

BLACK MARIA

women speak



vol. 3 no. 4

mujer de dos rios - woman of two rivers



graphic by Chris Leslie

somewhere
in a clear place against
the sun
you are dancing with a stick
to quicken the eyes of blindmen

m. patamia

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Sister Fly's Shoo Fly Pie Blues

Sister, sister, won't you listen?
Let me in to your cozy kitchen,
leave those ears and windows open.
Honey, you got nothing to lose.
I'm really not a threat-
we'll talk or walk or I'll amuse
you with a softshoe and treat
you to some of Sister Fly's
Shoo Fly Don't Bother Me Blues.

They kicked me out of the county jail
claiming I caused too much trouble,
but every place I try to settle,
a balled fist or a nightstick says:
"Move your dirty feet
or else I'll give you worse than a bruise."
I shrug, I fret, and I get
a bad case of Sister Fly's
Shoo Fly Don't Bother Me Blues.

I visited Mister Senator,
buzzed and buzzed my poor mouth sore
and since he didn't speak, I swore
I'd had enough of this abuse.
I charged him with deceit.
He whispered, "Don't you make a fuss."
And I think I'd delete
a verse or two from Sister Fly's
Shoo Fly Don't Bother Me Blues.

Once I courted a preacher's daughter,
he called me a filthy squatter,
her mama grabbed for a big wire swatter:

"Fly or die-your time to choose."

Again I feel its heat
on the backside of my highway shoes,
and so I hit the street
singing Sister Fly's
Shoo Fly Don't Bother Me Blues.

Honey, stage a sit-in at the shop,
honey, please stop stirring that poison soup.
Another bomb's about ready to drop.
When they come, before you use
an epithet that you'll regret
and find your nose facing a hose,
instead you just belt out
a chorus of Sister Fly's
Shoo Fly Don't You Bother Me No More Blues.

MELISSA CANNON



photograph by Arny Christine Straayer

Coming of Age in Summerville

You are twelve
Boxing in the backyard pit-
White sun, black marker stone.
Elizabeth,
For years your shadow,
Counts the knockout seconds.
What else can she do?
Eight - nine - ten
For she is nine,
And you are leaving
Like beach sand receding
Under feet she cannot move.
She has no name
For the animal you,
Teased out by boys
With macho crumbs
Which you eat like favored peanuts
In their zoo.
(Beyond them, insinuating cockatoos
Cry from jungular high schools.)

At dusk
You prepare
The Grave of the Child,
Burying toys carefully,
One by one,
Then digging them up,
Touching them once again
With your small, kind voice
Before tossing sod upon the sound.

PAT GRAY



photograph by Arny Christine Straayer

Veneray

Father,
You woke your
Damp-haired daughter
(Habitual noon-sleeper)
To view deer poised
A hill away-
Taut moment
In the foggy dawn.

But in my upstairs room
Such animals traverse my walls,
Their shadows closing round
The chenille pasture.
They nibble at my nipples, knees,
Pass on to riper fields,
While outside panthers prowl,
Encircle,
And lie down.

Father,
My preserve was lost
The day you brought the carcass
To my sixth-grade class-
Leaping doe felled with your bow and arrow-
Beauty you loved to watch,
Could not touch,
Were proud to kill.

PAT GRAY

In the Time of Carrie Carlotta

Leonora is flattening the lump of pie dough, wiping the rolling pin with flour and then rolling the dough outward in all directions. She is thinking of Carrie Carlotta, the sister who has not spoken to her in twelve years. Twelve years is a long time for no talking between sisters. Leonora slides her blunt fingers under the limp dough and lifts it into the air, sprinkling more flour onto the wax paper, then flipping the round crust over for more rolling. Think of how many pies she has made in twelve years. And Leonora is not a steady pie maker. Think of all the pies made by all the women of the world in those twelve years. That is how long since Carrie Carlotta and Leonora have spoken together. Twelve pumpkin pies at least for each woman and mince meat besides for some. Apple and cherry pies to empty all the trees that grow around the women's houses, multiplied by the number of children each has, who go out in different directions and return with pails of blackberries or gooseberries. But it is the custard pies and the pudding pies that really contain the silence. For it is when the women stir their puddings that their thoughts wander to faraway sisters, and it is when the liquid begins to thicken that the women must give up their longings to the whirlpool puddings.

Leonora's back is rounded and her head leans forward from looking many times into an oven or leaning over a crib to pat powder on the rump of one of her seven children. When Leonora sits on the front porch steps, bouncing the youngest child on one thigh, her other children scattered below her, she tells stories of Carrie Carlotta, but never does she say that Carrie Carlotta is a real person, her own sister.

Carrie Carlotta told her family that she was a butterfly, and they laughed. She rose up in the middle of the night and stole the delicate curtains from the kitchen window. Then pinning one to each of her nightgown sleeves, she danced in the yard outside her mother's bedroom. The pastel colors received the moonlight as she silently twirled around. The next morning, Carrie Carlotta's mother told that she had

dreamed of Carrie Carlotta as a butterfly. The family laughed at such a dream.

One of Leonora's children is giggling. It is the middle girl who best loves the butterfly story. This girl is so much like Carrie Carlotta, thinks Leonora. This girl whispers to fairies and chants to the witches, and when she is sent to pick cucumbers, she dances down the rows like a ballerina singing to her little green elves. How Carrie Carlotta would laugh if she could see this.

It is not fair, thinks Leonora. Such a tiny mistake twelve years ago, still not one letter between sisters. She rises and walks down the steps through her children. "Go play," she says over her shoulder as she leans to count the daffodils. A fat caterpillar is crawling between the stems, and Leonora says, "Let it be," as if one of her children were beside her. Then she remembers the youngest, who is anxious for the irises to bloom, and she runs to find her in one of the rooms of the house.

The youngest is sitting before Leonora's mirror smearing her face with her mother's red lipstick. Only three years old and already with bright lips and cheeks. This one is surely a budding Carrie Carlotta. The little girl winks both eyes at the mother and begins to color in her fingernails with the lipstick. "Oh baby," laughs Leonora. "It will be everywhere except in the tube and there will be no lipstick left for my going to town." But when she reaches for the tube, she sees the eyes of her child fading. "Shall I tell you another Carrie Carlotta story," asks Leonora, and the child claps her little red hands.

Carrie Carlotta went to the dime store and bought a ring for ten cents. She told her school friends that the tiny stones in a circle were diamonds, and that the giant stone in the middle was a ruby worth ten thousand dollars. When her friends asked why a poor girl like Carrie Carlotta would have such a valuable ring, she said that she had stolen it from a queen. Though Carrie Carlotta tried to act elegant, it was only two days until there was dirt on her fingers and beneath the large stone, which then looked very purple. "What kind of ruby is this," asked her friends, "that turns from red to purple in two days?" But Carrie Carlotta already had prepared the answer. She had been visited by an angel who told her to return the stolen ruby. The queen was so pleased by this act of honesty that she made a special stone for Carrie Carlotta, a deep pur-

ple stone made by squeezing together ten thousand irises from the queen's own garden.

* * * * *

For the next ten years, Leonora baked no pies. Every evening she would stand at the sink and move the dishrag in circles on each plate, then look into her shiny reflection and say, "why?" Her children would stand quietly around her, drying or stacking the dishes or wiping the top of the stove, some thinking why has she stopped baking pies, others thinking for what is she asking why, and still others thinking why doesn't she tell the Carrie Carlotta stories anymore.

In the mornings, she'd sweep the kitchen floor. Then handing the broom to a child who would proceed to sweep the front porch, Leonora would pick up the mop and push it first sopping wet, then wrung out, over each portion of the linoleum. Some mornings she'd scrub out the oven, scraping with a knife at the black crusty places. Other mornings, she'd defrost the ice box, boiling water in pans on the stove, lifting them into the freezer, chipping away at the ice until, little by little, it filled a tray that she carried to dump in the sink. Not a month later, it'd have to be done again. Well, if she was defrosting anyway, she might as well wipe up the milk spills and the jelly stuck on the door shelf and clean out the vegetable drawers.

Of course the children made their own beds; she had good children, but every now and then she'd better check to see if they ever once thought of sweeping underneath them. They could do that while she rubbed down the sink, stool, and bathtub. Cleansing powder made no dent in that rust stain, but one of these days Leonora's continual rubbing was going to catch up with it.

There was one thing in particular that Leonora did not want to do. Wind the clocks. Every single morning of a person's life, the clocks need to be wound, one Big Ben in the kitchen, one Baby Ben on the upstairs hall cabinet. For the first seven years, each of the children had taken a one year turn at being responsible for this winding. But for the last three years, Leonora had done it. Oh, she had tried to vary it, winding slow, winding in fast spurts, winding with her eyes closed, holding the clock to her ear as she wound, oh she couldn't stand that, winding at different times of the day. If someone would just accidentally knock that

thing off the shelf, she often thought.

On Saturday mornings, Leonora and two children would pull the wagon down the road and buy groceries for the week. On Saturday afternoons, Leonora dusted the stairs and bannister, sitting for a few minutes on each step, wiping around each groove of the bannister pole, gazing into the past for a moment, then moving on to the next lower step. When she got to the bottom she'd have to stop remembering Carrie Carlotta and start paying attention to dinner. There are only so many times that a woman can cook something before the smell of it makes her nauseous. Leonora was barely eating at all these days.

On the days that Leonora and her children did laundry, they folded it into fourteen separate piles, one each for the seven children, one for the mother, towels, sheets, tablecloths and chair covers, throw rugs, a pile of socks for the younger children to match up, and a basket of ironing to be done later. Leonora watched out the window at one of the older children gathering the clothes in off the line. Oh, she thought and felt her body jump slightly, she looks just like Carrie Carlotta when she walks. The girl was strutting along quickly beside the line, unclasping the clothespins with her right hand and letting the clothes fall still stiff into a pile over her left shoulder which leaned back a bit. It could have been Carrie Carlotta playing dress up lady in Mother's clothes, shoulders back, toes pointed forward beneath a skirt to midcalf, right arm outstretched, and left arm bent stiffly to carry Mother's purse.

Leonora sat down. A pain was developing in her back and rising to her neck. I mustn't become ill, she thought, for tomorrow we begin the spring housecleaning, washing the windows and woodwork, washing and ironing the curtains. She rubbed her neck. Well, if she were ill, the children would do all that for her. She could just sit in bed and do the mending, buttons, hems and knee patches. She could even give the children haircuts from bed and clip their nails. Yes, she enjoyed giving haircuts. Leonora never got tired of cutting all the hair. She reached for her neck again. Her head was beginning to throb. "Help me into bed children." For three days, Leonora slept soundly.

* * * * *

Memory approaches to claim Leonora's mind. She and Carrie Carlotta are sitting at each side of their mother's death bed. The moth-

er's face is lacquered with the wrinkles of living, but her lips are cracking and dry from not speaking. Carrie Carlotta is talking into her mother's ear. "Tomorrow, we will carry the cushions from the house to the back yard. Then we will sit underneath the sycamore tree and spread the white tablecloth in front of us." Leonora touches a damp rag to her mother's lips, one of many rags that has been made from the white tablecloth, and looks curiously at Carrie Carlotta. "Then she will pour the white wine, and I will fry up some chicken wings."

