She emphasizes important points that doctors may fail to mention during the hectic pace of an office day, or patients may be too embarrassed to ask. For example: continue to use a safe form of contraception for at least one year after your last period — menopausal babies do happen!

She mentions important points that doctors may fail to mention during the hectic pace of an office day.

Dr. Nachtigall elaborates on the estrogen controversy as treatment for menopausal symptoms. She believes, as I do, that each patient's evaluation for therapy is an individual one since some women have medical contra-indications for estrogen. She goes on to describe currently acceptable treatment schedules and stresses the importance of close monitoring in women on estrogen replacement therapy.

The last chapter discusses finding the right doctor to suit the individual patient. Dr. Nachtigall emphasizes that the main consideration is to find a doctor who is competent and easy to talk to, and also one who doesn't dismiss menopausal symptoms as "something you can forget if you work at it."

Find a doctor who doesn't dismiss menopausal symptoms as "something you can forget if you work at it."

I think all books have some facets which the individual reader finds he or she could do without. In Dr. Nachtigall's book, the text is interlaced with quotations from various women the authors interviewed. I found them distracting and often off the subject being discussed.

Otherwise, the book is very worthwhile and accurate and I would highly recommend it to all women. It prompted me to do a great deal of thinking about my attitudes toward menopause, and I'm sure it will do the same for others.

Dr. Cooney practices medicine in Edmonton.

"Scholarly journals are seldom instruments of change, but, as part of a social and intellectual movement, **Signs** has that potential."
—**Margot Peters**, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*

SIGNS: Journal of Women in Culture and Society

FEATURE ISSUE ON WOMEN IN EDUCATION

Following the general acceptance in the past few years of women's studies as a recognized part of university curricula, the Summer 1978 issue of **Signs** evaluates both the historical background and the present status of women in education and points out new trends in the discipline of women's studies.

Articles include

Patricia Albjerg Graham, Expansion and Exclusion: A History of Women in Higher Education
Sharon L. Sutherland, The Unambitious Female: A Data-based Discussion of Women's Low Professional Aspirations
Lorelei Brush, Alice R. Gold, and **Marni G. White**, The Paradox of Intention and Effect: A Women's Studies Course
Mary J. Oates and **Susan Williamson**, Women's Colleges and Women Achievers
Marcia Guttentag, Lorelei Brush, Marnie W. Mueller, and **Marni G. White**, Evaluating Women's Studies: A Decision-Theoretic Approach
Gloria Kaufman, Juan Luis Vives on the Education of Women
Anita Clair Fellman, Teaching with Tears: Soap Opera as a Tool in Teaching Women's Studies
Nancy Adler, Women in Higher Education: Some Speculations on the Future

The issue also features two important reviews by **Elaine Marks** and **Carolyn Burke** on feminism and women's studies in France, and an essay, *The Female Reader*, by **Mary Wollstonecraft** reprinted for the first time since its original publication.

Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society is an interdisciplinary quarterly devoted to the new scholarship about women. Now in its third year, **Signs** has already established itself as one of the most respected journals in the field.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

One-year subscription to **Signs** to begin with volume 3, number 4, Summer 1978
☐ Institutions $20.00 ☐ Individuals $15.00 ☐ Students $12.00
In countries other than USA add $1.50 for postage
The feature issue on **Women in Education** (volume 3, number 4)
☐ Institutions $5.00 ☐ Individuals $4.00
Name ____
Address ____
City ____ State/Country ____ Zip ____
Please mail with your check or purchase order to The University of Chicago Press, 11030 Langley Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60628

BO

THE CONFESSIONAL TRAP

review by Aritha van Herk

Station 14, by Miriam Mandel. NeWest Press, 1977. $4.95, paper.

There are a few good images in this slim book of poems. A few. For the most part, *Station 14* is inconsistent, slipping from brilliant visual images to dull and prosaic lines. Our imagination is captured by the person leaping to her suicide,

> with
> an orange balloon
> in
> my hand —
> a poppy
> red
> in my mouth.

At the same time, we are repulsed by the heavy plodding of the persona's self-conscious personal analysis:

> I am an embarrassment
> to my family
> a financial burden
> to my erstwhile husband.

Mandel's poetry suffers from an ostentatious didacticism that has no place in poetry. When the persona says, "I am manic/I hate it" the reader experiences no sympathy whatsoever. What one expects to find in poetry is a feeling or a sense of emotion rather than an intrusive voice that dictates the emotion. Mandel's persona repeatedly tells us how much she hates and how much she fears, but seldom do we get a distinctive awareness of that hatred or fear.

At her best, Mandel can convey a crystalline image that isolates an experience perfectly. In a poem about a Chinese Art Exhibition the poet captures with absolute clarity the peculiar quality of the paintings:

> black and white
> each stroke
> a particular delicacy
> like veins
> in the
> forehead
> of an exquisite redhead,
> a fair child

At her worst, Mandel wallows in a kind of emotional purgation that does not work as poetry.

Although the good lines ultimately vindicate the book, this collection made me question exactly what poetry is today. It should be more than merely the arrangement of the lines on a page. It should be more than prosaic or didactic statements. And it should escape emotionalism, the confessional trap. If Mandel were to hone her words more sharply and avoid *telling* so much, she could be a very fine poet indeed.

Branching Out

Now in its Fifth Year

Gift Specials: for $1.00 extra your gift card will also include a *Branch Out!* button with our tree logo on it.

Please send: ..... 6 issues ($6.00)*
..... 12 issues ($11.00)*

of *Branching Out* to:

Name ....

Address ....

City ....

Province .... Postal Code ....

Payment enclosed .... Please bill me ....

Include a *Branch Out!* button: .....

Please send: ..... 6 issues ($6.00)*
..... 12 issues ($11.00)*

of *Branching Out* to:

Name ....

Address ....

City ....

Province .... Postal Code ....

Payment enclosed .... Please bill me ....

Include a *Branch Out!* button: .....

Make cheque or money order payable to *Branching Out*
Box 4098, Edmonton, Alberta T6E 4S8
*Add $1.00 per year for U.S.A., $2.00 per year overseas.

You'll never know, Eve, till you ask... so ask us!

at the Alberta Women's Bureau

If Eve had been able to ask someone about her rights and responsibilities within the law, perháps she would have decided against the apple.

It's hard to make the right decision without all the facts, especially on issues that affect you as a woman. Knowing the particulars and procedures might not get you into paradise, but at least you won't unwittingly invite the punishment Eve did. So ask us — about any topic you're interested in. We can probably help.

Information sheets on the following subjects are presently available — free of charge. Check those of interest to you and mail this coupon or phone 427-2470.

TO: ALBERTA WOMEN'S BUREAU
1402 CENTENNIAL BUILDING
10015 - 103 AVENUE
EDMONTON, ALBERTA T5J 0H1

Please send me, free of charge, the information sheets I have checked below.

- ☐ Changing Your Name
- ☐ Wills and Estates for Albertans
- ☐ Children: Custody and Access
- ☐ How to Prepare a Meaningful Resume
- ☐ Helping You Cope with Widowhood
- ☐ A Woman's Rights
- ☐ The Illegitimate Child
- ☐ Establishing a Good Credit Record
- ☐ Alberta Labour Legislation of Interest to Women in the Paid Work Force
- ☐ Probate Procedure

NAME ____________________

ADDRESS ____________________

CITY ____________________ POSTAL CODE __________

Alberta
WOMEN'S BUREAU