It was as she died that she smiled. But as she smiled, she died. Leonora bowed her head and filled the damp rag with her silent tears. "Yes Mother, chicken wings! We will eat only the wings, and then we will dance so fast in a circle that our spinning will rise in the sky." Leonora lifted her eyes from the wet rag to an even greater pain as she watched Carrie Carlotta still talking into her mother's ear.

"Come, Carrie Carlotta. We must rest and we must let our mother rest." Leonora put her arm around Carrie Carlotta and led her to bed. But in the middle of the night, Carrie Carlotta rose up again, and Leonora found her fastening a string of beads around her mother's neck and sticking her mother's cold feet into shoes. "Stop it! Stop it, Carrie Carlotta! She is dead. Dead, you hear me! Your mother is dead." She shook Carrie Carlotta so fiercely that her head flopped from side to side. "Oh, Carrie Carlotta," she said touching the feverish cheek and pushing her into her bed. "Hold this wet rag to your forehead. Tomorrow we will talk."

Returning to her own room, Leonora spent many hours attempting to sleep. In the faint light of early morning, she saw a shadow pass by her and lean to close the window. Trying to wake from this half sleep, Leonora yawned as a heavy club swung down upon her neck.

* * * * *

"Oh Mother, don't die! Please don't die Mother." Leonora heard her oldest daughter's voice from beside the bed. She felt again the pain in her back and neck and her throbbing head. Never had her neck hurt like this since . . . Her sleeping thoughts came back to her. Oh, Carrie Carlotta, tomorrow we will talk. But they had not talked the next morning. Carrie Carlotta did not inquire about the large bruise,

and Leonora did not mention the pain.

"Please Mother, please wake up. The children are asking about you and I say you are getting well. Please don't die Mother." Oh this oldest one is the most like Carrie Carlotta. "Wake up. Wake up Mother." Leonora could feel her daughter shaking her shoulders. She opened her eyes. Two young hands were pulling away from her and into a lap where they grabbed each other and twisted an already wrinkled skirt. "I'm not dying," Leonora said. "Can a woman not have a moment to think?"

"But you have been sleeping three days now, and you wouldn't wake up when I called."

"Three days?" Leonora sat up in bed. "But the spring house-cleaning."

"We have finished with the cleaning."

She contemplated her daughter's red eyes. "You swept out the cellar?"

"Yes Mother."

Leonora laid back. Then it was the time of year now to put on lipstick. "I will be going to town."

"No. No Mother. You are feverish. I am afraid you are wanting to die." Oh this one is surely like Carrie Carlotta, Leonora thought again as she watched her devoted daughter lean to tuck the covers securely around her. And then she decided to send this oldest daughter to town instead. "No Mother, I won't. I will stay here with you. Nobody needs to go. Why go to town?" Leonora did not say that each year she went to town hoping to see Carrie Carlotta. Instead, she explained to the oldest daughter how to ride on the buses and where to find a map, and she named the places to visit to learn the city news.

The next morning, before even the sun came up, the oldest daughter sat limply on the edge of her mother's bed sobbing, while her mother's long white arm reached out to apply the lipstick. "But I don't want

to wear lipstick. I don't even want to go. Please let me stay and take care of you."

"Oh, for goodness sake, you make such a fuss. Now, I have been thinking about Carrie Carlotta, how she would be when she was older. You remember the stories of Carrie Carlotta?" The oldest daughter nodded yes, but being a young woman herself now and distressed about her mother's illness, she could no longer be heartened by make-believe stories. For the last three days she had not slept at all. She covered her face with her hands and handkerchief and continued her crying.

"Now, that Carrie Carlotta, she was always ready for an adventure. I'll guess she wears the reddest rouge and lipstick that you ever saw and draws two sharp peaks on her top lip. And she'd surely have on a bright green dress and a matching little hat with a feather. Green like you only see on the newest leaves of spring bushes. Her shoes would be silver slippers and she'd be wearing a brooch, a large purple brooch, perhaps a cluster of plums on her chest. But it would be her face that one must look at, for it would be filled with lines that moved into designs and figures as she talked. Are you listening to me?"

"Yes Mother," the girl cried and pushed her head into her mother's lap. "Then you make sure that you go to the bushes in the back yard and fill your pockets with those newest leaves to cheer you later."

* * * * *

Leonora's oldest daughter stood on a corner with the map in her hand. She looked around herself, wondering where she was. This was certainly the city according to all of her mother's descriptions, but where had she got this map, and why was she standing on the corner. She shaded her eyes with her hand and looked up at the street sign, then unfolded the wide map. So many thin lines and squares, she'd never find this corner on the map. She could barely read the names. Suddenly a person pushed in front of her and the map smacked into her face. Why I could have been knocked over, she thought, spreading her legs a bit and pushing hard against the sidewalk with her black oxfords while other people rushed around her. She watched them climb the steps into a bus and look out the window at her as the bus moved away. So she was at a bus stop. Well she would wait to see if another bus came.

Behind her was a window filled with boxes of fancy cigars and another window where rings and necklaces that cost a hundred dollars or a thousand or ten thousand dollars were laying on blue velvet. But Leonora's oldest daughter did not look over her shoulder. She was busy enough just standing very still among all the noises, flashing lights, and objects moving in every direction around her. She watched very carefully for a bus and, when it stopped, she too climbed the three steps. She sat in the front on a long narrow seat that ran along the side, and held her hands in her lap.

Often the bus would turn this way or that way weaving past all the tall buildings, almost colliding with other vehicles or the street signs while Leonora's oldest daughter gasped. At every corner it stopped to allow some people to get off and new people to get on. She saw that some of them carried umbrellas though it wasn't raining at all, or wore gloves that they would take off and lock inside their purses.

If she looked at the floor, she could see just their shoes lined up in pairs like after polishing, and it was amazing how many different styles there were: black shiny army boots and a child's red oxfords, slender high heels and flat dilapidated sandals, plain brown work shoes and snakeskin slip-ons. Then the bus would stop again, the work shoes would trudge away to be replaced by a pair of squat heeled shoes with wide straps and holes for the big toes to stick out of. This pair kept moving about, crossing and uncrossing, and tapping the floor like they were in a big hurry.

"Hey lady!" Leonora's oldest daughter looked up to see the bus driver's head nodding at her. "You going to ride this bus all day? We already made the route six times." His voice seemed to come very slowly through the buzzing in her ears. She covered her ears with her hands and her head felt like a nest of swarming bees. She lowered her hands so that the bees could fly out her ears.

Where was she, she thought. All of these people got on and off the bus, but where was she supposed to be going? She looked at her own heavy shoes and saw that the laces were loose in one. It was as she bent over to retie the laces that the early green leaves fell from her pocket. She remembered her mother and began weeping. Oh, her mother at home dying and she here lost in the city. Please don't die Mother.

Why was she riding a bus but not knowing where to get off to find her mother? "Lady, do you know what you're doing?"

"Mother," she cried. "I'm looking for my mother." The shoulders shrugged on the driver and the bus jerked forward. When it stopped again, she stared at the passengers as they filed on. Occasionally, she tugged at a coat sleeve until an unknown face would swing around and bend toward her and she would let go. The bus door would swoosh closed, and she would gaze around, lost and crying.

"You!" she suddenly cried. "You on the seat opposite me. You are my mother." An older woman looked up at Leonora's oldest daughter, glanced from side to side, and began rearranging her packages. "That is the exact same lipstick that my mother wears when she goes to town. See! Look at my lips and listen to me. You are my mother, aren't you?" She flung herself at the feet of the older woman. "Are you better now Mother? Are you well?" The woman was quietly trying to pry open the thumbs and fingers that were squeezing off the circulation in her legs. The bus driver smacked his hand against the large steering wheel, pulled himself up muttering, and, after two impatient strides, wrestled the girl to the floor. "Please don't die Mother. Please don't die."

"Let it be," said the older woman, now pushing away the driver. "There's no reason to start wrestling." Then leaning over the girl, "Can't you see this child is distressed?" Leonora's oldest daughter saw a green circle above her and spinning red lights. She felt a hand stroking her cheek. Gradually the colors changed into a face slowly revolving in front of her own. She closed her eyes for a moment, and when she opened them again, the face was stationary. Then it cracked into many expressions at once, red lips opening and closing in garish waves that flashed outward across the whole face, shaking the wrinkles and mixing them up. Leonora's oldest daughter looked away from the face to the woman's little green hat and large purple brooch. "Carrie Carlotta," she whispered.

* * * * *

"I found Carrie Carlotta!" Leonora heard the screen door slam. "Come, Carrie Carlotta. Come in." The screen door slammed a second time. "I found Carrie Carlotta! I found Carrie Carlotta!" How many pairs of footsteps sounding up the stairs? Leonora sat up in bed. Which child was it following the oldest daughter up the stairs, playing dress up

lady in her mother's shoes? "I found Carrie Carlotta, Mother." Leonora saw her oldest daughter standing at the bedroom door with one arm outstretched to her side. How dramatically she stood, poised just like Carrie Carlotta used to stand. How she was grinning about her make believe story, that Carrie Carlotta grin.

Leonora's oldest daughter stopped grinning and stared at her mother incredulously. Why is she so quiet, she thought. Why is she smiling only at me? She turned to look at Carrie Carlotta and seeing nothing but empty space, she gasped and ran out the door. In the hallway, she grabbed the hand of the timid Carrie Carlotta and jerked her into the bedroom. Carrie Carlotta stood like a statue with two round tears rolling across the red circles on her cheeks. Leonora's head leaned forward as if she were peering into an oven. Why don't they speak, thought the oldest daughter, and then one glance from her mother told her to leave.

For one full minute they stared into each other's faces, wanting not to divide the time into years by blinking. Then the purple red color rushed into Leonora's lips. "Why?" she said. "Why did you try to hurt me Carrie Carlotta?"

"Because, when one woman died, two mothers were lost."

"Yes."

Leonora patted the mattress beside her. Carrie Carlotta sat on the edge of the bed and took off her silver slippers. Then they lay side by side, one in a gaudy green dress and one in a plain white gown. Carrie Carlotta took off her little green hat with a feather and pushed it onto Leonora's head. They scooted very close together, only a handclasp between them, and clapped their outside hands together to beckon the children.

Leonora's seven children entered as a row of gaping mouths. "Don't stare at your mother so peculiarly," said Carrie Carlotta, and the children closed their mouths. "I think you look plain swanky in that hat, Leo Leonora." And the children's mouths fell open again.

* * * * *

Carrie Carlotta and Leo Leonora almost always walked arm in

arm. Within a year, they had traveled to town three times to buy matching dresses and hats. When they pranced down the stairway in their identical orange outfits, the children could hardly distinguish where one ended and the other began. Every Saturday morning Carrie Carlotta and Leo Leonora would pull the wagon down the road for groceries, and all the children would canter around them waiting for stories. "Oh, I remember the time," told Carrie Carlotta, "when Leo Leonora told the whole family that she was a butterfly."

On Saturday afternoons, the two sisters dusted down the bannister, while the children fried up a platterful of chicken wings. On Saturday nights, all the furniture in the kitchen was pushed back against the walls, and Carrie Carlotta, Leo Leonora, and their seven children danced in a circle.

ARNY CHRISTINE STRAAYER



Thirteen

Too young to hear about that
yet you told her for the future
how Jerri put her tongue "between your legs"
and she paled before us, changed.
I could not
and fed my qualms
said nothing
though I had also thought
if I were overwhelmed and she adored me,
I would consent, make love.

This place has gotten to me,
brook behind the house
stone and rain
how she lies awake
remembering
your phrase for cunnilingus-
pedantic word
I couldn't say
fearing it would jar her
from the dreams she sends her life to
there where we go down
in heights of dark.

ROBERTA GOULD

a brotha's lov unfelt

once i had
a livin
brotha.

/mama said i still
hav him/

i dont kno. i dont see him any/mo.

(was) it was never
klear to me
whether he is
a lovin brotha/
a bull/shit
brotha. or jus
a male brotha
a female sista.
to

mama sd he is a
lovin brotha.

i dont kno.

he
/ never
/ sho(d)
/ me lov.

DOROTHY BANKS

of her choosing

e/z tears flood
her eyes. nearly drowin
her face. washin away

may/bel/line

i
lashes that wave
good/bye. so long
as did her lover.

& she chose to go insane
rather thn loose hm
bein a/lon
an lon/ly. watching
teevee commercials
with happy endings.

rather thn
suicide herself.
seein hm no mo.

she asked me:
aint that nothin
aint i nothin
showin how wk i am

showin how silly i am
choosin to go
n/sane cause my man lef me.
leavin me out doors.
out of lov / bt n lov.
out of xplanations to me.
he even sd: YO ASS IS OUT!
i ask u. aint that nothin
I MEAN—
aint that really nothin

DOROTHY BANKS

nothing gift

u try n jet blk
yr fac e
n/2 my min
2/da. 2/morrow. forever.

u are the
ultimate
god gift
u think.

you are in all
actuality
a nothin
gift stored.

hostile an belligerent are yr
unimaginative actions. /u were never original/

you fail to comprehend
r understan that i
do not lik
you AT ALL!

toda. t/morrow. r/ever.

cute pretty faces
& nothin gifts
leave me col.

DOROTHY BANKS

making the most of poverty

and write some poetry while you're there, Helen said.
What's it worth to conceive an anemic North African poem,
to deliver in strapping metaphor.

A poem of tourists, two Panamanians, a Brazilian from Ireland,
bilinguists from El Paso, a Mexican mother cursing Morocco
because a square table cannot seat three round children.

Think poetry of sad sandstone, oxen on a treadmill,
deeply veiled women, barely touched by the sun, whose
arable eyes stay that untravelled distance from themselves.

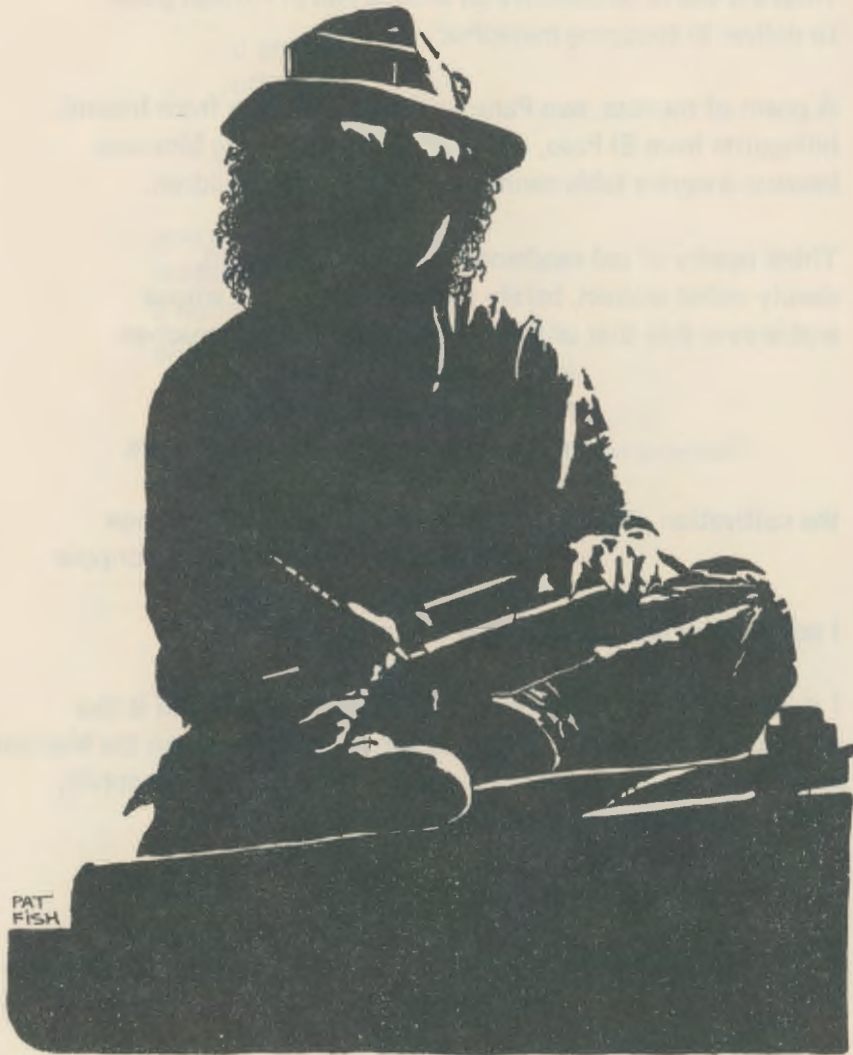
a baby astride her shoulder,
naked crying, he chews sugar cane
still the tears my head hears are hers.

the cultivation of need: the paraplegic, a crawling poor box
the sycamore cane for the fetid cripple
and the fertile eye disease

I admit some blind spots in my line of feeling.

I think of the air. . . rapacious. Standing beneath a palm is like
seeking refuge beneath telephone wire. Lodged between the Mexican
who holds her hair against the grazing air and the tobaccophile,
I have no sweat left and the cigarette smoke's so foul,
I puke in prose.

ALICE G. BRAND



"Autoherstoricization" graphic by Pat Fish

The Woman Who Won at Poker

There were already three nickles in the glove when the woman arrived. She dug with dirty fingernails into an overall's pocket and pulled out a fourth. It was her only nickle. She threw it in the glove with the others.

Three low men hovered illegally over the sidewalk. The short man with the combed hair brushed minute particles of dust from the pavement, removed five dice from the felt-lined shaker and handed one to each player. He returned the extra dice to the cup, then rolled a queen.

"Lucky lady is mine!" he cried.

The man with the beard rolled a king. "Dominant! King is a winner!"

"Not yet!" The man with eight fingers tossed his cube at the cement. It landed a nine. "I'll be damned!" He wasn't a lucky man.

It was the woman's turn. Her working-man's fingers let go the dice and it hit the white walk with a sound click, an Ace staring squarely at the group. The men exchanged disgusted looks. The woman grinned, almost maliciously.

"Okay, you go first," said the short man, ladling the cubes back into the shaker and handing it across. The woman's dirty fingers held the cup with practiced grip, blew a short, warm breath inside, and tossed a full house at the pavement.

"I'll be damned," repeated the man with eight fingers.

"Jack's full in one," the dusty woman challenged.

The men had one roll each to beat her. The man with the beard did not, and rubbed his eye with the cracked back of his left hand. The short man couldn't, and coughed neatly but nervously into his sleeve. The man with eight fingers nearly spilled out four tens, but not quite: one rolled over into a secretly grinning Jack. Three nickles left the glove and slid metally into an overall's pocket.

The woman shook the cup again. The red faces of four kings sternly mocked the male players.

"I'll be damned!" said the unlucky one.

"Huh," said the one with the beard, wiping his mouth on his sleeve.

"Four cowboys," said the short one, "going for five in two?"

"Four in one." The female didn't even blink. She watched the clean man try, the bearded man try desperately, the unlucky man try clumsily and unsuccessfully to beat her. A whirling steel helicopter shredded the hot air overhead. The woman pocketed three nickles more.

The cup went round.

"Ya know, I read this magazine yesterday," the scruffy man said, poking the old one in the ribs. "Says women who work in men's jobs grow excess facial hair and die early. Tee-hee." The clean short man stuck his face in hers and examined her upper lip for evidence of this.

She won again.

"Did ya see her this morning," the unluckly man drawled, "with that lawnmower? I damn near thought she was gonna flatten a tree."

"Yeah, she's fun to watch," the clean man nodded, and watched her land an ace-high straight. The nickles in her pocket now outnumbered theirs. The short man shrunk visibly but neatly. The bearded man grew by the moment more scruffy. The eight-fingered man scratched a graying scalp and repeated, "I'll be damned." The woman figured he

probably would, alright, and won again.

"Why don't you give it up, anyway?" the unlucky man goaded her. "You're never gonna make it with us men. You oughta be a secretary. You oughta be sitting on somebody's knee."

She stared in their faces, freshly surprised at the depth of their ignorance, wondering for the millionth time what it would take for these fools to accept her. 'If it takes beating them at their own game,' she thought, 'If it takes slaughtering their poker-faced egos, then by god I'll do it!' She held the cup without reverence or concern, and shook it until its rotting teeth rattled deadly in its green felt jaws. Five white cubes stunned the sidewalk with a blow. Five aces grinned at the group, almost maliciously.

"This is ridiculous," the short man objected, ridiculously.

"I'll be damned," said the unlucky man.

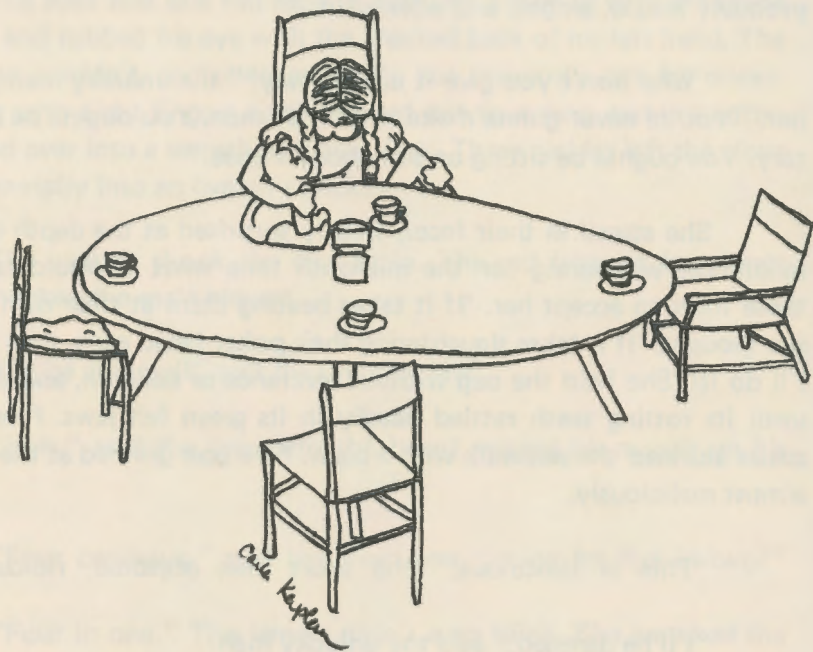
"Huh," said the scruffy one, and threw the nickles in her lap.

She stood, and a handfull of nickles clanged unreligiously in an overall's pocket. The woman and the dust turned on their heels and were off in the hot afternoon. For once, she believed, they weren't staring at her tits.

And She was right.

The man with the beard snickered and stared at her ass. The clean short man spat and gathered up his dice. The man with eight fingers muttered, "Bitch," under his coffeed breath. They all agreed, stood and went back to work.

ANNE MARGIS



graphic by Carla Kaplan

party

The pot was an old orange juice jar
 filled with the magic
 of tiny tea cup words
 empty
 and overflowing with delicate wonder-

"Have some tea,"
 the small one said
 pouring everything
 all into the cup.

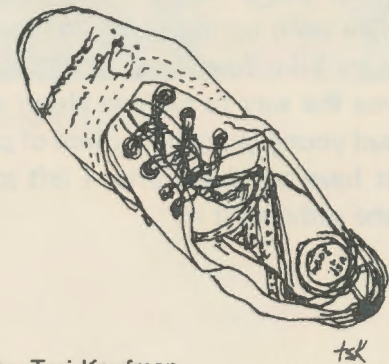
BEVERLY LANCASTER

first love

That small person is sitting beside me again
 reading a book.

The last time she was examining the small holes in her boots
 they showed a slit of toe-nail
 that drove me wild
 with mind lust.

BEVERLY LANCASTER



graphic by Teri Kaufman

The Woman Who Taught Me to See

When I came to her, I saw everything twice. She smelled of violets. The lights were kept soft for our eyes. She told my mother and father I should be well treated, not made to cry uselessly. For my eyes, she said. She stroked my head.

She told me stories of black cats walking black plush carpets into black rooms in black houses from which issued black music played by a woman wearing black gloves, seated at a black piano. She made me love the black of night wherein I safely slept, a child. I think her hair was red.

She stretched me gently from the eyes, the eyes. She worked the muscles and set me in the sun to dry and cure. She wanted me to see. She threw away my glasses.

Her house smelled of herbs, garlic, and twilight. Her dresses sounded silk as she moved around me in her slippers. She stroked my temples.

Leaving her was always a cruel assault of white bleached white. The city fell like walls on my softened face, freshened by her hands. I rode home on my bike, bearing away the taste of lemon verbena, violet. She showed me the way to see one vision at a time. I came and went out of her, a sad young girl, a pure piece of paper darkened by shadows. And she must have sat down after I left to release my pain from her hands where she gathered it in.

STEPHANIE MINES



photograph by Arny Christine Straayer

BIRTH OF A SONGSTRESS

You could hear the ice man a block away,
"Ice man, ahm ya ice man!"

Uncle Willy sat on the front porch
ah strummin' his guitar
ah singin' songs from the Delta.

She laid in the backroom huddled under quilts
made from scraps of used folk's clothes.
Over her, suspended, were the womenfolks.
One threw back the covers
One threw off the gown
One moan ah song from the Delta.

The buckboard was a trumpet unlearned,
ah screechin' loudly upon the dirt road.
Uncle Willy's fingers plucked oblique motion
upon the guitar. In the backroom a rag
was stuffed into her mouth, her hands forced
around the brass rails, where they clutched.

"ICE MAN, AHM YA. . . ."

The buckboard ceased.
Uncle Willy's fingers smothered the last note.
In the backroom the rag was unplugged and
daughter came. . . ah singin' songs from the Delta.

CRIS BURKS

Elaina Elaina I Almost Got Killed

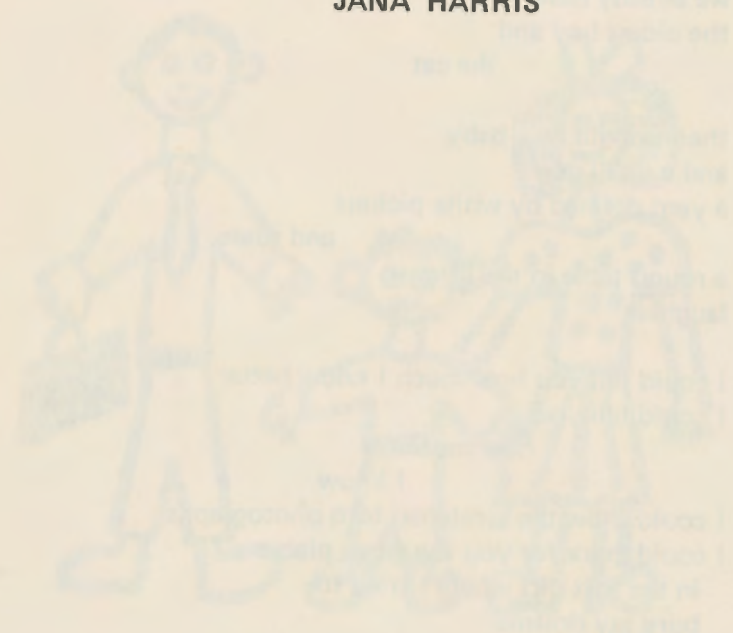
Elaina
I almost got killed,
some candy apple custom pimpmobile
runnin a red light while
I was pickin up all them 8x10 glossies
of you scattered over E 82nd St

Elaina
it says in script
your name signed over
each dark cheek
Elaina with the plucked
and fine-pencilled brows
smiling over naked shoulders
showin cleavage
Elaina, a hundred copies of your face
rain and gasoline soaked,
I almost got killed
tryin to take them photos home
- ironin out the creases
taken the street grit
outa your pretty smile,
all the time thinkin
why would anyone
throw away a picture
like yours, Elaina
I scotch taped them all
over my dresser mirror
rememberin those 8th grade boys
at the bus stop
sayin Maria Montez and Lupe Valdez
was their particular flavors
of bourdoir cheese cake
and my Ma spankin me for tryin

to see movie magazine pin-ups
your almost naked body
in LADY OF THE PAVEMENT
in HOT PEPPER
Hollywood's little latin
love girls, Elaina
with all that "did ya notice, honey
that even the next morning when you
was sittin on his lap, he still got
a hard-on over you. . ."
and Big Girls talkin about
how Maria died in a salt water bath
tryin to stay slim
For her French, playboy husband,
Lupe killin herself when
she got PG, drinkin and lookin like
death on a cracker near the end, they said
Elaina, I kiss your picture every morning
At 15, it was "shake your ass an' run,
honey, see what them boys'll do"
with some doo waa diddy diddy song playin
"it's the woman in you that makes you wanna
play this game. . ."
Elaina, I almost got killed
pickin up them pictures off E 82nd St
those husbands thinkin of you
in a V plunge neckline
Apache action with a Mexican smile
those husbands runnin red lights
all over your upper assets
a Puerto Rican girl in a Susie Wong
slit up to the thighs dress
strokable, lipsmacking, softsell
What happened, your agent throw away
all his merchandise 'cept the "D" cups?
Elaina, shake your ass an' run,
they said
I kiss your picture every morning
dream of you
your thin body lowering

onto mine
pink ribbons of your
French bra touching my shoulders
touching the nipples, the glitter
make up, Elaina EVERYBODY
is watching Elaina
Elaina
I almost got killed.

JANA HARRIS



Laterna Magika

I want a family
just like in the picture books
just like on tv

I want there to be a daddy
I'll be the mom
we already have
the oldest boy and
the cat

there should be a baby
and a small dog
a yard defined by white pickets
and roses
a round table in the kitchen
laughter

I could tell you how much I know better
I could tell you
how much
I know

I could show the scratched torn photographs
I could mark for you the exact places
in the soft dirt where I tried to
bury my dreams

they rise up
haunt my perceptions
I am tricked by the shadows at the edges of my eyes
I lower veils
change the lighting
cripple my senses
to get the exact image

I want a family
I could tell you how much I know better

SUSAN LYSIK



graphic by Marena Stelzer

The Notebooks That Emma Gave Me



photograph by Arny Christine Straayer

The Notebooks That Emma Gave Me is a book of many parts. For this reason, Black Maria staff found it extremely difficult to excerpt. The four individual sections reprinted here can barely introduce you to Kay van Deurs — a delightful woman with an interesting life.

Dear Rose,

No word from you or about you since I talked to you last January. It meant a lot to me to talk to you because I have always loved you and there is this ridiculous 25 year gap in our conversations and I was staggered to hear of the awful times you have endured. I wanted to send you something I had made. It turned out to be a piece of writing. It took me all this time to write it. It's a way of telling you about myself and it's a way of telling you that I love you and I want to know you and I am worried about you and will you, please, I beg you, write to me. Talk to me. Tell me who you are and how you are and what you think of me, whether you ever think of me and how you remember me and whether you are glad- please be glad- that I turned out to be the person that I am. And please, be my friend now and talk to me.

About the time I telephoned you, Emma gave me a red notebook with gold scrolls on the cover and blank pages. And I began, again, to tell myself the story of my life and, as always, the story began with you.

Hey, Rose, be my friend.

Rather recently I have decided that I am an anarchist. That makes me a lesbian-feminist-anarchist. I mean, I don't know what you have been reading but I have been reading Andrea Dworkin and Emma Goldman and Doris Lessing who has made me realize that part of being myself is being a writer.

And if you don't like having your name in there, I can take it out. It's just that I like it as a non-fiction piece. If I started changing names, I might begin turning it into fiction, and I write poor fiction. It's so hard to figure out what reality is, and there is so little time. Suddenly, I just want to say what I mean.

Well, here's your present.

Your,
Kay van Deurs

Emma came home and wrote new music for new words.

She is frightened. She thinks she might be getting sick. I say, please, don't get sick. She's singing so fine.

She has rehearsed, had a hot bath, much beer, and is asleep. I am awake, bathed, spending two hours deciding what I will wear. The nude beige bikinis, I have decided. And beige brushed cotton trousers just out of the washing machine and smelling clean and looking a bit wrinkled. I wonder if the world supposes that I do not choose my clothes as carefully as a straight woman does. That Emma likes me in it is the second most powerful reason for wearing something. Even more important is whether I like myself in it. The jewelry must be chosen to bring luck to Emma and to me and to the women who come to listen. Turquoise, I feel. The turquoise ring that Emma made and the silver hand holding turquoise that I made. That dictates the navy blue turtleneck sweater. And beige jacket, beige hooded overcoat. I will wear my boots: brown with three yellow stripes- yellow soles, yellow stripe where rubber bottoms turn into leather uppers, and a yellow stripe at the top, red shoe laces zagging between 16 brass eyelets, and a big red bow. Sometimes I wear my trousers tucked inside with red, blue, yellow, white striped socks above the boot tops. For formal occasions- courtrooms and rich people- I put the trousers outside my boots. The dirty sneakers are less exhausting than the heavy boots and since there is no snow or rain tonight and since we might get a chance to dance later, maybe I'll wear them.

To: The New York Telephone Company
From: Kay van Deurs

I have had a telephone in New York State since 1949. That's about 27 years. I've always paid my bill. I never paid a deposit. But when I came here, about the middle of June, you wanted a one hundred dollar deposit "because it's a business phone and what you did as an individual (for 27 years) has nothing to do with what you will do as a business." When I offered you references, you said, "no deposit, no telephone." So I gave you a one hundred dollar cash "deposit." Then you charged me one hundred dollars for hooking up my telephone.

That included the first month's service and a twenty-something dollar charge for "processing." When I telephoned to complain, your polite employees told me they could explain the charges, but could do nothing about them since they were "standard" and backed up by all sorts of legislation and, they said, I would get 8% interest on my one hundred dollar deposit.

I feel that you are trying to rip me off for two hundred dollars in spite of the fact I have paid you thousands of dollars for telephone service during the past 27 years and when I think that you want me to:

A. Pay you 200 dollars for nothing, and

B. Twenty or thirty thousand dollars during the rest of my life,

I think you are foolish to risk 20 thousand dollars in an attempt to rip me off for 200. Our incoming long distance calls amount to more than our outgoing calls- say 60 thousand dollars in the next 20 or 30 years.

That is, either return my 100 dollar deposit and send me a revised bill for the installation of my phone, or take the phone out and lose 80-90 thousand dollars.

I see those brown spots all over my face and hands. I feel the bones pushing against skin. I see the pores gaping open from age, exposure, neglect. Twenty lines- wrinkles- go straight up and down my upper lip. Deep creases run around my nose and down around my mouth. Big, deep furrows between my bushy brows run up my forehead and cross lines that crowd across my brow. And crinkly lines at the sides of my eyes. Circles under puffy eyes. And the whites are no longer white but speckled and streaked with blood. And yet, although my teeth are sort of yellow, I am beautiful. Gay liberation and the women's movement taught me that.

KAY VAN DEURS

Coming Home After Vacation

The car rolled into the drive at dusk and stopped.
The woman got out under the huge black trees
and went down into the garden and felt someone was there,
someone angry. The trees were soaking with darkness
and the sprouts stood up like knives.

The woman stood outside her own garden
and saw how the stems twisted like muscles
and the whole plot looked like a grave
someone was trying to get out of.

Suddenly

she felt a big shadow rise up
and race over - - her hand went to her throat
white as a root.

She was home, then,

this was her place, the one of all the others
where she feared to walk, where someone had always
arrived first, and would hold it against her
at any cost.

SHARON OLDS

Young Mothers IV

The look on the face of the young mother
at the coffee-house, looking down. No one
is looking at her. Everyone is looking
at her looking at the young child toddling around
like a lunatic, who might do anything next.

We watch that mother. The toddler approaches
a big poinsettia like a blood bomb gone off,
and looks at the mother. We look at the mother.
She holds up a cookie. Our mouths water.

Suddenly I think she will scream,
this watched woman, this marked woman,
stared at like the women with shaved heads
in Germany in 44. I think she will
turn to us all and shriek, her face
swelling dark as a heart. But she cannot. The child
watches her, the small face
unmarked by anything, mad with curiosity,
bearded with crumbs, the child sees her rise and
ease her big belly a moment before she walks.

SHARON OLDS



The Fishermen's Wives

The fishermen's wives
Smelling of seablood and foam
Have exchanged their pink cheeks
And feather hair
For the heads of fish
Their breasts
Once circles of soft and shimmer
Have turned into fins
Scaly and wet with salt-milk

The women
Whose husbands are fishermen
Grow green and cold in nets
All they know of moonlight
Is that it moves the tides
And causes their deep fish parts
To drip bright red brine

The wives of magicians
Make love inside of top hats
And turn into rabbits
Before the third act
While executives' wives
Attach leather handles
To their shoulders
And give birth to paper children

Praise to the doctor's wife
Who heals herself

God bless
The mortician's wife
Who lives forever

ELAINE NAMANWORTH

Bonebreakers

Regina was a member of the leather dollies for the last three years. the last year and a half she'd been president. it was a good gang. her older sister, joyce, was one of the founders. she started it six years ago. it was just natural for regina to follow joyce into it. there wasn't much for a girl to do in farmdale. either u were a prom queen or some motorcycle jock's girlfriend. regina could never fit into the first. she tried the latter for a while. she was miserable. her boyfriend, butch, was disgusting. he treated her like a servant. regina was superior to him. she had no reason to take his shit. the leather dollies was better. in the leather dollies regina could hand out the shit.

There were fifteen girls in the gang. they were independent girls, tough. they all had their own cars and spent half their time cruising main street. a few of them, like regina, worked on their cars. some dreamed of owning motorcycles. their parents wouldn't hear of it. they were too young to make decisions without their parents. being a leather dollie made the girls feel important. the other girls in school were afraid of them. they had a reputation. they wore black leather jackets with the gang's name written across the back. the jackets were regina's idea. she had lots of good ideas. she wanted to give the gang class. it was fine when she joined, under her care it was becoming something special. she raised it up from just being a social club into a respected organization. there wasn't anyone in farmdale high who hadn't heard of the leather dollies. there were plenty of girls who wanted to join. regina made it hard to join, kind of like the sororities she read about in paperback novels. they were very selective. new prospects had to b invited to the clubhouse by a member. everyone had to meet her. they asked her a lot of questions, checked out her car. they didn't care too much about the way a girl looked or dressed. looks were superficial. all the dollies dressed alike. what they wanted were girls with plenty of nerve. they had an image to keep up. they made every new girl undress and stand naked before them. they examined the body closely. the dollies weren't lesbians. it wasn't like that. they had to weed out the girls who embarrassed easily. they were a tough gang.

there could b no weak wills among them. after this, if they all liked the new girl, they invited her to hang around with them. they'd have her wrestle stella fuerto, their girl gorilla. no one could beat her. it was only necessary to endure. they'd hang around with the new girl for two weeks. if all went well she became a member. they charged her twenty-five dollars, gave her a jacket and took her out for the initiation party. the initiation party was another of regina's ideas. it never failed to amuse her. six of the girls would pile into helena derby's car. they always went in her car. it was the flashiest. helena's father was the town undertaker. she had a lot of money. they'd drive around town whistling and screaming at boys, shouting obscenities. eventually they found a boy they all agreed on, invited him into the car for a ride. the boys always went, being alone in a car with six girls didn't scare them. boys had no sense. no girl in her right mind would do the same thing. they took the boy out for a long drive, deep into the hills. all the girls would take turns kissing and touching him. the boy would like it. he wouldn't notice where they were going. boys were horny. gradually they undressed the boy. some of the boys even undressed themselves. they were stupid. the new member gave the boy a blow job. when he started to come they stopped the car, pushing him out, driving away, laughing and screaming, see u later sucker. the naked boy eventually found his way back to the road and hitchhiked home. it was harmless fun. regina loved it. it was dollie humor. no one got hurt. o, a boy here or there caught a cold or bruised his feet. that was nothing. the boys thought they were tough. they asked for it. they never raped a boy. they never did anything like what boys did to girls. the boys went with them willingly.

Yeah, regina had a lot of good ideas. she really made the leather dollies special. the leather dollies made her special too. without the gang she would have been nothing in farmdale. she was ugly. she stood 5'6" and weighed 160 pounds. she was big boned, squat and dark, part indian. her hair was cropped short; wire rimmed aviator glasses covered most of her face. her skin wasn't good either. it was filled with bumps and holes. she looked like a lady truck driver. her looks were alright because of the gang. her power gave her a certain allure. otherwise people would have noticed how ugly she was. with the dollies behind her regina had a glow. kids at school treated her with fear and respect. she was someone to reckon with. boys clamored to go out with her. that's how it was for all the dollies. there was a lot of power in being a tough female.

Regina went out with a boy named sweat. he was a big blonde polish kid. they called him sweat because his last name was sweatinsky. he played linebacker for the school football team. he was 6'4" and huge. regina liked his body. he was twice her size. he could knock her around if he wanted to. she liked that about him. although he never did. sweat was a gentle person. he treated regina well. they had an understanding. they got what they wanted from each other; mostly, that was sex. also, they were friends. regina had never been friends with a boy before, with sweat it was easy. he talked football. she liked football. they worked on their cars together. his father was a reupholsterer. sweat was learning the business. he showed regina. they practiced on regina's sedan, doing the interior in red zebra. regina loved it. it was so cool. they arm wrestled. they jogged together. they went to the movies and necked. regina liked sweat a lot. she liked him more than any other boy. she didn't plan on marrying him. she knew after high school his 250 pounds would turn to lard. she didn't want to reupholster station wagons all her life. she didn't know what she wanted to do. she didn't think she'd ever get married, being married was like being a greaser's girlfriend. wives weren't important. they were forgotten. they had no power. she didn't know. if she got a scholarship to state she'd study engineering. otherwise, mayb she'd have her own gas station some day. she didn't worry. she was a junior. she had two years. sweat didn't talk marriage either. that was good. it was an unspoken rule. a boy didn't talk marriage with a leather dollie. the leathers were too independent for that. it relieved the boys. all the dollies had boyfriends. regina had other boyfriends in her life. sweat was her favorite. he was good looking in his slavic way, his blonde hair slicked back in a d-8, his green eyes tiny slits in his round face. he thought regina was good looking too. he was always telling regina how pretty she was. no one ever told her that before. she never thought it mattered to her. she couldn't let it matter. deep down it did. she was human. she would have liked to b a prom queen. she would have liked to have naturally curly hair and freckles on her nose. she never would, not in this life. in sweat's eyes she did. regina couldn't help herself. she loved him for that.

Regina and sweat went to a bar. they had false id's. they went with laura and fritz. laura was regina's best friend. she was treasurer of the leather dollies. laura was very tough. she was a lot tougher than regina. she was a lot tougher than any of the other dollies. her mother died when she was a baby. her father and six brothers ran a junkyard at the edge of town. they were poor. they had no city ways. they didn't care

too much about laura. they left her alone. she grew up acting like a boy, modeling herself after her brothers. now that she was old enough she worked at the junkyard on saturdays. she knew car parts and machines as well as her brothers. she liked working there. it made her feel like a part of the family. her father was beginning to notice her. it made her glad. he ignored her for so long. all she had was regina and regina's family. they were friends since the first grade. they found each other early. they were blood sisters. laura loved regina more than anyone. regina accepted her love. regina's mother said, it was good that regina and laura were friends. regina's mother had a kind heart. she mothered laura. often laura slept at regina's house, stayed for dinner. regina's family were good christians. they could afford it. regina's mother knew that laura needed her daughter. regina would not find a better friend. regina's mother taught her daughters that every female needed another female they could trust. that's how it was with regina and laura. it was good.

Laura was odd looking. she was 6' tall, white as toilet paper and skinny. her hair hung down her back in long silver strands. her blue eyes crossed slightly. everything about her was pointy, her nose, her body, her personality. she dressed like regina, like all the leather dollies: leather jacket, blue jeans with leather patches, garringer belt. laura was different from the other girls in one way, she wore make up. she painted her face like a japanese kabuki, stark white with huge black lines around her eyes. it made laura look scary. she liked looking scary. fritz, her boyfriend, liked it too. it made laura an individual. fritz thought himself an intellectual and an individualist. laura just went with him because he had a big penis. she didn't care much about intellectualism. she didn't read much. regina read more. regina did well in school. laura didn't. it wasn't that regina was that much smarter. she cared about school; laura didn't. she would have rather worked in the junkyard full time. her father had her brothers. he didn't need her. besides the gang had a rule that members had to b in high school. laura didn't want to quit the gang. it was too much fun. she stayed in school.

The bar they went to was the hippest one in town. half the kids there had false id's. business was business. the owner knew they were all under age. they showed him id's. he could care less. if kids wanted to get drunk that was none of his affair. let their parents take care of them. the police never busted the place. it was a small town. there were only three policemen. they stayed in the station house unless they were called.

they preferred drinking coffee and playing cards to patrolling the quiet streets. nothing important happened in farmdale.

Mary lou was new in town. she moved in a few weeks ago. she was a big city girl. she thought farmdale was a horrible place. she hated it. she was 16. she went wherever her parents took her. the kids in town weren't friendly. she hadn't made any friends yet. no one even talked to her. they all just stared at her curiously. she never saw so many dumb people. she was sophisticated. the other kids thought she was stuck up. she was. she had a right to b. she grew up in the state capital. it was a lively place. she was worldly. she was beautiful. her hair hung down her back in perfect gold ringlets. tiny freckles danced across her cute little nose. she had 20-20 vision. she was graceful. in the capital she was captain of the cheerleaders. here she was nobody. when she tried to join cheerleaders the girls snubbed her. all she did was give them some friendly advice on how to improve their cheers. farmdale cheerers were third rate. they didn't want her advice. they wanted to b admired. the captain came right out and said they didn't like her. people were so uncouth here. it didn't matter. they looked foolish in their maroon uniforms. they were nothing like the hot pants the fargo girls wore. mary lou didn't want to look foolish. still, she had an ego to feed. she was lonely. she wanted recognition. she heard about the leather dollies in school. one of them, stella, was in her math class. she was an animal. mary lou chalked them off as a bunch of lesbians. they didn't scare her. they were just a group of homely girls. she couldn't understand why everyone looked up to them. she didn't look up to anyone in farmdale. she was above the locals. she patronized them. but she needed a boyfriend. she knew how it was, doors would open up to her if she had the right boyfriend. the right kind was a football player, a quiet one she could push around, football players had power.

Mary lou was in the bar too. there was no place else to go in this town. she noticed sweat and regina. regina was the ugliest girl she had ever seen. regina reminded her of a fargo dyke. she wondered about her. mayb her boyfriend was her cover. sweat was alright. she'd seen him around school. he was very popular. he looked harmless, stupid and harmless. mary lou didn't put out for boys. she was saving it for a college man. she just kissed and teased. she didn't imagine sweat would want much more. he looked too dumb. besides, he couldn't b doing it with a dog like regina. the thought of that made mary lou laugh. sweat

was a football player. all the football players had girls. it would b easy to take sweat away. she couldn't believe he'd want regina when he could have mary lou. it was like choosing between cinnamon toast and day old bread. she didn't know what he was doing with regina anyway. regina was a bull ox. girls in school were afraid of her. mary lou wasn't. she knew the type, all talk. it would b easy to have sweat. it would b convenient. mary lou decided. she'd make her first move tonight. it was time to become part of farmdale.

Regina stood between laura and sweat at the bar. she didn't notice mary lou. she was talking to laura about ordering engraved belts for the dollies. sweat was goofing around with fritz. he didn't have too much in common with fritz but he liked laura. she didn't keep her boyfriends very long and she was laura's best friend, so he tolerated fritz. sweat was easy going. he liked most people.

Mary lou walked up to the bar standing beside sweat. she waited to catch his eye. she smiled. her teeth were tiny pearls. her lips shone with paint. hi, rn't u arthur sweatinsky, the linebacker? sweat smiled, yeah that's me. well, mary lou drawled, i think u r just about the best football player i have ever seen, and i come from fargo. i've seen the best. sweat grinned, thank u. he didn't think the girl was trying to pick him up. girls waited for boys here. she was the new girl. she was being friendly. do u like football? he asked. she smiled, squeezing his arm. i just adore football, especially linebackers. especially linebackers like u who look so handsome in their uniforms. i think being a linebacker is the hardest position of all. it takes such strategy and intelligence.

Laura eyed mary lou. she didn't think much about buying belts. she was short on money right now. she didn't want regina paying for her like she always did. she wasn't paying too much attention to regina. she was watching mary lou. she didn't like what she was seeing. she poked regina with her sharp elbow nodding towards mary lou. regina stopped talking. she listened to the new girl.

O, mary lou pattered; i do love to go to football games and dances. i was captain of the cheerleaders in fargo. i never missed a dance. being new in town it's hard. i couldn't go alone. sweat smiled. he was feeling uncomfortable. he didn't know what this girl wanted, probably a date with one of his friends. he didn't like making blind dates. he felt

responsible. they never worked out. he tried to get rid of the girl. well, u r pretty enough. once everyone gets to know u i'm sure someone will ask u.

He turned away from the girl. he was 17. the girl made him nervous. she wasn't like regina. regina came right out and said whatever she wanted. regina was like another boy. she was someone he could talk to. regina was his friend. he understood her.

Mary lou pulled at sweat's sweater. she wasn't finished with him. she smiled, her hand hugging his arm. it's not that, she dimpled. plenty of boys ask me. i'm very pretty. it's just that i won't go out with just anyone. i'm waiting til a certain boy asks me, the cutest boy in town. sweat looked interested. yeah, who's that, mickey lucas? mary lou giggled. this boy was dumber than she expected. he was easy bait. no silly, u, of course. sweat blushed. he was embarrassed. he didn't know what to say. mary lou smiled. there's a dance next friday. i live on maplewood lane. why don't u pick me up around eight. she squeezed his arm hard. sweat gulped. huh? i think there's a mix up. mary lou didn't let him finish. my phone number is in the book under jenkins. i'm going to the little girl's room to powder my nose. she winked. don't go away. i'll b right back. she shook her backside saucily as she walked.

Sweat turned to regina. she was ashen. her mouth was open. of all the gall. who does that little bitch think she is? sweat was nervous. he looked at regina. he didn't want the new girl. he was flattered, but he didn't want her. he knew she couldn't fix cars like regina. he looked at regina. she was furious. she had a terrible temper. sweat frowned. come on let's go for a ride regina. i'm not interested in that girl. she doesn't hold a candle to u. regina sighed. it wasn't true. mary lou looked like she stepped out of seventeen magazine. she was everything regina hopelessly dreamed of being. sweat was loyal. she was proud of him. it wasn't just a matter of the girl coming on to sweat. it wasn't just jealousy. it was more than that. the girl was defying regina. regina didn't have the girl's figure or looks. all she had was her power. mary lou was mocking it. she was mocking the leather dollies. the girl had a lesson to learn. regina had her reputation to protect. regina would teach her. she smiled at sweat. she kissed him. he was a good boyfriend. ok honey, i'm just going to the pisser for a few minutes. the beer is getting to me.

Laura understood. she was regina's best friend. she was also a dollie. she put her arm around regina's shoulder. i'll go with u. regina smiled. no. i can take care of this myself.

The bathroom was empty except for mary lou brushing her golden hair in front of the tarnished mirror. she was whistling softly. things were going fine. she practically had sweat in her pocket. he'd b too embarrassed to cancel the date. he was a gentleman. by next weekend she'd b part of farmdale society; she'd b one of the kids.

Regina walked in through the door. she walked heavily. what a monster, mary lou thought. she walked up behind mary lou. mary lou came up to her forehead. there was no contest. regina pulled mary lou's hands behind her back. the hairbrush clattered to the floor. mary lou grimaced. regina was hurting her. no one ever touched her without permission before. what the hell do u think u r doing, she said through gritted teeth. regina smiled down into mary lou's perfect hair. mary lou watched her in the mirror. i want to talk to u, regina growled. i think u've got it confused. the question is what the hell do u think u r doing with my boyfriend? her voice was deep. it reminded mary lou of a man's voice. mary lou's arms hurt. tears came to her eyes. regina was twisting them. let me go. regina laughed. mary lou raised her leg to kick the bigger girl. regina caught her leg in mid air sending her crashing to the floor. the wind was knocked out of her. she stared up at regina standing over her like a giant. i said, regina repeated, what do u think u r doing with my boyfriend? mary lou was angry. this animal had no right to touch her. she would go to the police. your boyfriend, what a joke. who says he's your boyfriend? i don't see any class ring or id bracelet on u. how could he b your boyfriend? how could anyone b your boyfriend? u r so ugly not even my dog would kiss u.

Regina was burning with anger. her face was tight and pale. her cheek muscles twitched. she didn't need to b reminded of her appearance. sweat soothed her outside. now all her years of ugliness were flooding back. who the hell did this little flirt think she was? regina hurt inside. she grabbed mary lou by her shirt, pulling her up, pinning her against the wall. her hands dug into mary lou's shoulders. her hot breath washed across mary lou's face. tears fell down mary lou's cheeks. regina whispered. she pressed her weight against the other girl. she stood with her heel digging into the other girl's foot. u think i'm too ugly to kiss. i

think i'll change that. she pressed her face against the other girl's face. she forced open the other girl's strawberry flavored mouth. kiss me. mary lou stood stock still too shocked to think. she spit at the other girl, u pig. regina smacked her face. i said kiss me. mary lou felt regina's hard mouth pressing against hers. she felt her lips opening. she felt her tongue darting swiftly around the other girl's thicker tongue. she couldn't believe she was doing this. she wanted to vomit. she felt the other girl's hand feeling her tiny breasts. she pushed her hard. regina stopped. she stood over the other girl. her breath was uneven. her eyes were icicles.

Tears wet and rewet mary lou's face. u better let me go. if u don't i'll scream and call the owner. regina laughed. u really r new in town. that's a joke. everyone saw me follow u in here. everyone knows what's happening. they saw u coming on to sweat. i have a reputation in this town. no one is going to rescue u. this is farmdale, not fargo. u can scream as loud as u want; the owner will just turn up the music. there's fights in this place every night.

Mary lou was frightened. regina's iron grasp was hurting her. this town was so awful, anything was possible. she didn't think regina was smart enough to lie. she believed her. mary lou smiled, i'm sorry. i don't want your boyfriend. it was just a joke. ok? now let me go. regina laughed. her laugh was huge. that's funny. i don't care who u want. this is a matter of principle. u haven't just insulted me. u've insulted my gang. if u really want to know, u can't have sweat anyway. he's satisfied with me. he likes kissing me. she laughed again letting go of mary lou's arm. it would b a fair fight. regina wasn't a bully.

Mary lou thought she was letting her go. she felt cocky. her first fight wasn't so bad. this bull was all talk just as mary lou suspected. she started walking to the door. u r a stupid ugly bitch, living in a dream world. u and your stupid gang r nothing. i can have any boy i want including your precious sweat. look at me; i'm beautiful. now look at yourself. it's a pity on u.

Regina pounced before mary lou reached the door, knocking her to the floor. her full weight lay on top of the littler girl crushing her. her dark face loomed like a nightmare. she punched mary lou flatly in the nose. mary lou felt the bone crack. blood rushed down her face. she moaned trying to wrestle free. honey, regina murmured. i'm going to beat the

shit out of u. when i finish u'll b just as pretty as me. then we'll see how many boys want u. the funny thing is, i don't usually like to fight. this will b a pleasure.

Mary lou tried to wriggle away. she bit regina's neck. regina winced, angry. she punched mary lou's mouth, splitting her lip. fresh blood poured down her chin. mary lou had never been beaten. not even her parents hit her. they coddled her. they were civilized people. she was fragile. she hurt all over. she kicked regina. regina grabbed her jaw, crushing it in her great hands. mary lou moaned turning her face away. regina grabbed at it turning it around twisting the blond girl's neck. i'm not finished with u, she hissed. she punched at the girl's nose as if it was a toy. mary lou heard the bone crack again. she never knew there could b so much pain. blood spilled from her nose and mouth. her eyes were black circles. she fainted.

The fight had lasted only a minute. it was not enough. regina wasn't satisfied. she was a wild animal. her hurt was too deep. she lifted the littler girl carrying her like a sack of potatoes into the vacant stall dropping her onto the floor with a clunk. mary lou opened one eye. the other was swollen closed. she moaned in pain. regina grabbed the girl's head. roughly she forced it into the toilet bowl. the cold water awakened mary lou. her lips were too sore for her to speak. she stared at regina in fear and hatred. regina just smiled. her face was like a halloween mask. u know farmdale isn't the capital. farmdale is a crude town. she pulled a knife out of a leather case on her hip. it was a large hunting knife. it shone in the dim light. she waved it above mary lou. mary lou whimpered. her eyes filled with terror. don't, she murmured. please. regina laughed. u little fool, what do u think i'm going to do, stab u? i'm not a criminal. my father is a policeman. he taught me to fight fair. we're a law abiding family. my mother is a member of the ladies league. she laughed again, brandishing the knife. all i'm going to do is give u a haircut. u better lie still so u get a good styling. laughing, she hacked away at the girl's beautiful hair, dropping the yellow ringlets into the toilet bowl. she talked as she cut. i think i'll make it very short, kind of like mine only shorter. short hair is in this year. did u know? she cut the other girl's hair as close to the head as she could leaving about two inches of coarsely chopped hair. she smiled. i hope u like your new hair do. now u better stand up. i haven't finished with your make over yet. mary lou didn't move. she couldn't. she hurt too much. regina sighed.

that's too bad. i'll have to do this for u. slowly, she removed the other girl's clothes, cutting them into shreds. flushing each shred down the toilet. these commodes have good pressure. she tossed the girl's shoes out the window. the girl shivered in her nakedness. the bathroom tiles were cold. she moaned in pain and humiliation. how could her parents make her live here?

Regina stood up. she sniggered. u sure will make a fine sight when u walk out into the bar. i guess u really will b able to have any boy u want, u being naked and all. everybody's going to know u in farmdale now. u won't b the new girl any more. u'll b the nude girl. regina laughed at her own joke. well i better b going. sweat is waiting. i'll see u in school.

Regina walked out of the bathroom. she swaggered. sweat and laura were waiting for her. fritz was in the car. he didn't like getting involved in laura's gang affairs. sweat took regina's arm. he squeezed her lovingly. how'd it go? regina smiled. ok. sweat kissed her. u don't look any worse for the wear. regina laughed, putting her arms around her two friends.

Mary lou lay alone on the bathroom floor shivering. everyone saw her go into the bathroom. they knew what happened. regina was right. no one cared. she was just a new girl. she was stuck up, always talking about fargo. who cared about fargo. she deserved whatever she got.

The owner didn't want trouble. the dollies were good customers. the other kids respected them. besides, he liked regina. she was a nice kid, always polite. she once jumped his battery for him in a snow storm. he didn't forget favors. her father was a cop. it was better to mind his own business. it was just another friday night fight. he turned the music up.

Mary lou tried to stand up. she couldn't. there was no point in it. she couldn't walk out in public naked. she'd have to wait til the bar closed. she started to cry. she hated it here.

BARBARA SHEEN

Dear Nellie

Listen. I'll tell you exactly the way it is.
the rotting fish sliver of soap still clings
to the bottom of his tub. I don't know if the
warmth around my naked body is the water or
something you left behind. some of the hair
behind the toilet is yours. some is mine.
black and brown.

"Nellie," he says, "bleeds into
her poems."

(At her touch
dark corners of the room
began to speak.)

his fingers search for words under the Navajo
blanket. I have no words to give him.

"Nellie's book is on the table,"
he whispers. "Hurry."

I take a handful of your warm black words
press them into my skin. he is satisfied
and feeds me yellow peaches with his hands.

BONNIE BROWN MEAD



graphic by Teri Kaufman

The Bolus: from Family of Knives

The bolus: 1.

This bolus works backward.
It has tiny sticky feet,
little projections all over
that appear and disappear.
It is white and gummy flecked with red.
It sits in your lungs or your heart
or your stomach;
piles up years of waiting
to fly out into some sink,
your friend's face,
slime your lover's back.

This bolus works backward.
Especially when the moon is full
and the belly bloated from saved salt;
then especially the red flecks
get bigger,
invade and discolor the bolus.
It is up to no good.
Spit it up. Kill freely.
Fleck your friends.
Keep it in you and your years
are rendered hopeless.

The bolus: 2.

My mother had a bolus as big as our house.
Every day, though,
she would heave it up on her drawing board.
She drew houses. She was an architect.
Like me, her bolus was big and long
and had for years invaded all her organs.

Every day I sat by my mother
and I read books while she worked.
She was a small woman, all round
and when she bent, her breasts were her support.
Especially I remember the T-square,
her face when she determined to shove it
up and down the board.

I remember her new pencil sharpener:
No more exacto-blades, no more shavings
or having to use both hands.
She could shove the pencil downward
hard, then screw the whole top moving in a circle
about and about and quickly pull the pencil out.
I remember how I was always fascinated
with her drawings, especially the doorways
which were always quarter circles,
and the model buildings completed
with the trees outside
and all the people standing or walking.

She worked with her mouth, her back and her hands.
She almost always stood.
In her teeth the second pencil,
clenched ready for use.
Her left elbow bent, leaning into her hand.
The left hand on the board,
pressing fingertips.
And her right,
held up for instants of determination
suddenly swooping down
for that sure line.

I idolized her, her determination,
her ability to create on paper.
I idolized her small rotund and soft body
with her small sure hands.
She had a very steady eye.
I never once saw it waver like Dad's and mine.
She had a fair face with peak eyebrows.
Her eyes seemed always wide open,
not sneaky, but seeing a lot and saying little.
I was afraid of her. I hated her.
I wanted to possess her.

When she died, she lay in the backseat
of our green Ford leaving for the hospital
and she smiled at me with great peace
and she waved
and she said, "Good-bye, honey."
and I was sad and I said, "Bye, mom."
and that was the last time I saw her until casket.

The point is, in my whole life
there has been no pure undiluted emotion
without its insistent opposite.
She died.
She said good-bye honey
and she smiled.
That was typical.
I was dependent and thoroughly guilty
and never once have I had a pure emotion.

BETSY ADAMS

Visiting Hours

Although I liked to hear it
We never really
Passed for sisters
When you grew tall I hid you
When you let your hair go grey
You embarrassed me

From Acapulco and Mexico City
I wrote you postcards
On the European tours
I danced until morning
For Christmas I always
Sent you oranges from Florida

When I traveled
And in my apartments
I kept on my dressingtable
Only your Bachrach portrait and
The silver-framed photograph
Of your children in grade school

So that when they were in college
My latest lover
The charming importer
Sent you handsome Scottish
Pullovers
In childrens' sizes

Now in the smoking-room
Of the select retirement home
My knotted claws clutch your hand
While you admire my newest haircolor
'Mother me love me' my eyes cry silently
While you try who were never my child

MATT FIELD

Bedtime Story

We mothers of Princesses have problems
beyond all last chapters
dreading worse than witches
beyond the foul breath of dragons
the reality of sons-in-law.

Of all suitors in the Kingdom
by the rules it must be always
the third son, the unlucky, the monster,
who is metamorphosed by magic
into Beauty's true love.

My Goldenhair, King's Daughter,
most cherished and fairest,
all the good fairies with their lovegifts
were present at her christening
but the legend always ends the same.

Now seeing her caressed by
your greeny webbed fingers, hearing
her liquid voice echo your croakings, I
must not rage in the night in revulsion,
willing you back to your Well.

I am determined to love you.
I will work charms all night for my own
transformation, till those scales fall by
my spell, not from your warty back
but my eyes.

MATT FIELD



graphic by Carla Kaplan

Fiction

1

Lillian Bloom

is glazed as the donuts
her kids are tossing
like horseshoes across the table,
her hair is half clipped up

half falling into her food,
she can't feel the spit
coming through the straws
aimed at someone close to her

and partially deaf already
she doesn't hear the kids
claiming her
like antarctica.

She slips under the ice
that thickens each year
to a blackness.
Lillian Bloom barely sees

the stream of repairmen who alter
her house, barely speaks
to the service attendant, the taxi
driver, the only men she has except

the pediatrician where she wakes up
flushed and hot to tell him
her troubles, the only man who can reach her
through the tangle of kids she wears.

Lillian Bloom is the child
he puts his arm around.
She holds him as if
he were the only one who knew.

2

He's late.
In the booth
she pretends to make notes,
she can't be sure what he'll look like
without a smock; a man with a beard,
she can't be sure what's behind it
and this invitation, though she strongly suspects,
strongly imagines his beard rubbing her face, her thighs,
it's up to her, if he'd only arrive
she could move toward the dark region of her decision
she could pick at the salad she can't eat
she could stare blindly at the face
she sees peering into her kids' ears. He comes in.
She doesn't speak
of her children.

3

Lillian Bloom takes her pediatrician to bed
to let him examine her parts
without his coat on.
He is merely a man, moderate in size
and sex, merely a kind man who rides his bike
to work, merely a man who strips her down,
brings all her blood to her skin, merely
listens, holds her, listens, a doctor
after all. She cries
when they leave the borrowed room
afraid of being bitten
by daylight.

EDITORIAL

Between them they have
 6 kids, 2 spouses,
 2 Victorian homes, 2 careers
 that don't intersect,
 no time to meet,
 no place to meet,
 undefined expectations,
 unclear needs,
 no knowledge of one another,
 no way to communicate.
 This editorial in no way reflects
 the opinions of the parties involved,
 it suggests only the clarity
 of the situation.

She'd come on so tough, tougher than a truck driver,
 that when he didn't call the first day, or the second
 she hated the wound that opened, wrapped it in gauze,
 hid it behind her back, finally took a thick
 crocheting needle and stitched it shut,
 Lillian sewed that wound so tight it would never open.

Lillian Bloom opened and closed quick as a hibiscus.
 Her name flashed and withered in a day.

Her pediatrician went back to his office a bit taller
 a vague sense of openness toward his patients,
 soon forgetting the source of this feeling.

She remembers her children
 and finds them pouring cheerios over the living room rug,
 she remembers the dinner she hasn't cooked for days.
 she remembers the laundry spilling over the basket,

she puts on her bathrobe again,
 rewarms the coffee,
 remembers to shut the front door,
 forgets her hand is in it,
 weeps.

JUDITH W. STEINBERGH

Here

is what she loves deeply

her work she drives into with the sun polishing wet roads to chrome
her son who waits, feigning sleep in his crib until he can caress her face
her golden-haired, blue-eyed, hell-bent, anti-authoritarian daughter
who says shit at the right times
her husband who has left her

here is what she loves, but once removed

her men with tongues, who put their mouths on her, who make her laugh
deeply into the night, who take her to bed during sesame street
who take her children to school, or haven't met her children, or never met
a child at all
her men who play stringed lovers in seed tight cabins in the woods, who
paint day after day landscapes that have never left the mind, who walk
her on winter beaches and fly her into the chambers of coral reefs

here is what she likes with an embarrassing relish

the luminescent stars and comets she's stuck on her ceiling
the thought of toads in her husband's lover's bed
her bird bell clanging a pottery sea bell sound
her shells, colored powders, beach stones, sheep bones, weeds, seed pods,
ropes of feathers, long Indian skirts, filmy violet scarves, her
black braids
snow over the lakes to ski on, water running through woods, her children's
bare bodies, summer with a wind in the moors, the stitching of night
with the loon's pointed sound

here is what she needs and keeps her

a net of women so strong that when she falls from the tightrope she walks
day after day sometimes with easy precision, sometimes with wire cutting
her feet into bands, sometimes with a fatigue so great her dreams have
to hold her, that when she falls, her women-friends tighten their almost
invisible web, and she bounces and breathes, bounces and weaves every fiber
of their strength into her own body, bounces and is free in a way that
will let her bounce against them again, she bounces and soars, a dark bird
against the stadium lights, swoops to the crowd, and is off, a speck
in a cranberry dawn.

JUDITH W. STEINBERGH

Contributors

BETSY ADAMS is a biologist. She has had two books published, has appeared in many poetry journals and in scientific books and journals. She is getting her PhD in Evolutionary Ecology. *The Bolus: 1* has been previously published in *New York Quarterly*.

DOROTHY BANKS has been published in a local paper, the *Villager*, and her poetry will be published in *Black Forum* and *New Earth Review*. She received honorable mention in a collegiate poetry contest sponsored by International Publications. She is presently writing a collection of short stories and is enrolled in Austin Community College at the ripe old age of 40.

ALICE GLARDEN BRAND has appeared in *Studies in Poetry, Plexus, Velvet Wings, The New York Times* and *The New England Quarterly*. She teaches English at Cook College, Rutgers University, and is currently completing her doctoral dissertation on the therapeutic benefits of free writing.

CHRIS BURKS is a student at Columbia College, Chicago. Her major is Poetry-Fiction. She has been published in *Hair Trigger* and will appear in the *New World Anthology, In Search of the Valiant Soul* in November. She considers herself a word artist with the belief that each word should be given full shape and value to add to the total art form.

MELISSA CANNON is 32, grew up in Tennessee and has been writing for about 20 years. She teaches for a living.

MATT FIELD is an associate professor at Southeastern Massachusetts University where she has been teaching a course on American women poets and directing a poetry workshop.

PAT FISH is a native Southern Californian who lives in Santa Barbara. Her favorite form of art is called "Postal-Art" --mailing art to art pen pals all over the world. Self-portraits are a favorite method of communication across time and space.

ROBERTA GOULD has had poetry published in some 50 magazines, including *Poetry Now*, *13th Moon*, *The New York Times*, *Wind*, *Sunbury*, *Best Friends*, *Osiris*. Four Zoas Press will issue a book this fall and *Writing Air Written Water* is slated for publication early 1979. She is a surreal photographer in her spare time, the editor of *Light: A Poetry Review*, a member of the New York Poets' Cooperative and the Women's Inter-Art Center.

PAT GRAY of Knoxville, Tennessee, writes fiction and poetry and has been published in *13th Moon*, *Poet Lore*, *Voices International*, *The Small Farm* and the *Davidson Miscellany*.

JANA HARRIS has had the following poetry books published: From Jungle Garden Press, *This House That Rocks With Every Truck on the Road* (1976), *Letters From the Promise-Land, Alaska--Broadsides* (1976), *Pin Money* (1977); *The Book of Common People*, Poems in a dime store sack, Alameda County Neighborhood Arts, 1978, *The Clackamas*, (forthcoming from The Smith); in progress *Who's That Pushy Bitch* and a novel, *Alaska: In the Pursuit of Money*. She teaches Creative Writing at Modesto Junior College. Recently published in *MS* and *The Nation*.

CARLA KAPLAN lives in Chicago, writes, draws, and is an editor on the staff of *Black Maria*. She feels a lot like the little girl at a tea party.

TERI KAUFMAN has skipped around from school to school. She is a closet artist who needs some air and in the process she needs to share the writing, drawing and singing she does.

BEVERLY LANCASTER has been published in *Wormwood*, *Aspect*, *Sun-Lotus* and *Eureka*. Her hobbies are photography and cartoons.

CHRIS LESLIE, printer, is co-owner and operator of Metis Press.

SUSAN LYSIK is a single working writing parent and lives in Santa Cruz, California with her 9-year old son.

ANNE MARGIS lives in an attic writing full-time: short fiction, satirical essays and a potentially best selling novel. The single parent of a

3-year old boy, she collects gambling debts, wind-up toys and men from Chicago. . .

BONNIE BROWN MEAD writes fiction and poetry. She has been published in *Moving Out*, *Seven Stars*, *Poet Lore Thorn Apple* and is currently working on a book of poetry with another poet, Sandra Reno. She teaches creative writing at a local community school.

STEPHANIE MINES is the author of *Two Births* (Random House) and *Belly Poems* (Cassandra). She earns a living by teaching writing to children and others trying to speak in San Francisco.

ELAINE NAMANWORTH has had poems published in *City* magazine and *The Helen Review*. She is currently co-authoring a book of poems, *Ribs*. She lives and works in Greenwich Village, New York.

SHARON OLDS has had poems recently in *Conditions* and *New York Quarterly*, has finished a first book of poems and is a CAPS-grant recipient in poetry for 1978.

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BARBARA SHEEN lives in southern New Mexico. Her stories have appeared in various publications. Her first book of short stories, *She-devils*, was recently published by Metis Press, 815 W. Wrightwood, Chicago, Ill. 60614 — \$3.50 plus \$0.50 postage. She is also the author of a series of bilingual workbooks for children entitled *We Learn English* published by Educational Insights, Inc., Carson, Ca.

JUDITH W. STEINBERGH has published a book of poems for children: *Marshmellow Worlds*, co-edits a women's poetry paper, *Grist*, and has published poems in *13th Moon*, *The Smith*, *Prairie Schooner*, among others. She is a Poet-in-Residence in Wenham, Mass. public schools and lives with her two children in Brookline.

MARENA STELZER is an editor of *Black Maria*, free lance interviewer, key line paste up and layout consultant, aerobic fitness instructor, oil painter and house painter.

ARNY CHRISTINE STRAAYER loves to eat candy and is not ashamed of it. She also loves to write- Orders are now being taken for her book of children's stories, *Rock and Me Immediately*: Metis Press, 815 W. Wrightwood, Chicago, Ill. 60614. \$5.00.

KAY VAN DEURS is looking for a revolution. *The Notebooks That Emma Gave Me* is available for \$5.00 from Kay Van Deurs, Box 199, Youngsville, N.Y. 12791.

Publications Received

Loving Women Is Dangerous, by Carol Anne Douglas. Published by Jo March Press, 3616 Connecticut Ave. NW, No. 300, Washington, DC 20008. \$2.00.

A Lesbian Estate, by Lynn Lonidier. Published by ManRoot, Box 982, South San Francisco, CA 94080. \$4.00.

Love Image, by Valerie Taylor. Available from Naiad Press, Inc., 20 Rue Jacob Bates City, MO 64011. Include 10% postage. \$4.50.

Belly Poems, by Stephanie Mines. Available from Cassandra Publications, 160 Caselli Ave., San Francisco, CA 94114. \$3.50.

The Muse of the Violets, By Renee Vivien. Published by The Naiad Press, Inc., 20 Rue Jacob Acres, Bates City, MO 64011. Include 10% postage. \$4.00.

The Women's Room, by Marilyn French. Published by Summit Books (A Division of Simon & Schuster). \$10.95.

The Activist Anthology, edited by Morty Sklar & Darrell Gray. Available from The Spirit That Moves Us Press, Morty Sklar, PO Box 1585, Iowa City, Iowa 52240. \$3.50.

Dreams in Harrison Railroad Park, by Nellie Wong. Published by Kelsey St. Press, Berkeley, CA. \$3.00.

Scream Quietly or the Neighbors Will Hear, by Erin Pizzey. Published by Ridley Enslow Publishers, 60 Crescent Place, Box 301, Short Hills, NJ 07078. \$7.95.

Magdalen, by Ruthellen Quillen. Published by Sibyl-Child Press, PO Box 1773, Hyattsville, MD 20788. \$2.25.

Black and White, by Carol Stetser. Available from Padma Press, PO Box 56, Oatman, Ariz. 86433. \$5.95.

A Radical Life, by Vera Buchweissbord. Published by Indiana Univ. Press, Bloomington, Ind. \$15.00.

Cecilia Meireles, poems in translation, by Cecilia Meireles. Translated by H. Keith & R. Sayers. Available from Brazilian-American Cultural Institute, Inc., Washington, DC. \$3.75.

Songs & Dances of the Women Within, by Robin Lou Trusty-Hiersche. Published by Grossmont Press, 7071 Convoy Court, San Diego, CA 92111. \$3.95.

Mules & Men, by Zora Neale Hurston. Published by Indiana Univ. Press, Bloomington, Ind.

A Ladle-Shaped Woman, by Alice Rogoff. Published by Cassandra Publications, 324 Bartlett St. No. 30, San Francisco, CA 94110. \$2.00 plus \$0.25 postage.

The Solitude of Self, by E. Cady Stanton. Available from Press Pacifica, PO Box 47, Kailua, Hawaii 96734. \$0.75.

To Cry Is Not A Sin, by Theron Montgomery. Published by Grossmont Press, 7071 Convoy Court, San Diego, CA 92111. \$3.95.

International Directory of Little Magazines and Small Presses, 14th Edition 1978-79, edited by Len Fulton and Ellen Ferber. Published by Dustbooks, PO Box 1056, Paradise, CA 95969. Paper: \$10.95; Cloth: \$13.95.

Small Press Record of Books In Print, 6th Edition, editor Len Fulton, associate editor Ellen Ferber. Published by Dustbooks, PO Box 1056, Paradise, CA 95969. \$8.95.

The Lesbian: A Celebration of Difference, by Bernice Goodman. Out & Out Books. \$3.75.

Published by Beyond Baroque Foundation, 1639 W. Washington Blvd., PO Box 806-N, Venice, CA 90291:

A Vegetable Emergency, by Maxine Chernoff.
Dan McCarroll's Space Diary, by Dan McCarroll.
Is Predestination Weather Reports, by Curtis Lyle.



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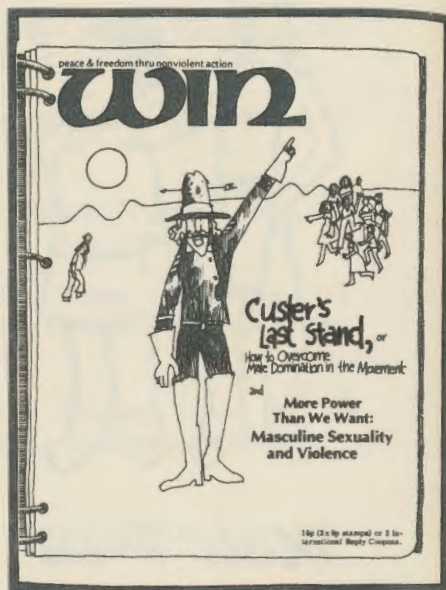
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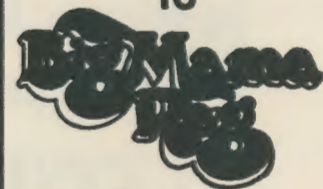
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